

## LITERACY ON INFORMATION THROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT-A STUDY

**G. A. Devabalagan,**  
Research Scholar, DLISc,  
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University,  
Tirunelveli-627 012

**Dr. C. Martin Arockiasamy,**  
Senior Librarian,  
St. Xavier's College (Autonomous),  
Tirunelveli-627 002

### ABSTRACT

*The advent of printing press, e-resources and e-literature has changed the reading habits of public from the past. Depending on the age and educational level of the individuals, the new technologies have been affecting the reading habit and the acquisition level of information among the public. Schools on European model started coming up throughout India and helped in the spread of basic literacy. Social and political consciousness started growing. Thus a need for reading materials was generated. According to the market demand, magazines, periodicals and newspapers were brought out both in English and in the vernaculars. The media of communication like telephone and radio were found to be supplementing as well as competing with other media of information exchange such as letters, newspapers, and books. However, these new technologies in communication did not lessen the reading habit of the public at any great extent. The present study aims at collecting primary data from the respondents of the District Central Library and other branch libraries in Tirunelveli District. A structured questionnaire was constructed as a tool and a pilot survey was launched with 50 samples. The primary data were collected from the selected respondents by using pre-tested standard questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from published and unpublished sources.*

**Keywords:** Information Literacy, Public Libraries, Reading Habits, e-resources

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is not surprised to realize that man has always been interested in information in producing, using and presenting it. Information in one form or the other has consistently been a significant element in the development of human society and it has shaped, over a long period of time into the

The success of any library depends considerably on how best the system design is based on a close and accurate understanding of the users. A formal information center or library is yet to pick up these activities in the same spirit. Hence

Information Literacy is the ability to define one's information needs, and then to access, process, evaluate and use information for decision making, learning, and problem solving. It is a tool for lifelong

### 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present study reviews the previous research literature to go ahead in the right direction on this research.

way in which we think and act. It is likely, of course, to continue to do so with even greater intensity. What is now proclaimed as an information age is, in some sense a term that can be applied to all stages of human development.

it is necessary to know the information needs, the motives, purposes of seeking information, ways and means of gathering information and the entire user – studies and practices in relation to information.

learning in the network era. Libraries are providing extensive support and training to users and also supplying access to information resources using all the available technologies.

Syamalamba's study (2011) states that Information literacy is the ability to

Lau, (2006) in his study indicates that the term information literacy encompasses a wide range of competencies acquired through a multiplicity of methods of library instruction focused on educating its users. They are variably known as

Okki and Asiru (2011) revealed that the factors tempting usage of electronic information resources were the demand to accomplish research work, writing research articles, completing course assignments and excelling in courses of study. The study also revealed that postgraduate students

Natarajan et al, (2010) pointed out that the databases and other e-resources required computers and networked electronic information resources for serving the library users in searching library's catalogue, browsing electronic journals and accessing subject guide or database without

Ranasinghe and others (2012) noted that the recent technological emergence in the fields of medicine and medical education have made computer literacy a necessity, which encompass the knowledge on

Balasubramanian et.al (2014) on their study observed that the students preferred internet for accessing information.

Chandrakumar (2009) found that the search strategies like Boolean operators or

Kaur and Verma (2008) observed that the researchers being aware of the electronic information resources made the

Tiefel (1995) identified that students needed to become independent learners and to achieve this, user education had to play a major role. The study recommended that "users should receive guidance on which

Adeleke and Emeahara (2016) examined the role of information literacy and the use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students. The study found a significant relationship

identify, evaluate organize and use the information judiciously"

"Information fluency, User education, Library Instruction, Bibliographic Instruction, Information Competencies, Information Skills, and Development of Information Skills"

frequently use electronic information resources and the main barrier for using EIR was slow internet connectivity. The study recommended increasing institutional bandwidth, continuous power supply and conducting information literacy programmes to improve the search skills of users.

visiting the library premises. The reasons for low use of e-resources identified were slow downloading and lack of time or the lack of awareness of users. This study also stressed for arranging publicity and training for accessing e-Resources for better utilization.

common software packages, operating systems, database management, and the usage of internet, as vital competencies for the present day undergraduates.

The study indicates that the PG students had less awareness of the electronic information resources available in the library.

phrase searching were rarely used by the researchers.

best use of them and utilized for their seminars and project work.

resources are best for their needs, and basic instruction on search technique, and should feel assured that the system is not difficult and is evolving towards a more efficient, effective, and easy-to-use system".

between IL and the use of e-information resources. The study recommended for the inclusion of information and communication technology course with emphasis on e-

information literacy in the curriculum of

Chinyere (2014) in his study assessed the perception of users about the effectiveness of user education for searching information resources. The study examined the role of information professionals in facilitating the easy access and retrieval of library resources, and various ways of

Sasikala and Dhanraju (2011) conducted a study for assessing the information literacy skills among Science students of the departments of botany, Physics, Chemistry, and Environmental Science of Andhra University through questionnaires. The study covered details of demographic data, awareness about the use of printed reference sources, knowledge about library catalogue, opinions on the

postgraduate students.

educating users in the use of library resources. The study found that the user education instructed, equipped the library users with the skills of enabling them to be independent in searching literature and also helped them retrieve needed information.

usefulness of library tools and user education programs etc. The results of the study showed a lack of awareness of the usage of library catalogue, a lack of search skills and a gap in the knowledge of using web search tools. The study observed that user education programmes offered by the library would enable the users in searching and finding easily the needed information.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims at achieving the following objectives.

1. To identify the respondents from the users of public libraries whether they belong to student or working person's category.
2. To explore the educational qualification of the sample respondents from the users of selected public libraries in Tirunelveli District.
3. To find out occupation wise distribution of respondents from the users of public libraries.
4. To know the frequency of visit to library by the respondents using public libraries.
5. To identify the frequently used library resources by the respondents visiting public libraries in Tirunelveli District.
6. To evaluate the satisfaction level of respondents over information literacy fed by the public library system in Tirunelveli District.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey method of collecting data from the library users through a well designed questionnaire has been adopted in this study. A well structured questionnaire was distributed to 500 selected sample size

of the public library users' population in Tirunelveli District. Out of 500, 450 filled in questionnaires were received back and analyzed for this study. The results of this study are analyzed and interpreted in detail.

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 5.1 Distribution of Sample Respondents Based on Category

The total respondents are classified into two groups namely students and the

public and the results are furnished in the following table.

**Table-1: Distribution of sample respondents based on the classification of student or working person**

Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Students	379	84.22
Working persons	071	15.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data provided in the above table reveal that a majority of the (379) respondents constituting 84.22% of the sample population of the DCL, Tirunelveli and other selected branch libraries belong to

the category of "Students" comprising of Under Graduates, Post Graduates and others whereas 15.78% of the (71) respondents represent the working class of the society from all walks of life.

### 5.2 Distribution of Students Respondents Based on Educational Qualification

The distribution of the questionnaire to the users visiting District Central Library, Tirunelveli and a few selected branch

libraries are classified under three categories are viz., Under Graduates, Post Graduates and others.

**Table-2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Educational Qualification**

Category	No of Respondents	Percentage
Under Graduates	307	68.22
Post Graduates	130	28.89
Others	013	02.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data shown in the above table reveal that a majority of respondents (68.22%) using public libraries in Tirunelveli District are graduates followed by Post Graduates (28.89%) and others

(2.89%). It is revealed from the study that most of the users (97%) of Public libraries in Tirunelveli District are degree holders and a meager number of users are non- graduates.

### 5.3 Distribution of the Working Persons Based on Occupation

The classification of respondents based on their occupations are furnished under five categories viz., Teachers,

Government officials, workers of private firms, professionals such as Doctors and Engineers in the following table.

**Table-3: Distribution of the Respondents Based on Designation**

Category	No of Respondents	Percentage
Teachers	081	18.00
Government Employees	094	20.89
Private employees	144	32.00
Doctors	031	06.89
Engineers	042	09.33
Self Employed	037	08.22
Others	021	04.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data shown in the above table presents the distribution of respondents using public libraries in Tirunelveli District based on their occupation. The study reveals that a majority (144) of respondents (32%) using public libraries in Tunelveli District are Employees from Private Sector followed

by Government Employees (20.89%), Teachers (18%), Engineers (9.33%), Self Employed (8.22%) and Doctors (6.89%) whereas some respondents (4.67%) do not represent any of the above categories falling under the category of “others”.

**5.4 Frequency of Visit to Library by the Respondents**

Regular use of information centres plays a key role in updating knowledge in human beings. The distribution of

respondents based on their use of library in a year is presented in the following table.

**Table-4: Frequency of Visit to Library by the Respondents**

Frequency of visit	No of respondents	Percentage
Once in a day	139	30.89
Once in a couple of days	092	20.44
Twice in week	085	18.89
Once in a week	063	14.00
Occasionally	71	15.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data given in the above table describes how frequently the library users visit library for seeking information. The study indicates that a majority (139) of respondents (30.89%) visit library once in a day followed by (92) the respondents (20.44%) visiting library once in a couple of

days, (85) respondents (18.89) visiting library twice in a week and (63) respondents (14%) visiting library once in a week while 15.78% respondents (71) visit library occasionally. It is evident from the study that almost 70% of the respondents visit library at least once in a week.

**5.5 Usage of Library Resources by the Respondents**

The usage of library resources to read and refer by the respondents is furnished below.

**Table-5: Usage of Library Resources by the Respondents\***

Library Resources	No of Respondents	Percentage
Text Books	375	83.33
Reference Books	213	47.33
General Knowledge Books	308	68.44
Back Volumes	117	26.00
Journals	297	66.00
Newspapers	373	82.89
Reports	142	31.56
Internet	271	60.22

(\*Note: The respondents are given multiple choices for their answers on this particular question and the percentage calculated is based on total number of respondents.)

The data presented in the above table reveal the usage of library resources by its users. According to the study, Text books are used by a majority of respondents (83.33%) for seeking information followed by other resources such as News Papers by 82.89% of respondents, G.K. Books by

68.44% of respondents, Journals by 66% of respondents, Internet by 60.22% of respondents, Reference Books by 47.33% of respondents, Reports by 31.56% of respondents and Back Volumes by 26% of respondents.

**5.6 Distribution of Respondents Based on Satisfaction over Information Literacy**

Capacity building by way of providing orientation on information literacy plays major role in academic/research institutions. Libraries hold the key for

enlightening the library users on their skills. The distribution of sample respondents over satisfaction on information literacy is furnished in the table shown below.

**Table-4: Distribution of Respondents Based on Satisfaction over Information Literacy**

Satisfaction over Information Literacy	No of Respondents	Percentage
Very Poor	032	07.11
Poor	035	07.78
Satisfied	152	33.78
Good	177	39.33
Very Good	054	12.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data shown in the above table explore the satisfaction level of respondents from the users of selected public libraries in Tirunelveli District on Information Literacy. The study portrays a majority of public library users' (39.33%) view is that their satisfaction level on information literacy is Good. It is also inferred from the study that 33.78% of respondents are satisfied with the

information literacy. 12% of the respondents states that their satisfaction level over information literacy is "Very Good". It is noteworthy that 7.78% of respondents' opinion on satisfaction over information literacy is Poor whereas 7.11% of respondents states that it is Very Poor while asking about their satisfaction level over information literacy.

**6. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

1. A majority of the respondents (84.22%) belong to Students' category.
2. A majority of the respondents (68.22%) are qualified with Bachelor Degree.
3. A majority of the respondents (32%) among the users of public libraries are the employees from Private Sector.
4. A majority of the respondents (83.33%) among the public library

5. A majority of the respondents (85.11%) among the public library users don't have any grievances on information literacy. They rated on information literacy as (i) Satisfied (33.78%) (ii) Good (39.33%) and Very Good (12%).

## 7. SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are made based on the analysis of data and findings to increase information literacy awareness and the library services.

- The awareness programmes on information literacy particularly accessing e-resources have to be arranged to improve the knowledge of information literacy of library users.
- Library services have not been fully utilized, that is to the optimum level. Hence, the awareness should be created among the library users to use the library resources to the optimum level.
- Orientation Programmes on E-learning services to the library staff have to be organized to educate the library users and make them more knowledgeable on information literacy.
- The kind of assessment on accessing the information literacy level of the users and status of the existing environment has to be made at regular intervals. In order to enhance the quality of library and information services, the business hour of the Library needs to be changed.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The competency in Information literacy makes sure maximum utilization of the information resources as well as optimization of capabilities in handling information. There are a large number of orientation programmes organized by several libraries and information centres aiming at educating the users on the salient features of information resources, search techniques, search strategies, scholarly communications and other aspects. In India the architects of modern information system such as INFLIBNET, NISCAIR, National Informatics Centre and so on offer training programmes to the end-users through workshops on information resources in Infonet e-journal consortium, information

resources in CSIR e-journal consortium & training programmes on 'biomedical information retrieval' covering Indian Medlars Centre's resources like, IndMED, medIND, OpenMED and UNcat. All these training programmes aim at developing competencies in information literacy among the end users. Likewise public library authorities and public librarians need to promulgate information literacy competencies to the public library users. The importance of public libraries would reach the public more strongly, if the public libraries enchant general public and younger generations by means of meeting the information needs of all users.

## 9. REFERENCES

1. Adeleke, Dare Samuel D. S. and Emeahara, E. N. (2016): Relationship between Information Literacy and Use of Electronic Information Resources by Postgraduate Students of the University of Ibadan, Library Philosophy and Practice. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1381>.
2. Balasubramanian.P., Catherin.B.C. and Suthakar.N. (2014): An Investigation into Use, Awareness and Attitude towards Electronic Information Sources among Postgraduate Students in the Colleges affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University-Tirunelveli. Journal of library

- and Information Technology, Vol. 10, no. 2: 13-44.
3. Chandrakumar.V. (2009, February): Use and Usefulness of E-journals: A Case Study of Research Scholars. Paper presented at the 7th International CALIBER, Pondicherry University, Puducherry, pp. 468 - 478, Available at: [www.inflibnet.ac.in/caliber2009/Caliber PDF/59.pdf](http://www.inflibnet.ac.in/caliber2009/Caliber%20PDF/59.pdf)
  4. Chinyere, E. U. (2014): Effects of Library Instruction on Satisfaction with the Use of Library and its Services: A study of Undergraduate Students in Five Universities in the Southern Part of Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*, Vol.10, no.13: 1857–7881
  5. Kaur, B. and Verma, R. (2008): Awareness of Electronic Journals and their Usage among the Users: A Study of Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh. *Indian Journal of Library and Information Science*, Vol. 2, no.3: 113-119.
  6. Lau, J. (2006): Guidelines on information literacy for lifelong learning. Available at: <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/information-literacy/publications/ifla-guidelines-en.pdf>
  7. Nataraj, K., Suresh, B., Sivaraman, P. and Sevukan, R. 2010. Use and user perception of electronic resources in Annamalai University: A Case Study. *Annals of library and information studies*, Vol. 57, no.1: 59-64.
  8. Okki, O. C. and Asiru, S.M. (2011): Use of Electronic Information Sources by Postgraduate Students in Nigeria: Influencing Factors on Library Philosophy and Practice. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/500>
  9. Ranasinghe, P., Wickramasinghe, S. A., Pieris, R. W. A., Karunathilake, I. and Constantine, G. R. 2012. Computer Literacy among First Year Medical Students In a Developing Country: A Cross Sectional Study. *Biomed central*, Vol.5, no.504: 1-8.
  10. Sasikala, C., and Dhanraju, V. (2011): Assessment of Information Literacy Skills among Science Students of Andhra University, *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 2011. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/626>
  11. Syamalamba, R. (2011): Information Literacy Programmes for Undergraduate Students. *International journal of digital library services*, Vol.1, no.1: 49-61.
  12. Tiefel.V. (1995): Library User Education: Examining Its Past, Projecting Its Future. *Library trends*, Vol. 44, no. 2: 318-38.