



Understanding and Awareness on Electronic Information Resources (EIR) Among Students from The School of Social Sciences, Periyar University - A Survey

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Abstract: *University libraries have provided different kinds of information resources and documents for user society such as faculty members, students and research scholars but the mentioned resources have not been focussed and have not been able to encourage the user society effectively and efficiently to make use of them. This paper has made an attempt to know about the information use pattern of online information resources among students who are doing post graduate in the department of School of Social Sciences at Periyar University. Due to the rapid growth of E-Resources like ICT, social media and effective networks, the habits of accessing information have drastically changed. Nowadays, Internet does our daily activities. Therefore, this present study has tried to understand and know about the awareness on online information resources and services which have been provided by the Library to user society. The results found that the large number of users have utilized existing E- Resources at the University's digital library, effectively. The large number of 41.54% of the respondents visited the library daily, and a great portion of 45.38% of the respondents reported E- Resources as very essential to investigate research and academic purposes. It was identified that the user community has also been satisfied with the overall performance of the E- Resources.*

Keywords: *E-Resources, Online Sources, Information Sources, User Study, Information Seeking Behaviour, Periyar University, Social Science*

INTRODUCTION

The term information is used in so many different contexts in our life. According to Hayes (1969), information is “a slippery concept, amorphous, loaded with connotations and implications and that it has had a variety of meanings and we must have suitable definitions even it is at the most elementary level.” Shannon (1949) has defined information as, “a selection from a set of available messages, a selection which reduces uncertainty. Information relieves uncertainty.” Kemp (1976) declared “indeed, information has been described as the fifth need of man ranking after air, water, food and shelter”. On the other hand, Chen and Hernon (1982) pointed out that information is, “all knowledge, ideas, fact, data and imaginative works of mind which are communicated normally and informally in any format” and also information has been defined as “data used in planning, decision making and analysis of some program”. Uttor (1999) explained “Information has a major role in man's routine activities; either it may be at home, school colleges, playground or work places. It is crucial to man's survival. It is like a stair to provide foot path to promote the research work.”

Periyar University Library was established in 1997. It has 77,099 volumes of text and reference books on various disciplines. The library subscribes 207 National and International journals, and 13 leading Newspapers. The library is following the open access system and provides its service to meet the requirements of P.G. Students, M. Phil and Ph.D. scholars and the staff members of the University.

University Library has various sections such as Reference Section, Text book Section, Books for competitive Examinations, Theses Dissertations Section, Back Volumes Section, Reprographic Section, Question Banks etc. Library also extends its facilities to the students and faculties of affiliated colleges. Library offers the following services to its readers.

1. Circulation Service: (Books issue / return / renewal)
2. Reference Service
3. Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)
4. Selective Dissemination of Information Service (SDI)
5. Current Awareness Service (CAS)
6. Question Bank Service
7. Reprographic Service
8. Internet Service
9. Inter Library Loan (ILL) Services through DELNET and INFLIBNET
10. Courseware Repositories
11. Article Repositories
12. TOC (Table of Contents) e-delivery service.

Source: <http://www.periyaruniversity.ac.in/Library>

Objectives

The present research made an attempt to observe the awareness and information seeking behaviour of online sources by the PG students from the department of Social Science, Periyar University, Salem. The research was carried out to reach the following aims and objectives:

1. To know the purpose of visiting the library by the respondents
2. To examine the awareness of library services by the student community
3. To analyse the library visits regarding the frequency and the span of time
4. To find out the awareness and usage of online sources through Internet
5. To explore the techniques adopted for browsing
6. To see the preference of electronic resources
7. To collect suggestion for maximizing the usage pattern
8. To get feedback on the services offered through Internet
9. To recommend improvement measures based on the findings of the study

Related Work

Several research works conducted by the researchers in different periods regarding information seeking behavior and user studies, so far. A few of the recent studies which were apt for this study have been chosen as a source. Velmurugan (2017) carried out a research on seeking behavior with selected departments of users in Periyar University, Salem. The findings of the study revealed that almost 54 % of users were from the female category. It was identified that 42.0% of them visited the library every day, and 57.69% of the respondents preferred to download PDF file formats. 90.00% of the respondents used digital library effectively, and 46.15% of them were fully satisfied. The library use pattern and the level of satisfaction were examined by Bhatti (2013) from the department of Social Sciences at Bahauddin Zakariya University at Multan, and it was found that the user community was not fully satisfied in terms of journal collections which were available in the university library. Moreover, they were not properly maintained, and they just provided the abstracting and indexing services to the user society.

Hussain and Kumar (2006) conducted a survey on the use, collection and services of IIRS (Indian Institute of Remote Sensing) Library during 2006. The findings showed that 41.25% of the respondents went to utilize the library services on a daily basis. 81.25% of them had gone to the library to borrow books or other materials.

87.50% of them preferred the printed collection, and 86.25% of the respondents made use of recent periodicals. Velmurugan (2013) carried out a study on use and user perceptions of electronic information resources at Siva Institute of Frontier Technology, India. The findings showed that a large number of the users (51.22%) were under the age group of 21-30. The great number of 95.12% of the users found well aware of e- resources, and only 4.88 % of them were not aware of it. Few studies conducted by authors such as Velmurugan and Ramasamy (2014) who examined the use of information resources and their services by means of Internet among the students of an International School in the Digital Environment during 2014. Velmurugan (2013) took a survey-based research among the selected Engineering graduates to examine the use pattern during 2013, and in the same year, Velmurugan (2013) investigated through graduate students at Rajalakshmi Institute of Technology regarding the library utilities and benefits. Kumar, et al. (2010) conducted a study on the staff and doctoral candidates in terms of the sources and services of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture and Technology library at Meerut. The results showed that the doctoral candidates (73.33%) visited the library daily more than the staff members (6.67%). 16.67% of the staff and doctoral candidates visited the library to read magazines, and 40% of the staff and doctoral candidates were satisfied with the quality of library services which were provided by the University Library at Meerut.

Methodology

Based on the above mentioned objectives, the required data were collected from the respective department of Social Sciences at Periyar University at Salem. To collect the data, the questionnaire method was employed, and a total of 150 questionnaires were distributed among the mentioned departments a total of 150 questionnaires, and 130 of them (86.66%) were fully filled and returned. To measure the output of this study, simple percentage method was employed to carry out the various levels of distribution. The study analyzed different parameters such as age wise classification, visiting time by the user society, frequency of E-Resources, frequency of browser access, types of E-Resources, preferable Search Items, importance of E-resources, sources of accessing E-Resources, purpose of using E-Resources, access to Internet, salient Features of E-resources, and level of user satisfaction, and suggestions and recommendations, limitations of the study, etc.

Results and Discussion

1. Gender wise classification

Table 1 represents the gender wise classification, and it was found that among 130 respondents, the major part (53.85%) was from female category. The remaining 46.15% of the respondents were male. The gender wise analysis indicated that the female group showed their interest to participate and support the researcher whereas the male category was not interested.

Table 1. Gender wise classification

| S.No | Gender | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|--------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Male | 60 | 46.15 |
| 2 | Female | 70 | 53.85 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

2. Department wise

Researcher analysed the department wise distribution with the selected department of School of Social Sciences including Sociology, Psychology, Journalism and Mass Communication and History and some other groups. Table 2 represents that the greatest number of the respondents (45.39%) participated from other departments such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Education, Economic, Library and Information Science and

Tamil departments and followed by the next majority of 20.00% of the respondents from the department of Psychology. It was noted that the minimum number of 9.23% of the respondents were from Journalism and Mass Communication as they showed very less interest to participate and support the research.

Table 2. Department wise distribution

| S. No | Department | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Sociology | 20 | 15.38 |
| 2 | Psychology | 26 | 20.00 |
| 3 | Journalism & Mass Communication | 12 | 9.23 |
| 4 | History | 13 | 10.00 |
| 5 | Others | 59 | 45.39 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

3. Age wise classification

Table 3 reveals that almost 51.0% of the user community were at the age group from 21 to 25, followed by 40.70 % of them who were at the age group between 26 and 30. The least number of age group i.e. 8.50% was between 31 and 35. No number of age group between 36 and above was found. Based on the analysis, the results revealed that the age group of users between 21 and 25 were well aware and showed their support willingly to the research. On the other hand, the users being in the age group of 36 and above were not interested and also not aware of the research regarding the online information resources and their services which were available at University Library.

Table 3. Age wise classification

| S.No | Age group | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | 21to 25yrs | 66 | 50.80 |
| 2 | 26to30 yrs | 53 | 40.70 |
| 3 | 31to35 yrs | 11 | 8.50 |
| 4 | 36 & above | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

4. Frequency of library visit

Table 4 illustrates the library visiting time span among the user community of Social Sciences department. The frequency range was indicated such as every day, once in a week, once in a month and occasionally. The huge number of 41.54% of the respondents visited the library daily, followed by 33.85% of the user community who visited the library once in a week. The small portion of 10.00% of the respondents visited the library rarely.

Table 4. Frequency of library visit

| S. No | Frequency | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Every day | 54 | 41.54 |
| 2 | Once in a week | 44 | 33.85 |
| 3 | Once in a month | 19 | 14.61 |
| 4 | Occasionally | 13 | 10 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

5. Frequency of E-Resources

Table 5 illustrates how often the online resources existing in the library sources were used by the user community. The analysis represented that the highest portion of 48.46% of the users accessed the electronic resources every day, followed by 26.15% of the user society who accessed the resources weekly, 20.76% who visited the library to utilise the availability of the resources once in a month. It was noted that only 4.63% of them had no time to go to the library to access the online resources.

Table 5. How often use the E-Resources?

| S. No | Frequency | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Daily | 63 | 48.46 |
| 2 | Weekly | 34 | 26.15 |
| 3 | Once in a month | 27 | 20.76 |
| 4 | Never | 6 | 4.63 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

6. Frequency of browser access

To get the information on the rate of recurrence of usage browser through the respondents, table 6 below represents that the huge amount of the users (53.84%) used Mozilla Firebox to access, followed by 30.76% of the respondents who used the Google Chrome to access. The small amount of the respondents (1.53%) used some other browsers to do research.

Table 6. Frequently used browser

| S. No | Browsing methods | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Mozilla Firebox | 70 | 53.84 |
| 2 | Google chrome | 40 | 30.76 |
| 3 | Internet Explorer | 18 | 13.87 |
| 4 | Other | 2 | 1.53 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

7. Types of E-Resources

Table 7 reveals different types of online resources which were used to track the relevant information for research purposes by the user community. The online sources such as e-books, e-journals, online databases such as Emerald Insight, Sage Publications, Web of Science, CD Rom etc were identified. It was found that 43.07% of the respondents used online journals instead of printed journals. The next resource was online databases with 32.32% of respondents who used them, and only 15.38% of the users used the CD-Rom during the research period.

Table 7. Types of E-Resources

| S. No | Type of e-Resources | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | E-book | 12 | 9.23 |
| 2 | E-journal | 56 | 43.07 |
| 3 | Online database | 42 | 32.32 |
| 4 | CD-Rom | 20 | 15.38 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

8. Preferable Search Items

The preferable key words such as the name of the authors, titles, subjects, publishers, and any other specific keywords which were used to do research through the documents, were counted. The table below indicates that major proportion of 36.15% of the user society used the search term 'Subject', followed by 20.78% of the users who used the specific keywords, 17.69% of the respondents who used 'Title', and only 2.30% of them who used the other search terms.

Table 8. Preferable Search Items

| S. No | Search Items | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Author | 18 | 13.84 |
| 2 | Title | 23 | 17.69 |
| 3 | Subject | 47 | 36.15 |
| 4 | Key words | 27 | 20.78 |

| | | | |
|-------|-----------|-----|------|
| 5 | Publisher | 12 | 9.24 |
| 6 | Other | 3 | 2.30 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

9. Importance of E- resources

The significance of online information was investigated because the online information resources are very essential for human life like water and air, and they are useful for reading and research purposes. As can be seen in Table 9, 45.38% of the respondents reported that E- resources are very important whereas 10.76% of the respondents declared that electronic information is not important for them during the research period.

Table 9. Importance of E- resources

| S. No | Importance of E- resources | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Very important | 59 | 45.38 |
| 2 | Somewhat important | 32 | 24.63 |
| 3 | Not important | 25 | 19.23 |
| 4 | Not very important | 14 | 10.76 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

10. Sources of accessing E-Resources

The researcher analysed the various E-sources of accessing the online information and found that the large number of respondents (43.84%) used 'University Websites' to access the resources, followed by 'OPAC' which was the second (30.01%), and the remaining 26.15% of the respondents used Search Engines (See Table 10). The results revealed that the user society used the university websites in a useful way.

Table 10. Sources of accessing E-Resources

| S.No | Sources | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | OPAC | 39 | 30.01 |
| 2 | Search Engine | 34 | 26.15 |
| 3 | University Websites | 57 | 43.84 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

11. Purpose of using E-Resources

Various purposes of using online resources were identified. The table below illustrates four kinds of purposes such as Research, Learning, Current information and Teaching. It was investigated that the utmost 51.53% of the post graduate students used the resources for their research studies, followed by 30.77% of the users who used the resources for learning. It was noted that only the minimum number of the respondents (2.30%) used them for teaching purposes.

Table 11. Purpose of using E-Resources

| S.No | Purpose | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Research | 67 | 51.53 |
| 2 | Learning | 40 | 30.77 |
| 3 | Current Information | 20 | 15.38 |
| 4 | Teaching | 3 | 2.30 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

12. Access to Internet

Table 12 shows how the researchers accessed the Internet which was located in various places like Central Library, Department, Internet café and Home. The huge number of the respondents (44.62%) accessed the internet at their own departments, followed by 33.85% of the PG students who accessed the Internet in

Digital Library section at their University Central Library. It was noted that the leaset number of the user community (8.46%) accessed the interent at their Home PC.

Table 12. Access to Internet

| S. No | Sources of information | No.of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Central Library | 44 | 33.85 |
| 2 | Department | 58 | 44.62 |
| 3 | Internet care | 17 | 13.07 |
| 4 | Home | 11 | 8.46 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

13. Salient Features of E-resources

The table below represents the characteristics of online items and how the users utilised them. In this context, 31.53% of the user society indicated that the online items were very easier to access, followed by 28.46% of the respondents who felt they were useful to access to update their knowledge. It was seen that only 3.85% of the users felt that there a was wider range of information.

Table 13. Feature of E-resources

| S. No | Feature of E-resources | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Access to Current / Up to date | 37 | 28.46 |
| 2 | Easier to access | 41 | 31.53 |
| 3 | Faster to access | 27 | 20.76 |
| 4 | Wider range of Information | 5 | 3.85 |
| 5 | Improved professional | 20 | 15.38 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

14. Level of Satisfaction

Table 14 shows that the majority of the respondents (46.15%) were fully satisfied with the opinion of relevance of the Electronic Resources, followed by 26.92% of the respondents who were partially satisfied, and only 11.53% of the respondents who were not satisfied. The analysis indicated that nearly 50% of the user community were satisfied with the electronic resources and the services provided by the librarians and information scientists.

Table 14. Level of User Satisfaction

| S. No | User Satisfaction | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Fully satisfied | 60 | 46.15 |
| 2 | Partially satisfied | 35 | 26.92 |
| 3 | Least satisfied | 15 | 11.53 |
| 4 | No comments | 20 | 15.38 |
| Total | | 130 | 100 |

Suggestions and Conclusion

The following suggestions have been recommended to get a better improvement in the utilization of the online information resources among the user community members of the social sciences department at Periyar University:

- They should get aware to use E – Resources like online journals to update their knowledge in their respective subjects.
- The problems of low speed access must be eradicated through increasing the bandwidth.
- The staff and students have to stay away from printed documents as they may be obsolete.

- User oriented initiatives must be conducted at regular intervals for the students as well as the faculty members towards the effective utilization of online information
- The span of time must be increased for the user community so that the users get maximum utilization of this service

Results and Discussion

This research study was done to examine the purposes of visiting the library, the awareness of the library services, the uses of online resources, the preference of electronic resources, and the feedback on the services. Then, the suggestions and recommendations were given to provide better services for the benefit of the user society. The research suggested three most important points such as 1. Awareness must be provided to utilize the online resources. 2. The low speed access should be eradicated by means of bandwidth increases and 3. The span of time should be increased so that to the users get maximum utilization of the library services. Further, the recent research investigated by Chopra (2018) found that almost 60% of the respondents consulted online services for the current information, and 62% of them seek information to get prepared for examinations. Siddiqui (2011) conducted a study to examine the information seeking behavior of MBBS students in Lucknow, and through the research, found that the successful library depends upon the choice of library collections that should meet the needs and requirements of the end users. In another research investigated by Akpojotor (2016), it was reported that the PG students of library and information science were quite aware and highly used the e- resources. Moreover, Thanuskodi and Ravi (2011) analyzed the use of the digital resources by the staff members and scholars at Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, and noted that the users visited the library a lot less, as such discovery through serendipity was reduced, and they also preferred to access the databases of the online refereed journals.

There are similar findings supporting the present research and therefore, this research tried to focus on the awareness and understanding of the online information resources, and how the user society has used the E-Resources at the University Central Library, Salem. The results found that the huge number of the users utilized existing E- Resources at the University digital library effectively. The huge number of the respondents (41.54%) visited the library daily, and the great portion of the respondents (45.38%) reported E-Resources were very essential for investigating research and academic purposes. They were also satisfied with the overall performance of the E- Resources.

Limitations of The Study

Browsing is essential in everyone's life in the present environment. Because of the speedy growth, drastic changes, and the development of Information Technology, the conventional mode of education system has converted in a greater extent. In this electronic age, gathering, storing and processing information have become easy due to the invention of networks. As the Internet offers many services, it serves the society in different ways, for the research purposes have been on the high rise. Therefore, the present study has made an attempt to investigate the awareness and understanding of the Electronic Information Resources (EIR) among the PG students of Social Sciences department at Periyar University in Salem District. As there has not been such a study so far, this study has been taken into consideration, and it tried to focus on the awareness and understanding of Electronic Information Resources (EIR). This study was limited to only the post graduate students from the department of social sciences at Periyar University.

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