

Information Seeking Behaviour of UG Students of Arts and Science Colleges in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract - The libraries are not only collecting and providing access to printed materials, but also managing ever-increasing amount of electronics resources, online indexes, databases, e-journals etc., the e-books are increasing day by day and are available in the internet. The present paper deals with information seeking behaviour of UG students of the present age of technology in the Arts and science Colleges of Tirunelveli District. It also analyse the utilization level of e-journals, characteristics of e-journals, types of e-journals, steps involved in accessing e-journals the role of library professionals, its merits and demerits. To collect the data, 150 questionnaires are distributed, and 146 filled questionnaires were collected from the students of Arts & Science colleges in Tirunelveli District. The study finds out the positive attitude of UG students' information seeking behaviour in the cyber age.

Keywords: Information Seeking Behaviour, Arts & Science College, Tirunelveli District, E-Resources

I. INTRODUCTION

Libraries help to improve reading habits, knowledge, and awareness of the users. They can be a part of good study habits of students in any area of specialization. Reading enhances personal skills and helps to handle complex ideas or issues. Reading encourages quick learning and strengthens the curriculum of the students. There are various types of readers like gifted readers, normal readers and e-readers. Gifted readers have the habit of deep reading and the normal readers read for their purposes only and the e-readers read e-books only through internet. The arts & science colleges' libraries have a variety of books to fulfil different purposes of various types of academic readers. Easy access to reading materials is one of the important factors in cultivating reading. Reading habits are essential for students for their intellectual enhancements. The library has the responsibility of making information available in different formats to encourage reading culture among the students. The college library has the responsibility of making information sources available in different forms to encourage reading habits of the learners. Library users read books to get the latest information related to their day to day practical life. Books are responsible for creating and generating reading habits among the college students. Though reading habits are essential need of the students, the enormous explosion of information published in the form of newspapers and books in different subjects, it is impossible

for all libraries to subscribe all that are published at the national and international levels. Under these circumstances the best way of serving the users is to display books properly and notifying users about the new information related to education.

II. INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Information seeking behavior refers to the strategies for locating information and retrieving it to fulfil the academic needs and quest for knowledge. It has three elements, namely, people, information, and systems involved. The study of individual information seeking behavior requires understanding of the psychological state of the users that may lead to have an insight into their expectations that make it possible to predict information-seeking activity (Ocholla). Information seeking is a natural and necessary mechanism of human existence. Information seeking is the process of searching for information from all information resources including e-resources. Information seeking differs from person to person, that is, the ways and means they are using in seeking the information are different at different items. The information seeking behavior essentially refers to the strategies and actions undertaken to locate and discrete knowledge elements. The integrated utilization of the three basic sources - people, information and system have become put and parcel of information seeking behavior, to yield the highest information satisfaction to the clients.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Floyd (1975) investigated the information seeking behaviour of the students in seven Jamaican high schools and found out that the increased access to books and other sources made a difference in the book preferences, and that Jamaican students had some common interests with their peers from other countries. The identification of books commensurate with their reading interests is of particular importance for sixth graders who are at a crucial stage in their reading development.

Gorman (1990) carried out a study entitled, patterns of information seeking and library use by theologians in seven Adelaide theological colleges. The researcher described an

attempt to develop the theological libraries, a replicable method for collecting data on information seeking behaviour and library. Use by theologians provide information on Adelaide theological colleges, derives data from the study of research habits analysis data on the use of libraries.

Griffiths and Brophy (2005) conducted a survey on student’s information searching behaviour on the web. They found out that the students prefer to locate information or resources via a search engine and Google is the search engine of their choice. Also it was reported that search engines influence their perception and expectations of other electronic resources.

Jamali *et al’s* (2005) article provides a review of the log analysis studies on use and users of scholarly electronic journals. Log analysis is clearly useful for certain kinds of analyses, like shedding light on the format of the articles scientists read (PDF or HTML), the age of the articles (obsolescence), and the way scientists navigate to the required material (searching and browsing behavior). But log analysis is not helpful in discovering the value and use of the articles retrieved, or about what lies behind the expressed information seeking behaviour.

Keller, Melanie. (2006) conducted a study on “An examination of user behaviour during web information task” with 21 participants in order to understand the characteristics of information seeking tasks on the web and how the tools of current web browsers are being used within information seeking tasks. The result of the study was that there are several differences in how the users integrated with their web browser during different tasks. The information gathering tasks take longer time than the fact finding tasks but both were search-based with the heavy use of Google.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The focus of the study is to analyze the level of reading habits and the utilization of library services by the students of Arts & Science Colleges in Tirunelveli District. The statement of the problem is to analyse the information seeking behaviour of the UG students of arts and science Colleges in Tirunelveli District.

C. Data Analysis and Interpretation

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives are framed for the study.

1. To identify the causes or motives of reading among the students of Arts & Science Colleges.
2. To know the level of information seeking behaviour of respondents.
3. To identify the factors affecting the users’ reading habit.
4. To provide possible recommendations to make reading habits more convenient.

VI. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is concerned with the information seeking behavior of UG students in the Arts & Science Colleges in the Tirunelveli District the district has 24 Arts & Science Colleges affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. Out of these colleges, 5 Colleges are taken for the present study.

VII. METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, a stratified random sampling method was followed for the selection of respondents. The study is based on the primary data collected from the students. A questionnaire was developed for this study and given to 150 students found in the libraries and the filled 146 questionnaire was collected from the students of select Arts & Science Colleges in Tirunelveli District. Sufficient time was given to the respondents for furnishing the information. Their suggestions relating to the improvement of library services are also called for.

A. Tools Used for the Collection of Data

For the collection of primary data from the respondents, a structured, close-ended questionnaire consisting of 25 questions was used. Besides this, a few informal conversations also helped for adding some information.

B. Limitations of the Study

1. The present study is confined only to the UG students of Arts & Science colleges.
2. The study is restricted to the students the Arts & Science colleges in Tirunelveli District area alone.

TABLE I THE POPULATION OF THE SAMPLE

| Sl. No. | Users | Total Questionnaire Distributed | Total Questionnaire Received | Sample Population in Percentage (%) |
|---------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | B.Com., Students | 50 | 48 | 33.3% |
| 2 | B.Sc., Students | 45 | 43 | 30.0% |
| 3 | B.A., Students | 35 | 35 | 23.3% |
| 4 | B.B.A., Students | 20 | 20 | 13.3% |
| | Total | 150 | 146 | 100% |

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that the population of the sample. On the whole, 150 questionnaires are distributed to women students. Out of these, 50 questionnaires distributed to B.Com., students, 45 questionnaires to B.Sc., students, 35 questionnaires to B.A., students and 20 distributed to B.B.A.,. Out of these 146 questionnaire received from the

respondents of B.Com., students 48, B.Sc., students 43, B.A., students and B.B.A., students returned back all filled questionnaires. The analysis shows 33.3% of B.Com. Students responded to the study and they are the major respondents comparing to B.Sc., students and B.A., B.B.A., students

TABLE II MOTIVES OF READING (OR) PURPOSE FOR VISITING THE LIBRARY

| Sl. No. | Motives/Purpose | B.Com., Students | B.Sc., Students | B.A., Students | B.B.A., Students | Total (Percentage) |
|---------|---|------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | To get information | 08 | 11 | 09 | 04 | 32(21.92) |
| 2 | To update and improve G.K | 08 | 03 | 04 | 03 | 18(12.33) |
| 3 | For Academic Purposes (Exam, and teaching Work) | 12 | 13 | 16 | 10 | 51(34.93) |
| 4 | For Entertainment | 06 | 04 | 01 | 00 | 11(7.53) |
| 5 | For Reference | 14 | 12 | 05 | 03 | 34(23.29) |
| | Total | 48 | 43 | 35 | 20 | 146(100) |

Source: Primary data

Table II shows that the motives of reading and visiting libraries by the respondents. The Students of Arts & Science colleges are reading the books and newspapers to get information, to update general knowledge, for academic purposes, for teaching purposes, for entertainment and for reference. 21.92% students are reading to get information. To update and improve General Knowledge 12.33% students are reading. For academic purposes 34.93%

students are reading. For entertainment purpose only 7.53% students are reading. For reference 23.29% students are reading. Besides this purposes, students are reading and visiting libraries to learn something and to talk with others about the books what they have read. Nearly one in eight, reading science fiction or fantasy, and this choice is followed by mystery and crime, romance and non-fiction books also.

TABLE III TIME SPENT FOR READING

| Sl. No. | Time Spent | B.Com., Students | B.Sc., Students | B.A., Students | B.B.A., Students | Percentage (%) |
|---------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Less than One Hour | 08 | 09 | 05 | 02 | 24(16.44) |
| 2 | 1-2 Hours | 22 | 19 | 18 | 10 | 69(47.26) |
| 3 | More than 2 Hours | 18 | 15 | 12 | 08 | 53(36.30) |
| 4 | Total | 48 | 43 | 35 | 20 | 146(100) |

Source: Primary data

Table III shows that most of the students i.e., 47.26% are spending are 1-2 hours for reading and 16.44% of the students spent their time in the library less than one hour and 36.30% students spent their time for reading more than

two hours. The study shows that most of the students (47%) spend at least one hour in the library during their working time.

TABLE IV FACTORS AFFECTING THE READING HABITS

| Reasons | B.Com., Students | B.Sc., Students | B.A., Students | B.B.A., Students | Percentage (%) |
|--|------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Lack of Time | 12 | 06 | 08 | 05 | 31(21.23) |
| Inconvenient library hours | 18 | 14 | 13 | 02 | 47(32.19) |
| Non-availability of reading materials of my interest | 07 | 09 | 08 | 11 | 35(23.97) |
| Distance is more from the classroom | 11 | 14 | 06 | 02 | 33(22.60) |
| | 48 | 43 | 35 | 20 | 146(100) |

Source: Primary data

Table IV shows that most of factors affecting the reading habits of the students are inconvenient library hours (ie, 32.19%) and non availability of reading materials of their

interest (ie, 23.97%). Due to lack of time only 21.23% students fail to utilize the library and more distance is the reason for 22.60% students.

TABLE V FACILITIES AVAILABLE INSIDE THE LIBRARY FOR READING

| Physical Facilities | Good | Satisfactory | Undecided | Not Satisfactory | Poor | Total |
|---------------------|------|--------------|-----------|------------------|------|-----------|
| Ventilation | 16 | 09 | 02 | 02 | 03 | 32(21.92) |
| Lighting | 13 | 08 | 01 | 03 | 02 | 27(18.49) |
| Cataloguing | 14 | 07 | 02 | 01 | 01 | 25(17.12) |
| Book Arrangement | 18 | 08 | 03 | 02 | 03 | 34(23.29) |
| Seating Arrangement | 13 | 09 | 04 | 01 | 01 | 28(19.18) |
| Total | 74 | 41 | 12 | 9 | 10 | 146(100%) |

Source: Primary data

This table shows that most of the students are satisfied with the physical facilities available on the library, i.e., Ventilation, Lighting, Cataloguing, Book arrangement and

Seating arrangement. 74 Students responded as good and 41 students as satisfactory, 12 students as undecided, 09 students as not satisfactory with the facilities available in the library and 10 students are responded as poor.

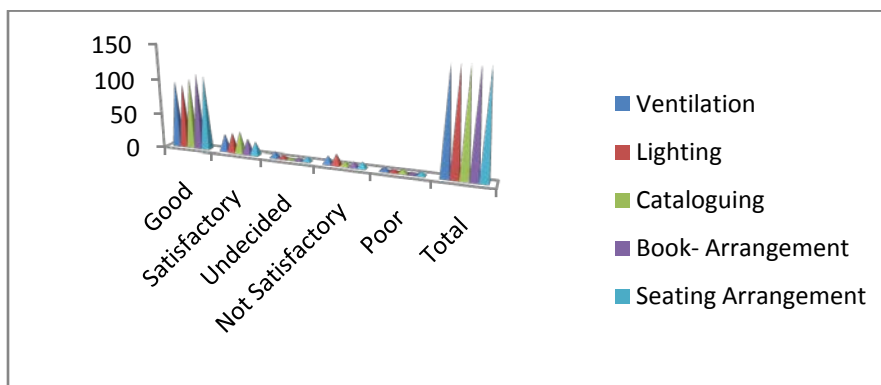


Fig. 1 Facilities Available inside the library for reading in Bar Chart

TABLE VI DIFFICULTIES AT THE TIME OF USING THE LIBRARY

| Sl. No. | Option | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------|--------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 42 | 28.77 |
| 2 | No | 104 | 71.23 |
| | Total | 146 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Table shows that 104 (71.23) respondents are not found any difficulties at the time of using library and only 42(28.77) respondents have undergone difficulties at the time of using the library.

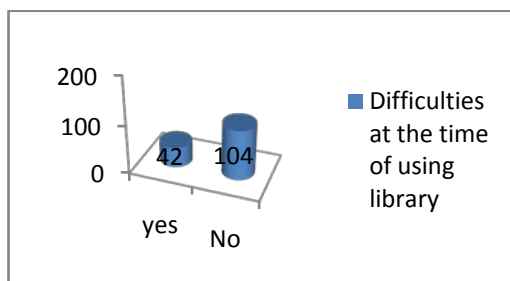


Fig. 2 Difficulties at the time of using library

VIII. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. It is found out that most of the students are reading for their academic purposes i.e. for studying, and teaching.
2. Most of the students (47.26%) are found spending 1-2 hours in the library for reading.
3. Most of the factors affecting the reading habit is inconvenient library hours (32.19%) and non-availability of reading materials of their interest (23.97%)
4. Most of the students (50.68%) are fully satisfied with the facilities available in the library for reading.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

1. College libraries should conduct campus reading programs, book clubs, readers' advisory services etc., to enhance the students' reading habits, and there should be comfortable reading areas.
2. Parents should encourage the students to read and visit libraries even from the childhood as computers and smart phones have become dominant features that affect the reading habit and information seeking behavior of the younger generation.

X. CONCLUSION

The analysis of data clearly reveals that the libraries of arts and science colleges in Tirunelveli District are encouraging the reading habit of the students. Easy access to reading materials is one of the important factors in cultivating reading habit. UG students are using both print materials and electronic resources that are available in the college libraries to develop their reading habits and to fulfil their academic purposes. Maximum students borrowed minimum 4 books and maximum 15 books in a year from the college libraries. In the academic libraries there should be adequate books and newspapers to accelerate reading habits. This study will be helpful to the librarians to understand the significance of the information seeking behavior of UG students. The study also emphasizes the need to enhance the students' information seeking behavior by improving the services related to library and by sharing the availability of the traditional and e-resources with the elite users through amicable and healthy relationship with them.

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