
Emerging Challenges in Information Seeking Behavior of University Libraries in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The present article deals with the “Emerging Challenges in Information Seeking Behaviour of University libraries in Tamil Nadu”. The university library is the nerve centre of an academic environment and serves for the development of academic excellence and research activities to suit the needs of the present age of information explosion. For purpose of study, from the eleven university libraries of Tamil Nadu a sample of 550 respondents have been selected on the basis of stratified random sampling method. A structured close ended questionnaire was used for collection of the required information. The data collected was tabulated in different tables and to fulfill the objectives of the study, analysis were made applying statistical tools. The findings were summarized at the end. Necessary suggestions have also been given at the end of the article.

Keywords

Information Seeking Behaviour; Academic Excellence; Research scholars,

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INTRODUCTION

University libraries help not only the elite community but also the socially, economically down-drodden and physically handicapped members of the society to active success in their academic pursuits and contribute to the welfare of the whole nation. The university library is the nerve centre of an academic environment and sources for the development of academic excellence and research activities to suit the needs of the present age of information explosion.

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR:

The study of individual information seeking behaviour requires understanding of the psychological state of the users that may lead to have insight into their expectations that make it possible to predict information seeking activity. Information Seeking Behaviour differs from person to person, that is, the ways and means they are using in seeking the information they need are different. Information seeking behaviour is also, like learning a high level cognitive process. Human beings use a variety of gross strategies in information seeking, including our own long-term memory, consulting friends, colleagues or experts referring books, journals and files conducting empirical studies and applying formal systems. Formal systems include libraries research organizations, government agencies, electronic networks and the growing collection of information services that make up the information society.

THE NEED FOR INFORMATION:

The need for information is one of the cognitive needs of mankind. Information need leads to information seeking behavior and these concepts complement each other and have been affected by many other factors like the source, need, form, and nature of the clientele. The information seeking behaviour of an academic library focuses on the immediate need for the elite users. The efficiency and effectiveness in organizing the resources by comprehending the information seeking behaviour of the clientele to provide the right information to the right users at the right time in right perspective is the essence of library and information services.

EMERGING TRENDS AND CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES:

The changing new dimensions and directions of information and communication technologies have its impact and influence on the library and information

centres around the world. With this technological paradigm shift, the electronic information sources have become an integral part of the university libraries. Electronic and web resources play a crucial role in teaching learning research and extension activities of institutions and organizations. Everyday new technology or an application of a tool is emerging out from the globalized market. The expectations and demands of the elite clients are also increasing. University libraries have become electronic libraries to provide access to online resources, online journals, electronic documents and virtual resources. The advent of ICT has changed the trend and techniques of Library and information centres (LIC). The dependency of the technical scholars in the academic centres in accessing e-resources has increased to a large extent.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The following are some of the past studies related to the present study: According to Ward (1977) all the sociological aspects of information seeking behaviour concerned with the patterns. The design of functional yet attractive libraries with an air of informality attract young readers. Providing opportunities for children to discuss and share their reading experience influenced them and increase their reading habit. Eskola (1999) conducted a study on university students information seeking behaviour in a changing learning environment, and how students' information needs and seeking behaviour are affected by new teaching methods. The aim of the study is to investigate the different kind of activating teaching methods used in the French universities and the students' information seeking behaviour in the university. Rekha and Malthur (1987) analysed the information seeking behaviour of farm women in Maharashtra state. It is found out that the print media played an important role in their lives. Asemi (2005) studied the information searching habits of students of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Iran and found that all the respondents used internet frequently because all faculties were provided with internet connectivity. It also revealed that the researchers of the university were getting quality information through the internet. The study conducted by Dinesh K.Gupta (2011) at Kurushetra University, revealed that most of the academic respondents were attracted towards e-journals than print journals, Respondents depend more on open-sources materials than on available via INFONET. They identified the need for training in using e-resources and retrieving information from time-to-time.

Prabakaran (2013) examined the 'Use of E-Resources among Faculty Members of Engineering Colleges in Cuddalore District'. The study analyzed the usage of e-resources by institution wise respondents and sex wise distribution of respondents. Most of the respondents' access to search engines is Google and preferable format for getting information are both print and electronic version.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Traditional libraries in the Universities provide books and other physical print materials for research and other academic activities in the past. But the present academic libraries demand the librarians the acquisition of soft skills and software skills to provide information to the scholars online. Hence, the present study focuses on the competence level of the library professionals and the satisfaction level of the elite academicians in the information seeking behavior process at the present changing environment of information and communication technological age. An attempt is made in this study to throw light on the socio economic aspects as depicted in the university libraries. The significance of the study lies in the fact that it can lead to optimization of uses and values of the university libraries from the social, economical, technological and academic points of view and brings forth positive solutions to the present problems in the technical usage of resources.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The present study entitled "Emerging challenges in Information seeking Behaviour of University Libraries in Tamil Nadu" aims to (1) identify the present day challenges of the library professionals in sustaining the quality of the library service, (2) analyse the information seeking behavior of the cyber age scholars and students in the academic environment and also, (3) to find out the growing needs of the users and emerging trends in the library science. The study scopes to identify the users level of satisfaction and offer solutions to the present dilemmas in the utilization of re-sources.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are few of the objectives of the present study:

1. To study the creditable quantitative and quantitative features of the university libraries in Tamil Nadu.

2. To analyse the number, types and levels of library users.
3. To assess their needs, requirements and expectations.
4. To know the E-services available in the libraries under study.
5. To evaluate the performance of users of the libraries under study.
6. To collect the opinions and views of the librarian in this context, and
7. To identify their major problems and offer solutions and suggestions to tackle them.

SAMPLING DESIGN:

There are about eleven university libraries in Tamil Nadu. On the basis of stratified random sampling method a sample of 550 respondents have been selected for the represent study.

DATA COLLECTION:

The required information has been collected both from Primary and Secondary sources. The selected respondents served as primary source. It covered faculty members of the Universities, research scholars, post graduate students, librarians and library professionals. The secondary data have been collected from the annual reports, periodicals, websites and other related materials.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION:

A structured close-ended questionnaire was designed for the purpose. A pilot study was conducted. On the outcomes of the pilot study necessary modifications were made and the questionnaire was finalized. The final questionnaire was distributed among the selected respondents. Finally 550 responses fully answered were collected, tabulated and analysed. To analyse and interpret the variables under study, the relevant and feasible mathematical and statistical tools and techniques such as descriptive statistics, averages, percentages, chi-square tests are used wherever necessary, diagrams have been used for highlighting the outcomes of the analysis. In addition Factor analysis SPSS and ANOVA are used. The study has been under taken during the year January 2020 to May 2020

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The present study pertains to eleven universities functioning in Tamil Nadu that is 6 Universities in the northern districts and 5 universities in the

southern side of Tamil Nadu. The study is entirely based on the data provided by the respondents. Since the study is concerned with the attitude and behavior of the respondents the information and the result of the analysis of the data collected cannot be generalized. However, it is applicable only to the universities selected for study.

HYPOTHESIS:

The following are some of the hypothesis set and tested.

1. There is a significant variation between the area of study and sex status of the respondents with the different type of information seeking behavior in the acquisition of knowledge.
2. There is a significant variation between the respondents preference of time, Language, subject and time spent on reading with the nature of respondents.
3. There is a significant variation between the respondents' educational qualification and status with different area of the Universities under study in the utilization of the latest resources available in the university libraries.
4. There is a significant variation between the respondents of universities in the northern and southern district respondents.
5. There is a notable difference in the purpose of utilizing e-resources and the problems faced by the respondents of different status from both the northern and southern district area universities.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The vast amount of data collected have been analysed and interpreted by applying appropriate statistical tools and inferences are derived. Hypothesis are set and tested to accept or reject the hypothesis set. The following are some of the data collected analysed.

Table 1: The status of Respondents in the Universities of Northern and Southern Districts.

Status * area of university cross tabulation				
	Respondents	Area of university		Total
		North	South	
Current status	Faculty member	18 6.5%	17 6.2%	35 6.4%
	PG student	172 62.5%	163 59.3%	335 60.9%
	M.Phil	59	66	125

	scholar	21.5%	24.0%	22.7%
	Ph.D scholar	26	29	55
		9.5%	10.5%	10.0%
	Total	275	275	550
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

The table shows that, out of 550 respondents, a majority of 335 (60.9%) respondents constitute Post – Graduate students, followed by 125 (22.7%) M.Phil., scholars, 35 (6.4%) constitute faculty members and the remaining 55 (10%) constitute Ph.D., scholars.

Table 2. Time Spend for Browsing Internet Per day

		Area of university		Total
		North	South	
Time spend for browsing	Less than 1 hour	104	94	198
		37.8%	34.2%	36.0%
	1-2 hours	120	125	245
		43.6%	45.5%	44.5%
	2-3 hours	26	21	47
	9.5%	7.6%	8.5%	
More than 3 hours	25	35	60	
	9.1%	12.7%	10.9%	
Total		275	275	550
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

Table-2 shows that out of 550 respondents a majority of 44.5% spends 1-2 hours per day for browsing internet. About 36% spends less than one hour per day for browsing, 10.9% spends more than 3 hours per day for browsing and rest of the 8.5% spends 2-3 hours per day for browsing. The table shows that the respondents of the northern district universities 9.1% spends more than 3 hours per day and among the southern university respondents about 12.7% spends more than 3 hours per day and among the southern university respondents about 12.7% spends more than 3 hours per day for browsing internet. Hence, it can be conducted that majority of south university respondents spend more time per day for browsing.

Table 3.Problems in Using E-Resources

Area of university cross tabulation				
		Area of university		Total
		North	South	
Using e-	Lack of	102	46	148

resources	facilities	37.1%	16.7%	26.9%
	Lack of training	65	69	134
		23.6%	25.1%	24.4%
	Lack of knowledge on e-resources	56	65	121
		20.4%	23.6%	22.0%
	Lack of time	34	71	105
12.4%		25.8%	19.1%	
All	18	24	42	
	6.5%	8.7%	7.6%	
Total		275	275	550
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The table-3, reveals that out of 550 respondents a majority of 148 (26.9%) respondents faces lack of facilities as a problem in using E-resources, 121 (22%) faces lack of knowledge on e-resources as a problem, 105 (19.1%) faces lack of time as a problem in using E-resources and the rest of (7.6%) 42 faces all the above discussed problems in using e-resources. It can be concluded from the details given in the table that a majority of the Universities in the northern districts face lack of facilities as a problem in using e- resources.

TABLE 4. Search of Information through Online

		Area of university		Total
		North	South	
Search of information through online	From the web address directly	93	94	187
		33.8%	34.2%	34.0%
	Use subscribed databases	50	33	83
		18.2%	12.0%	15.1%
	Use search engine	122	116	238
	44.4%	42.2%	43.3%	
Through portal	10	32	42	
	3.6%	11.6%	7.6%	
Total		275	275	550
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from table-4 that a majority of 235 (43.3%) searches Information through search engine, 187 (34%) searches information through the web address directly, 83 (15.1%) searches information through subscribed databases and the rest of 42 (7.6%) searches information through portal.

It can be inferred that the majority of the respondents from north universities search information through search engine.

Table 5. Search Engine used for E-Mail Communication

Search engine		Area of university		Total
		North	South	
E-mail communication	Gmail	223	179	402
		81.1%	65.1%	73.1%
	Yahoo	22	37	59
		8.0%	13.5%	10.7%
	Rediffmail	10	18	28
		3.6%	6.5%	5.1%
	Sancharret	2	6	8
		.7%	2.2%	1.5%
	V.S.N.L	4	16	20
		1.5%	5.8%	3.6%
	Hotmail	6	9	15
		2.2%	3.3%	2.7%
	Others	8	10	18
		2.9%	3.6%	3.3%
Total		275	275	550
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Computed from Primary Data

It is evident from table-5 that out of 550 respondents, a majority of 402 (73.1%) uses g-mail account, 59 (10.7%) uses yahoo account 28 (5.1%) uses rediff mail account, 20 (3.6%) uses V.S.N.L. account, 18 (3.3%) uses other account. About 15 (2.7%) uses Hotmail account and the rest of the 8(1.5%) uses sancharret account. Out of 275 northern districts respondents, a majority fo 223 (81.1%) uses g-mail account, 22 (8.0%) uses yahoo account, 2 (7%) users sancharret account, 10 (3.6%) uses rediff mail account, 8 (2.9%) uses other accounts and 6 (2.2%) uses hot mail.

Table 6. Problems faced while Using Internet

		Area of university		Total
		North	South	
Using internet	Slow access speed	128	106	234
		46.5%	38.5%	42.5%
	Difficulty in finding relevant information	47	40	87
		17.1%	14.5%	15.8%
	Overload of information on the internet	28	28	56
		10.2%	10.2%	10.2%
It takes long	18	35	53	

	time to view/download pages	6.5%	12.7%	9.6%
	Privacy problem	18	36	54
	Lack of it knowledge	6.5%	13.1%	9.8%
	All	12	22	34
		4.4%	8.0%	6.2%
	Total	24	8	32
		8.7%	2.9%	5.8%
	Total	275	275	550
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Computed from Primary Data

It can be inferred from the analysis of the data given in table06 that the majority of the north university respondents face the problem of slow access seed while using internet. It can also be seen that 38.5 per cent respondents of the southern university face the problem by slow access speed while using internet.

Table 7. Problems for using ICT based Library Services

Q 49	No		Yes	
	No. Of Respondents	%	No. Of Respondents	%
Lack of infra structure	161	58.7	114	41.3
Library staff are not interested in ict adoption	219	79.8	61	22
Inadequate trained staff in ict application	197	71.5	78	28.5
Lack of initiative on the part of library staff	206	74.9	69	25.1
Lack of ict knowledge on the part of users	212	77.1	63	22.9
Increasing operating cost of ict applications	203	73.8	72	26.2
Lack of support from authorities	211	76.7	64	23.3
Others	208	75.5	67	24.5

Source: Calculated from Primary Data

Table – 7 shows the opinions of the respondents whether they accept or reject the problems of using ICT based library services by saying No or Yes. About 58.7% of the respondents disagree with the lack of infra structure and 41.3% of the respondents agree. About 219 (79.8%) disagrees the statement that the library staff are not interested in ICT adoption whereas 78 (28.5%) agrees. About 197 (71.5%) respondents disagree regarding the inadequate trained staff in ICT application and 78

(28.5%) of respondents agrees. About 206 (74.9%) disagrees the statement. Lack of initiative on the part of library staff, whereas 69 (25.1%) respondents agree the statement. Hence, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents disagree the statement, that the library staff are not interested in ICT adoption and the majority of the respondents disagree the statement that there is lack of infrastructure.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The following some of the findings of the study.

1. A majority of the respondents (88%) said that they were using internet resources in the university libraries in Tamil Nadu.
2. About 36.5 percent of the respondents agreed that they were learning to use E-resources only by trial and error method or by self study in the university libraries of Tamil Nadu.
3. About 26% of the respondents used internet for class teaching preparation and another 26% used internet for research purpose in the university libraries.
4. About 46.4% of the respondents found the adequacy and accessibility of E-resources “very good” in the University libraries of Tamil Nadu.
5. About 26.9 percent of the respondents found lack of facilities in using E-Resources in the Universities in Tamil Nadu.
6. About 42.5% of the respondents found E-Resources as an important source of information in the university libraries in Tamil Nadu.
7. The study revealed that about 43.3% of the respondents used search engine to find information through online in the university libraries of Tamil Nadu.
8. About 90% of the respondents used E-mail for communication in the University libraries in Tamil Nadu.
9. About 73% of the respondents used G-Mail search engine for e-mail communications in the university libraries in Tamil Nadu.
10. About 42.5% of the respondents found that, slow access speed as the main problem faced while using internet in the University libraries in Tamil Nadu.
11. It is inferred from the statistical analysis that there is an association between the area of the respondents and the frequency of checking E-mail.
12. A majority of the respondents (79.8%) disagreed with the statement that ‘the library staff are not interested in ICT adoption’ and 58.7% of the

respondents disagreed that there is “lack of infrastructure”.

SUGGESIONS:

Based on the findings of the study, following are some of the recommendations put forward to increase the usage among students, staff and research scholars in the different services of university libraries.

1. Number of computer systems connected to the internet should be increased.
2. Information regarding the popular websites should be displayed on the library.
3. Most of the users search information only through the search engine than the respective website address, institutions have to be equipped with suitable campus network.
4. The users need training on how to use a system design based on user seeking and searching behavior.
5. It is recommended that the university libraries must make all efforts to increase the number of e- resources such as e-journals, e-books and online data – base in their collections.
6. To improve e-resources awareness is to be created about the electronic resources among the rural areas.
7. More number of Wi-Fi facility with higher range should be installed within the campus in order to access e-resources fairly at users convenient time.

CONCLUSION:

The present study deals with the Emerging challenges in Information Seeking Behaviour of University Libraries in Tamil Nadu. The overall objectives are to make a comprehensive study regarding information seeking behaviour of post-graduate students, research scholars and staff members of the Arts and Science Universities in Tamil Nadu. With the popularity of various techniques, libraries are getting more complicated in this cyber age. By adopting various techniques one can make the components of the library better and make life easier for the present day users of the libraries. It is suggested that the university libraries have to evolve more scientific methods to develop a standard collection of e-resources.

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