

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AMONG THE STUDENTS IN THE SELECTED ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES IN SALEM DISTRICT, AFFILIATED TO PERIYAR UNIVERSITY, SALEM: A SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Information is most powerful. The requirement of information may be different. The purpose of information may also be varied such as, gaining knowledge by reading new area of study, preparing notes for class etc. Information seeking is one of important activity among the students and faculty members for not only a piece of information, text books, reference books, audio, video etc. Information Seeking Behaviour is one of the important areas in user studies. The motives of users give raise to information needs and requirements. Information explosion has paved the way to seek information in growing multiplicity at different levels, frequency, volume and use. This situation appears to be uncertain and varied in character, so that information needs of a particular group of users and the flow of information from a specific circumstances /organization are different to conclude. Users require information for the formation of decisions. They may obtain information through the research procedure, which is the procedure of finding ideas, facts, and new information by methodical study. Now a day, library users are no longer obliged to visit the library at regular open hours, to meet all their information needs. Information Technology has made simple to users, to sit comfortably in their office or home to do research, employing a computer to search electronic information sources and services.

Keywords: *Information Seeking Behaviour, Students, Library, Salem District, Information Sources.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Now a day, library users are no longer obliged to visit the library at regular open hours, to meet all their information needs. Information Technology has made

However, in order to benefit from ICT-driven services, users need to comply with their prerequisites. Apart from fundamentals in conditions of electricity, electronic devices, hardware and software, and the appropriate knowledge and skills to access electronic information, these technologies make demands with which indigenous people in developing communities cannot easily comply. The study has provided insight into the

simple to users, to sit comfortably in their office or home to do research, employing a computer to search electronic information sources and services.

information seeking behaviour among the students perception on information sources and services in the selected arts and science colleges in Salem district, affiliated to the Periyar University. Further research can also be explored at state, national and international level. Such type of research is very much useful to identify the user needs exactly so that the gap in sources and services can be filled.

Information Seeking Behaviour

Elsevier's Dictionary of library science Information seeking behaviour is a wide term, around the ways, how individuals articulate their information need, seek, evaluation, selection and use

the information. In other words, information seeking behaviour is a purposeful seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goals. In the way of seeking, the individual

may interact with people, or a manual information system, or with computer

Information

The word 'information' is used to identify many different concepts. But still, it is difficult to define it precisely. According to Oxford English dictionary "Information is facts or knowledge provided or learned" Shah pointed that "information is power and it is a life saver

Needs of Information

It is a common practice in the developing countries that a very little attention is being paid to the information needs of the majority poorest people, and the information reaches the rich people. There is a barrier to the poor people in accessing the information. India is no

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nkereuwem (1984)² conducted a study on information needs and seeking behaviour. In her study she analyzed a very little frequency of library visits by the engineers and petroleum workers. This study revealed that 84 % of the respondents pay to visit to the library for

Varalakshmi (2003)³ traced out the available standards for measuring the college libraries in India, and compared the recommendations made by University Grants Commission (UGC) (India) and suggestions made by the expert committees and professional experts. An in-depth analysis reveals their strengths

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. This study has been framed with the following objectives;
2. To find out the information seeking behaviour of the students of the selected Arts and Science colleges in Salem district, affiliated to Periyar University.
3. To distinguish the information needs of students of the selected Arts and Science colleges in Salem

based information system.

for any venture". Reitz¹ defined "Information as all the facts, conclusions, ideas, and creative works of the human intellect and imagination that have been communicated, formally or informally, in any form".

exception in this regard. Information is crucial for nation's development. The growth of a nation is not feasible until and unless the information needy people are well informed and made available of the information at their door steps as free of cost.

just a little times in a year. Only 9% of the scientists visited the library once or twice a week. The study also showed a positive correlation between the competence of library materials and the rate of library visits.

and weaknesses. She concluded that there are no authentic standards revised and approved by a body like the UGC to evaluate college libraries in India and suggests a model set of standards for college libraries in India, keeping in view the technology-based information environment.

District affiliated to Periyar University.

4. To find out the reasons for seeking information from the library.
5. To identify the problems encountered by the students while seeking information.
6. To find out the level of satisfaction about ICT products /services and facilities provided by the library.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology entails the methods used by the researcher to study a particular problem and behind the logic the methods in the circumstance of the particular research study. The methods used in the research study will point out the nature of a problem and the type of

data required. After selection of the problem, structuring the objectives and reviewing the related literature, the subsequently important step in research study is to explicate the details of the different steps followed in the research design.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

It is a plan and structure of the investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to the research questions and control variance (Kerlinger, 1986). It is also referred to as an outline that provides the researcher with a detailed sketch or

plan for the compilation and analysis of data (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1991). Quantitative research methods have been adopted to attain the research objectives. A questionnaire survey is enabled to collect the data on a number of variables.

5.1 Sampling Design

Using the Census sampling method collected the samples from the universe. The data showed that the Undergraduates and Postgraduates who are pursuing Arts and Science education of 34 Arts and Science Colleges located in Salem district, of Tamil Nadu, India. A total of 900

questionnaires were distributed to the students and 681 fully completed questionnaires were received and the response rate is 75.66%. The incomplete questionnaires were not considered for this study.

5.2 Data Collection Tool

The questionnaire method was a preferred tool of data collection and giving the socio-demographic profile of the participants of this study and for logistical reasons. The questionnaire method was adopted as a tool of data collection. Part I.

Personal Information, Part II. Information Seeking Behaviour -General, Part III. Information Seeking Behaviour- Libraries, Part IV. Information Seeking Behaviour as Sources, 31 format were preferred.

5.3 Validity of the tool

The validity of the questionnaire can be measured by the researcher. The content of the validity refers to an extent to which the questionnaire represents the factors under the study. The content validity of the questionnaire was tested by

a panel of experts comprising the library professionals and the library and information science professional. The validity of the questionnaire was tested using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

6. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is undertaken to explore the use pattern of research scholars and their perception on information sources and services in the surveyed universities by the students and to find the ways and means to promote the existing system.

This study is specific with reference to the Arts and Science Colleges located in Salem District only. Further, this study is based on the data received from the Undergraduate, Postgraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In this study the data was collected from the primary sources using

questionnaire. Moreover, the secondary source of data was collected from the

books, print journals and e-journals and web pages. The component of analysis states to common entitles whose social appearances are the hub of the study. It may be individuals, groups, programmes, organizations or institutions liable on the research questions established for the

study **Baker, (1991)**. The learning of this research, the unit of analysis of the individual students who belong to the students of the selected Arts and Science colleges in Salem district, affiliated to Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu.

7.1 Gender wise classification of students

In this research study gender is classified into two, male and female. Studying the information seeking behaviour among the students in the

selected arts and science colleges in Salem district based on gender is important for this study.

The classification of students on the basis of gender is shown in the table below.

Table – 1 Gender wise classification of students

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	276	40.5
Female	405	59.5
Total	681	100.0

The above table shows that 40.5% of students are male and 59.5% of students

are female. This points out that the majority of the students are female.

7.2 Age wise classification of students

In this study age is classified into three, 17–20 years, 20-22 years and 23 and above. Studying the information seeking behaviour among the students in the

selected arts and science colleges in Salem district based on age is required for this study.

The classification of students on the basis of age is shown in the table below.

Table – 2 Age wise classification of students

Age	Frequency	Percent
17 - 20 years	251	36.9
20 - 22 years	370	54.3
23 and above	60	8.8
Total	681	100.0

The above table shows that 36.9% of students are of 17-20 years, 54.3% of students are of 20-22 years and 8.8% of

students are of 23 and above. This indicates that the majority of the students are of 20-22years.

7.3 Marital Status wise classification of students

In this study Marital Status is classified into married and unmarried. Studying the information seeking behaviour among the students in the

selected arts and science colleges in Salem district based on Marital Status is essential for this study.

The classification of students on the basis of Marital Status is shown in the table below.

Table – 3 Marital Status wise classifications of students

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	50	7.3
Unmarried	631	92.7
Total	681	100.0

From the above table it can be seen that 7.3% of students are married and 92.7% of students are unmarried. This

indicates that the majority of the students are unmarried

7.4 Medium of study at School level wise classification of students

In this study the Medium of study at School level is classified into three, Tamil, English and other. Studying the information seeking behaviour among the

students in the selected arts and science colleges in Salem district based on Medium of study at School level is important for this study.

The classification of students on the basis of the Medium of study at School level is shown in the table below.

Table – 4 Medium of study at School level wise classification of students

Medium of study at School level	Frequency	Percent
Tamil	529	77.7
English	151	22.2
Others	1	0.1
Total	681	100.0

From the above table it is clear that 77.7% of students are from Tamil Medium, 22.2% of students are from English Medium and 0.1% of students are

from others Medium. This indicates that the majority of the students are from Tamil Medium.

7.5 Educational qualification wise classification of students

In this study Educational qualification is classified into two graduation and post-graduation. Studying the information seeking behaviour among

the students in the selected arts and science colleges in Salem district based on Educational qualification is essential for this study.

The classification of students on the basis of Educational qualification is shown in the table below.

Table – 5 Educational qualification wise classifications of students

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percent
Graduation	415	60.9
Post-Graduation	266	39.1
Total	681	100.0

From the above table it is evident that 60.9% of students are graduates and 39.1% of students are post graduates. This

indicates that the majority of the students are graduates.

7.6 Category wise classification of students

In this study Category is classified into three, arts, science and other. Studying the information seeking behaviour among

the students in the selected arts and science colleges in Salem district based on Category is important for this study.

The classification of students on the basis of Category is shown in the table below.

Table – 6 Category wise classifications of students

Category	Frequency	Percent
Arts	359	52.7
Science	321	47.1
Others	1	0.2
Total	681	100.0

From the above table shows that 52.7% of students are from arts, 47.1% of students are from science and 0.2% of

students are from others. This indicates that the majority of the students are from arts category.

8. FINDINGS

8.1 Personal Sources

“Friends” is the top graded Personal Sources factor with a mean value of 4.18, “Family & Relatives” are the second graded Personal Sources factor with a mean value of 4.07, “Experts” is the third graded Personal Sources factor with a mean value of 3.90, “Word-of-mouth” is

the fourth graded Personal Sources factor with a mean value of 3.87, “Library Staff” is the fifth graded Personal Sources factor with a mean value of 3.80 and “Colleagues” is the sixth graded Personal Sources factor with a mean value of 3.75.

8.2 Visit Sources

“Library / Information / Documentation center” is the top Visit Sources graded factor with a mean value of 4.21, “Review of Articles” is the second graded Visit Sources factor with a mean value of 3.95, “Library / Publisher’s Catalogue” is the third graded Visit

Sources factor with a mean value of 3.85, “Bibliography” is the fourth graded Visit Sources factor with a mean value of 3.80 and “Abstracting / Indexing Journals” is the fifth graded Visit Sources factor with a mean value of 3.72.

8.3 Purpose

- “Preparing notes” is the top graded Purpose factor with a mean value of 4.25,
- “General knowledge” is the second graded Purpose factor with a mean value of 4.23,
- “Public speaking” is the third graded Purpose factor with a mean value of 4.14,
- “Preparing for Examinations” is the fourth graded Purpose with a mean value of 4.11,
- “To prepare assignments / Seminars” is the fifth graded

Purpose factor with a mean value of 4.04,

- “Develop Competence” is the sixth graded Purpose factor with a mean value of 3.96,
- “For undertaking projects” is the seventh graded Purpose factor with a mean value of 3.96,
- “Writing papers and chapters for conference /Book /Articles” is the

eighth graded Purpose factor with a mean value of 3.95,

- “Service / job requirement” is the ninth graded Purpose factor with a mean value of 3.88 and
- “Reading purpose only” is the tenth graded Purpose factor with a mean value of 3.80.

9. CONCLUSION

The study has provided insight into the information seeking behaviour among the students perception on information sources and services in the selected arts and science colleges in Salem district, affiliated to the Periyar University. While rendering their services, the librarians should keep in mind the varying needs of each discipline and should have a degree of elasticity to deal with newly arising needs and situations. They should go for an additional line of inquiry, which will be helpful to understand, how the users, who use the library as a place to develop more

awareness of the library resources. If the library professionals understood, how the users get the awareness about the library’s traditional as well as electronic resources and services, the library could make further efforts to reach the users in an efficient way. In this aspect, the present study has been undertaken and various factors like information needs, information use and seeking behaviour, visit to the library, productivity level, satisfaction on information sources, services and infrastructure facilities and staff attitude.

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