

## **INFORMATION NEED AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF RESEARCH SCHOLARS IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT**

**S SRIKALA \***

### **ABSTRACT**

The present study intends to study the information seeking behavior of research scholars in Kanayakumari district. Hence survey method is adopted using a well structured questionnaire prepared by the investigator. The questionnaire was administered among the research scholars of Scott Christian College, Nagercoil, S.T.Hindu College, Nagercoil and Nasamony Memorial Christian College, Marthandam. 135 questionnaires were returned and hence sample for the study consists of 135 samples. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

**KEYWORDS:** Information Seeking Behavior, Library Resources, College Libraries.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Information is the knowledge of the human brain in action. It may be ideas, facts, data and imaginative works of human mind which are communicated formally or informally in any format. A close analysis of the variety of experiences gained by an individual also reveals the relationship of these units of thought with associated ideas. Also different individuals may derive different set of experiences over the same units of thought. Each person's experiences on identical units of thought would remain isolated and prove less valuable, if both these individuals do not share their experiences. The individual subjective knowledge of each person is transformed into knowledge by each individual's public expression via speech and writing on being shared.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of the study is argued on the basis of the following points:

1. The study aims to create awareness about the collection and service of the library.
2. Simultaneously the study will project the effectiveness of sources and services of College Library/Department Library.
3. The study focuses on the skill of using electronic sources available in the library.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following objectives are framed for the study:

1. To assess the information needs of research scholars.
2. To identify the mode of search done by the scholars for current information.
3. To compare the information seeking behavior of print media and electronic media resources.
4. To assess the user's satisfaction on availability of facilities and services provided by the libraries.

---

\* Librarian, Hindustan College of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore-641032, Tamil Nadu, India.

**Correspondence E-mail Id:** editor@eurekajournals.com

5. To identify the major problems faced by the research scholars when accessing information.

**LIMITATIONS**

1. It is confined only to research scholars of M.Phil. and Ph.D.
2. The study is restricted to Kanyakumari district.
3. Study was conducted during 2014-2015.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Collected data were analyzed using description statistics for interpretation. Study is based on 135 samples of which 103 are M.Phil. and the remaining are Ph.D. scholars.

**INFORMATION NEED OF RESEARCH SCHOLARS**

Information needs of the research scholars are given in the Table 1.

**Table 1. Information Need of Research Scholars**

S. No.	Information Needs	No. of Scholars
1	For Thesis/Dissertation work	135
2	Seminars	132
3	Conferences	23
4	Workshop	58

Table 1 reveals that the information needs of the research scholars are in the order of Thesis/Dissertation work, Seminars, Workshops and Conferences.

**ACCESSING CURRENT INFORMATION**

Current information plays a key role in preparing thesis work as well as for preparing seminars, articles etc. The mode of search done by the research scholars are given in Table 2.

**Table 2. Methods of Accessing Current Information (Source: Survey Data)**

S. No.	Source	Order of Preferences											Total
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	
1.	Enquiring the librarian	25	18	14	9	8	10	12	10	9	8	12	135
2.	Using catalogues/OPAC	28	20	12	11	12	8	10	8	11	9	6	135
3.	Searching the shelves	10	15	9	18	21	13	4	6	10	16	13	135
4.	Scanning periodicals	17	24	35	8	3	11	15	13	2	5	2	135
5.	Through index/abstracts	14	18	21	17	11	6	9	18	5	3	13	135
6.	Addition lists	26	22	12	8	14	12	9	6	8	7	11	135
7.	Current contents	19	13	18	20	11	9	6	5	18	13	3	135
8.	Discussing with colleagues	47	13	11	12	8	10	3	8	6	12	5	135
9.	By chance	6	9	18	5	3	13	14	18	21	17	11	135
10.	Interest	11	15	13	2	5	2	17	24	35	8	3	135
11.	Any other sources	6	8	7	11	9	12	14	8	12	22	26	135
Total		209	175	170	121	105	106	113	124	137	120	105	1485

The above table clearly portrays the respondent's order of preference with regard to accessing current information. Most of them have given top priority for seeking/ collecting information from discussing and getting information from colleagues followed by using catalogues, enquiring librarians and searching in addition lists. Some of the respondents were depending on scanning periodicals, accessing internet and through index/ abstracts for collecting current

information. It was also inferred that the lower order of preferences are current contents, searching shelves, and rarely relying on 'by chance' method.

### **INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF RESEARCH SCHOLARS**

Information seeking behavior of research scholars is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Information Seeking Behavior (Source: Survey Data)**

S. No.	Information Sources	Name of the Colleges						Total	
		S.T. Hindu College		Scott Christian College		Nesamony Memorial Christian College		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
<b>Journals</b>									
1.	Reading contents page	30	46.15	27	42.19	2	33.33	59	43.70
2.	Reading full text	9	13.85	4	6.25	-		13	9.63
3.	Consulting indexing periodicals	11	16.92	15	23.44	1	16.67	27	20.00
4.	Consulting abstracting sources	15	23.08	18	28.12	3	50	36	26.67
	Total	65	100	64	100	6	100	135	100
<b>Reference Sources</b>									
1.	Consulting subject index	50	76.92	43	67.19	5	83.33	98	72.59
2.	Through alphabetical listing	15	23.08	21	32.81	1	16.67	37	27.41
	Total	65	100	64	100	6	100	135	100
<b>Books</b>									
1.	Reading content page	51	78.46	55	85.94	4	66.66	110	81.49
2.	Consulting index	8	12.31	6	9.37	1	16.67	15	11.11
3.	Reading the full text	6	9.23	3	4.69	1	16.67	10	7.40
	Total	65	100	64	100	6	100	135	100
<b>Abstracts</b>									
1.	Consulting subject index	41	63.08	53	82.81	4	66.66	98	72.59
2.	Consulting key word index	16	24.62	8	12.5	1	16.67	25	18.52
3.	Consulting author index	8	12.30	3	4.69	1	16.67	12	8.89
	Total	65	100	64	100	6	100	135	100

The above table indicates the behavior of the research scholars in methods of seeking information in the library according to their requirements. With regard to journals, more than 59 percent of the respondents were referring only contents pages.

Only 13 percent of the respondents were saying that they visit the library to read full text. It also pointed out here nearly 26 percent of the respondents were seeking information through the method of consulting abstracting sources.

As far as the book reference is concerned, more than 81 percent of the respondents were

adopting method of reading content pages and less than 8 percent of them go through the entire full text.

In connection with the abstracts, more than 72 percent of the respondents were having method of consulting subject index in almost all the colleges, only 18 percent of them were adopting method of consulting keyword index, and only 8 percent of the respondents were consulting author's index.

**SATISFACTION OF RESEARCH SCHOLARS**

Satisfaction of research scholars is given in Table 4.

**Table 4. Satisfaction of Research Scholars (Source: Survey Data)**

S. No.	Resources	Name of the Colleges											
		S.T. Hindu College				Scott Christian College				Nesamony Memorial Christian College			
		Adequate		Inadequate		Adequate		Inadequate		Adequate		Inadequate	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Periodicals	55	84.61	10	15.38	53	82.81	11	17.18	5	83.33	1	16.66
2.	Text Books	51	78.46	14	21.53	45	70.31	19	29.68	4	66.66	2	33.33
3.	Reference Sources	47	72.30	18	27.69	50	78.12	14	21.87	5	83.33	1	16.66
4.	Index/ Abstracts	49	75.38	16	24.61	49	76.56	15	23.43	4	66.66	2	33.33
5.	Dissertation/ Theses	50	76.92	15	23.07	52	81.25	12	18.75	3	50	3	50
6.	Patents/ Standard/ Report	40	61.53	25	38.46	48	75	16	25	3	50	3	50
7.	Computer-Based Sources	43	66.15	22	33.84	40	62.5	24	37.5	1	60.66	5	83.33
8.	Non-Book Materials	35	53.84	30	46.15	33	51.56	31	48.43	2	33.33	4	66.66

**PROBLEM FACED BY THE RESEARCH SCHOLARS**

Difficulties faced by the research scholars in accessing the information are given in Table 5.

**Table 5. Problems faced by the Research Scholars (Source: Survey Data)**

S. No.	Difficulties	Name of the Colleges						Total	
		S.T. Hindu College		Scott Christian College		Nesamony Memorial Christian College			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Lack of time	6	9.23	4	6.25	1	16.67	11	44
2.	Lack of information	3	4.62	2	3.13	1	16.67	6	24
3.	Lack of reading materials	4	6.15	3	4.68	1	16.67	8	32
	Total	65	100	64	100	6	100	135	100

As given in the above table, the respondents were facing many barriers to avail the information in the libraries. It was found that out of 135 respondents only 18.5 percent of the sample respondents were saying that they faced a number of difficulties while accessing information in the library.

Further, this study states that 44 percent of the respondents have lack of time (inadequacy in library visit) to approach the libraries. It also reveals that lack of sufficient reading materials is another cause of concern. It also pointed out that nearly 24 percent of the total respondents had lack of information to access the library information.

It is inferred that there is a wide communication gap between students and library professionals.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

1. Information needs of the research scholars are in the order as: for preparing thesis/ dissertation work, seminars, conference and workshop.
2. Most of the research scholars are giving top priority for seeking/collecting information from discussing and getting information from colleagues followed by using catalogues, enquiring librarians and searching in addition list.

3. Majority of the research scholars are satisfied by the services provided by the department library and college library.
4. Very least ranking is given to internet-Journal and CD Ram because it is not available in most of the libraries and skill is required to use these electronic sources.
5. The research scholars face difficulties in access and use of the information not because of one factor alone, but because of multiple factors like lack of time or lack of information or lack of reading material.

The modern society is dynamic and complex. The duty of the research scholar towards social change, scientific development and social uplift is undisputable. It is the duty of the information centers to provide the required information to the research scholars so as to materialize their duty for a better tomorrow.

**SUGGESTIONS**

College Library and Department Library want to develop their collection, improve their services and stand out in this competition age.

But due to rapid growth of information, varied application of information technology, and financial constraints, this has become a big challenge for library professionals, especially of academic libraries.

It is to be remembered that in case we are in a position to archive it successfully, only then librarianship can be sustained for future and excellence can only be achieved by intelligent and sincere efforts.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Laloo BT. Information Needs, Information Seeking Behaviour and Users. New Delhi: *Ess Ess Pub*; 2002.
- [2]. Ellis D, Cox D, Hill K. A Comparison of the Information Seeking Patterns of Researchers in the Physical and Social Sciences. *Journal of Documentation* 1993; 49(4): 356-69.
- [3]. Tripathi M, Prasad HN. The Information Seeking Behaviour and Use of Information Sources in Physical sciences and Social Science - A Comparative Study. *SRELS Journal of Information Management* 2001; 38(4): 343-56.
- [4]. Wilson TD, Walsh C. Information Behaviour: An Interdisciplinary perspective. University of Sheftield, Department of Information Studies, Sheftield; 1996.
- [5]. Wilson TD. On Conceptual Models for Information Seeking and Retrieval Research. *Information Research* 2003; 9(1).