
Information Seeking Behaviour among the Students in Selected Arts and Science Colleges in Salem District: A Survey

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Abstract

Information Seeking Behaviour is one of the important areas in user studies. The motives of users give raise to information needs and requirements. They may obtain information through the research procedure, which is the procedure of finding ideas, facts, and new information by methodical study. It plays an important role by connecting the research scholars with current and timely information. If the library professionals understand that how the users are getting 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

Keywords

Information Seeking Behaviour; Arts and Science Colleges; library; information need.

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INTRODUCTION

Information Seeking Behaviour is one of the important areas in user studies. The motives of users give raise to information needs and requirements. To quench the force for information, users accept numerous ways and means to right to use the different channels of communication of information. Information explosion has paved the way to seek information, which is growing multiplicity at different levels, frequency, volume and use. In this situation it appears to be uncertain and varied in character, so that information needs of a particular group of users and flow of information from a specific circumstances /organization are different to conclude.

Users require information for 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. Establishment and perpetuation of a resource well-to-do library with require based amenities and services are important prerequisites for Universities. It plays an important role by connecting the research scholars with current and timely information.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Nowadays information seeking behavior of the students becomes an important area of research in library information science, since the information providers and libraries not able to understand the users' information needs and the means of fulfilling their needs. Their exist number of studies that has examined the factors that are involved to find the information seeking behavior of students of higher educational academic institutions. This study investigates the information seeking behavior of the students of the selected Arts and Science Colleges in Salem District, Affiliated to Periyar University in Tamil Nadu.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

All research study has its limits and this study is no exemption. The limitations of the current study are given below. In this study is specific to arts and science colleges located in Salem districts only. Further, this study is based on data received from the undergraduate, postgraduate students in arts and science colleges. Appropriately of the results has not be established to other categories. The study is relies on data attained from self-appraisal method only.

OBJECTIVES

This study has been framed with the following broad objectives;

1. To study the information seeking behaviour of the students of the selected Arts and Science Colleges in Salem District, affiliated to Periyar University.
2. To identify the information needs of the students of the selected Arts and Science Colleges in Salem District affiliated to Periyar University.
3. To identify various factors in collecting information relating to information seeking behaviour as sources.
4. To find out the user satisfaction on information sources and services among the respondents of the selected Arts and Science Colleges in Salem District affiliated to Periyar University.
5. To explore the reasons for seeking information from the library.
6. To identify the problems encountered by the students while seeking information.

To fulfill the above objectives, the following important research hypotheses are formulated and tested with suitable tools and the same is presented in the respective chapters in the thesis. The formulated hypotheses are;

METHODOLOGY

This study has been taken up in the Periyar University jurisdiction of Salem District. The Periyar University was established in the year 1997 by the Act 45 of the Government of Tamil Nadu. The University is located on the National Highway -7 towards Bangalore at about 8 Kms from the Salem city. The Campus extends to about 100 acres accommodating the Administrative and Academic Department buildings. The University has been named after a Prominent Social Reformer popularly called "Thanthai Periyar". The University Grants Commission has granted 2f, 12 (B) Status and re-accredited by NAAC with 'A' Grade in the year 2015. The University aims at holistic growth of the students' knowledge in various fields to realize the maxim as inscribed in the logo "Arival Vilayum Ulagu" (Wisdom Maketh the World). About 27 departments and 96 affiliated colleges are functioning as research centre's bridging the gap between the Academic, Industrial and Social Activities by catering the needs of the students.

TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was the preferred tool of data collection to get the socio-demographic profile of the participants of the study and for the logistical reasons. The direct interview method was adopted as a tool of data collection.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

All research studies have the limits and this study is no exemption. The limitations of the current study are given below. 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 and Postgraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges. The study relies on the data obtained from self-appraisal method only. Followed by this, the next section provides the major findings of the study.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The 40.5% of the respondents are male and 59.5% of the respondents are female. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are female. Essentially this shows that boys might have opted professional covers and girls are advised to join arts stream due to preference for boys.

Table 1: Gender wise classification of students

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

77.7% of the respondents studied in Tamil medium, 22.2% of the respondents studied in English medium and 0.1% of the respondents studied in other mediums at the School level. This indicates that the majority of the respondents studied in Tamil medium.

Table 2: Medium of study at School level wise classification of students

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

60.9% of the respondents are Undergraduates and 39.1% of the respondents are Postgraduates. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are Undergraduates.

Table 3: Educational qualification wise classification of students

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

52.7% of the respondents are studying in Arts categories, 47.1% of the respondents are studying in Science categories and 0.2% of the respondents are studying in other categories. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are studying in Arts categories.

Table 4: Category wise classification of students

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

16.3% of the respondents are studying in Government Colleges, 14.1% of the respondents are studying in Government Aided Colleges, 13.7% of the respondents are studying in Constituent Colleges and 55.9% of the respondents are studying in Self-finance Colleges. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are studying in Self-finance Colleges. Again as it was already muted self financing colleges are growing at faster rate here in Salem.

Table 5: Category of the Institution wise classification of students

Category of the Institution	Frequency	Percent
Government College	111	16.3
Government Aided College	96	14.1
Constituent College	93	13.7
Self Finance College	381	55.9
Total	681	100.0

16.9% of the respondents are 1st year, 34.9% of the respondents are in 2nd year and 48.2% of the

respondents are 3rd year. This indicates that the majority of the respondent are in 3rd year.

Table 6: Year of study wise classification of students

Year of study	Frequency	Percent
1st Year	115	16.9
2nd Year	238	34.9
3rd Year	328	48.2
Total	681	100.0

12.5% of the respondents are studying B.A., 15% of the respondents are studying B.Com., 32.6% of the respondents are studying B.Sc., 3.8% of the respondents are studying M.A., 20% of respondent are studying M.Com., and 16.1% of the respondents are studying M.Sc., This indicates that the majority of the respondents are studying B.Sc., Degree.

Table 7: Degree wise classification of students

Degree	Frequency	Percent
B.A.,	85	12.5
B.Com.,	102	15.0
B.Sc.,	222	32.6
M.A.,	26	3.8
M.Com.,	136	20.0
M.Sc.,	110	16.1
Total	681	100

- “Preparing notes” is the top ranked purpose factor with a mean value of 4.25.
- “General knowledge” is the second ranked purpose factor with a mean value of 4.23.
- The analysis reveals that “Public speaking” is the third ranked purpose factor with a mean value of 4.14.
- “Preparing for Examination” is the fourth ranked purpose with a mean value of 4.11.
- “It was resulted that preparing Assignments / Seminars” is the fifth ranked purpose factor with a mean value of 4.04.
- “To Develop Competence” is the sixth ranked purpose factor with a mean value of 3.96.
- “Undertaking projects” is the seventh ranked purpose factor with a mean value of 3.96.

Table 8: Ranking for Purpose Factor

Purpose	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Preparing notes	4.25	0.903	-1.350	1.848
General knowledge	4.23	1.018	-1.354	1.268
Public speaking	4.14	0.932	-1.053	0.906
Preparing for Examination	4.11	1.034	-1.134	0.763
To prepare assignments / Seminars	4.04	1.024	-1.245	1.398
Develop Competence	3.96	1.027	-0.948	0.474
For undertaking projects	3.96	1.095	-0.944	0.282

CONCLUSION

The study has provided insights 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 the varying needs of each discipline in mind and should have a degree of elasticity to deal with the 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 understand how the users are getting awareness about the library's traditional as well as electronic resources and services, they 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 are taken into account. This study is restricted to the selected Arts and Science Colleges in Salem District, Affiliated to Periyar University in Tamil Nadu.

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