

# ASSESSING OF INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF PERIYAR UNIVERSITY, INDIA

<sup>1</sup>Shankar, R and <sup>2</sup>Dr. M. Jayaprakash

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar and <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor,

Department of Library and Information Science, Periyar University,  
Salem- 636 011, Tamilnadu, India

\*\*\*

**ABSTRACT-** *The present study has made an attempt to explore the information needs and information seeking behavior of post graduate students of School of Mathematics, Periyar University, Salem District. The survey of the researchers to find out the answer of questions such as collections of library, services of the library, structure of materials, overall effectiveness of the library use of digital library, searching online resources which are provided by the library, information resources, purpose and need of information and so on. A questionnaire was circulated to 125 postgraduate students and 115 filled questionnaires were returned at the rate of 92%. The results of the study revealed that the majority of 51.315% of respondents was in the age group of 31-35 years and found that the average number of 38.33 % was identified overall study period. 40.87% of respondents were using OPAC effectively. It was noted the usage of digital library analyzed and found 44.35% of respondents were using the digital library to collect information for their research purpose and 61.74% of users are fully satisfied to use the information resources.*

**Keywords:** Information needs, Information seeking behavior, Library resources, Periyar University, Salem, Tamilnadu.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Information is a valuable asset in the electronic environment. The information is multi faceted and various forms such as text books, reference books, research articles, conference proceedings, letters, memos, newsletters, leaflets, hand books, manuals, research reports and so on which are available in the form of paper bound. Information seeking is a board term, which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express his information needs, seek, evaluate and select information, and finally uses it to satisfy

his information needs. Various factors affect the information seeking behaviors of an individual or a group of individuals, i.e. purpose for information, channels and sources of information and barriers to information. Information seeking is a basic activity of an individual (Wiberley, 1989). Information seeking behavior tells about the personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought. Information seeking behavior is expressed in various forms, from reading printed material to research and experimentation. Scholars, students and faculty actively seek current information from the various media available in libraries, for example, Encyclopedias, journals and more currently, electronic media (Prabhavathi, 2011). At the moment, these are coming through online due to radical change on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). With the advent of ICT, people collect information very quickly using Internet. Hence, it is right time to analyze the information needs and information seeking behavior of postgraduate students from School of Mathematics who far the internet facilities are being used by them.

## 2. ABOUT UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

In 17th September 1997, the Government of Tamil Nadu has established the Periyar University at Salem as per the provisions of the Periyar University Act, 1997. The University includes the districts of Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri. The University got the 12(B) and 2f status from the University Grants Commission and has been accredited by NAAC with A Grade in 2015. University Central library was established in 1997. It has 78,580 volumes of text and reference books on various disciplines as on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The library is having good number of national and international journals and 13 leading news papers subscribe 196 national and international journals and 13 leading news papers. The library is following open access system and provides services to meet the requirements of PG students, M.Phil, Ph.D. Scholars and faculty members of the University. The library has various sections such as reference section; Periodical section; Digital library text book section book for competitive Examination, Theses & Dissertations section, Back volumes section, Reprographic Section, Question Banks

etc and Library also extends its facilities to the students and faculties of affiliated colleges.

**3. RELATED WORK**

Mishra, Yadav and Bisht (2005) examined a survey to find out the Internet utilization pattern of the undergraduate students of G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology at Pantnagar. The results revealed that the maximum number of 61.5% of users was male and the majority of 51.6% of users used Internet for preparing assignments. A majority of the respondents i.e. 83.1% male and 61.3% female respondents indicated that they faced the problem of slow functioning of Internet connectivity during the period of study. Kaushik and Kanchi (2007) conducted a study on reading habits of rural undergraduate students. The study was administrated based on questionnaire method. The results reflected that the maximum number of 57.69 percent of respondents is read newspapers every day and the minimum number of 33.33% of users read rarely. A huge number of respondents 58.33% are eager to read general magazines and followed by 14.73% read magazines on films and 16.67% are used to read various competitive journals and magazines. Velmurugan (2013) carried out a study to know the use and user perception of electronic resources in Siva Institute of Frontier Technology which is located in Chennai. The findings of the study revealed that the maximum number of 53.65% of the respondents using the electronic resources in the library was twice a week. The purpose of using electronic resources most by the respondents (34.14%) was to prepare for projects. The majority of the respondents (68.29%) were satisfied and 13.82 % of the respondents were not satisfied. Meho and Haas (2001) investigated a survey on information seeking behavior and use of social science faculty studying stateless nations. This study was conducted through electronic interview with sixty researchers of fourteen countries such as United States, Germany, Australia, Russia, and India. The findings of the study showed that research students are facing a lot of difficulties while conducting research and in accessing information for their research. It was also found the barriers include lack of research support, academic structure during the period of study. Velmurugan (2010) observed from the results that the level of students has an influence over their opinion on possessing an email-ID and suggested that multimedia educational tools be developed on the basis of syllabus of the students, so that they can have an interactive learning experience with the help of modern day inventions.

**4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study tries to observe the information needs and information seeking behavior of post graduate students of School of Mathematics, Periyar University, Salem. The study is conducted to reach the following objectives.

1. To discover the information resources in the university library

2. To examine the democratic profile of students
3. To study the purpose of using the library resources
4. To learn the frequency level of library visit
5. To find out the usage of Digital Library resources
6. To identify the problem faced while accessing library resources and
7. To know the level of satisfaction among the users community.

**5. METHODOLOGY**

The required data for this study were collected from primary sources through questionnaire. The unit of analysis in this research study is postgraduate students from school of mathematics, Periyar University Salem. Simple random sampling technique was adapted to collect samples from the population. The total numbers of 125 questionnaires were distributed, and 115 filled questionnaires were received at the rate of 92%. The data thus collected were analyzed using simple percentage calculation.

**6. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

This study was undertaken to analyze the information needs and information seeking behavior among the postgraduate students from school of Mathematics, Periyar University, Salem District.

**6.1. Gender wise distribution**

Table 1 shows that 42 (36.52%) respondents were male and the rest of 73 (63.48%) were female. It is found that the majority of respondents were female and ranked first between them.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Sl. No	Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Male	42	36.52
2	Female	73	63.48
	Total	115	100

**6.2. Distribution of Respondents by Age**

Table 2 indicates the age wise distribution of respondents during the period of study. It is found that the maximum number of 59 (51.31%) respondents were in the age group of 31-35, and followed by 35 (30.43%) respondents were 25-30 years, 21 (18.26%) respondents were belong to above 35 years. The result shows that the major part of the respondents was belonging to second category i.e. 31-35 age groups. It is found that he average number of 38.33 % were identified overall study period.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Sl. No	Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	25 to 30	35	30.43
2	31 to 35	59	51.31
3	Above 35	21	18.26
Total		115	100

Table 5: Library Visit by the Respondents

Sl. No	Opinion	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Every day	60	52.17
2	Weekly	30	26.08
3	Fortnightly	12	10.44
4	Monthly	6	5.23
5	Occasionally	7	6.08
Total		115	100

### 6.3. Information sources used for seeking information

Table 3 shows the information resources used for seeking information which are available in the university library. The analysis has been taken what are sources available and which sources mostly preferred from students during the period of study.

Table 3: Information sources used for seeking information

Sl. No	Sources	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Text books	34	29.57
2	Indexing Journals	31	26.96
3	Reference books	15	13.04
4	Discussion with Librarian	06	5.22
5	Thesis and dissertation	09	7.82
6	Newspapers	18	15.65
7	Other magazines	02	1.74
Total		115	100

### 6.6. Time spent in the Library

Table 6 shows the respondents opinion on hours spent in the library. It is inferred that the maximum number of 66 (57.39%) of the respondents were spent 1 to 2 hours in the library. 32 respondents (27.83%) were spending less than one hour in the library. The least number of 14.78% of the respondents were spending more than 2 hours in the library.

Table 6: Time spent in the Library

Sl. No	Opinion	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Less than 1 hour	32	27.83
2	1 to 2 hours	66	57.39
3	More than 2 hours	17	14.78
Total		115	100

### 6.4. Marital status-wise distribution

Table 4 describes the marital status wise distribution of respondents. Among the 115 postgraduate students, 97 respondents (84.35%) are unmarried whereas the remaining 18 (15.65%) are found married during the period of study. The result shows that the majority of the respondents from school of mathematics belong to the category of unmarried who use information seekers.

Table 4: Marital status by the Respondents

Sl. No	Marital status	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Married	18	15.65
2	Unmarried	97	84.35
Total		115	100

### 6.5. Library Visit by the Respondents

Table 5 represents the respondent's opinion on visiting the Periyar University Library. It is identified that out of 115 respondents, the majority of 60 (52.17%) respondents were visiting the library every day and followed by 30 (26.08%) of the respondents were visiting library weekly once. The minimum numbers of 6 (5.23%) respondents were visiting the library monthly once.

### 6.7. Purpose of using the Library

Table 7 depicts that the purpose of using the library by the respondents of Periyar university during the period of study. Based on the analysis, out of 115 user community, the major part of 41 (35.65%) respondents are using the library for research purpose and followed by 31 (26.96%) users are using the library to prepare research papers for publish on journals and conference proceedings whereas the least number of 7 (6.08%) respondents are using the library to update their current information to enhance their knowledge.

Table 7: Purpose of using the Library

Sl. No	Purpose	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	To read general books	9	7.83
2	To gather subject information	11	9.56
3	For entertainment	16	13.92
4	To prepare articles for journal / conference	31	26.96
5	For research	41	35.65
6	To update current information	7	6.08
Total		115	100

### 6.8. Use of OPAC for finding books

Table 8 indicates that the majority of almost 60 percent of users are not using the OPAC to find a book or other materials which are available in the library whereas the remaining 40% of users are using the OPAC catalogue effectively to know about the books what they need for their research.

Table 8: Use of OPAC for finding books

Sl. No	Use of OPAC	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	47	40.87
2	No	68	59.13
	Total	115	100

### 6.9. Use of Digital Library

Table 9 represents that the analysis of use of digital library among the postgraduate students of school of mathematics. It is found that the majority of 67.83% of users are using the digital library effectively to find the various purposes whereas 32.17% of the remaining users are not using the digital library during the period of study.

Table.9: Use of Digital Library

Sl. No	Use of Digital Library	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	78	67.83
2	No	37	32.17
	Total	115	100

### 6.10. Purpose of using Digital Library

Table 10 indicates the purpose of using digital library among the user community of school of mathematics. The majority of 44.35% of respondents are using the digital library to gather information for their research purpose and followed by 25.22% of respondents are using to get education oriented information. It is noted that 9.56 percent of users are using the digital library for health oriented information and the only 4.35% of users for other purposes.

Sl. No	Frequency	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	To collect information for research	51	44.35
2	To read e- newspaper	12	10.44
3	For education	29	25.22
4	Related to health	11	9.56
5	Related to sports	7	6.08
6	Others	5	4.35
	Total	115	100

Table.10: Purpose of using Digital Library

### 6.11. Problems while using the Digital Library

Table 11 shows the various problems faced by the respondents while accessing the Digital Library online resources. The problems such as lack of connectivity, slow speed, insufficient training, problems in downloading articles, lack of time and lack of awareness about Digital Library online resources. it is noted that out of 115 post graduate students, the huge number of 36 (31.31%) respondents are facing the problem while downloading the research papers and followed by 25 (21.74%) respondents are feeling the lack of connectivity and the least number of 2 (1.74%) respondents are not aware about the digital library online information which are available in the library.

Table 11: Problems facing while using the Digital Library

Sl. No	Problems	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Lack of connectivity	25	21.74
2	No speed	19	16.52
3	Insufficient training	12	10.43
4	Problems in downloading papers	36	31.31
5	Lack of time	21	18.26
6	Lack of awareness about Digital Library	2	1.74
	Total	115	100

### 6.12. Level of satisfaction

Table 12 depicts the level of satisfaction while using information resources in University Library by the postgraduate students of school of mathematics during the period of study. Among the 115 respondents, 71 (61.74%) users are fully satisfied using information resources and followed by 19 (16.53%) respondents are partially satisfied using information resources and 14 (12.17%) users are dissatisfied and the remaining 11 responders did not report any comments.

Table 12: Level of satisfaction using University Online information

Sl. No	Rating	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Fully satisfied	71	61.74
2	Partially Satisfied	19	16.53
3	Dissatisfied	14	12.17
4	No Comments	11	9.56
	Total	115	100

## 6. FINDINGS

Based on the analysis, the findings of the results are found from the study which was conducted for postgraduate students from School of Mathematics during the period of study are as follows.

- It was analyzed gender wise distribution and found that 36.52% of respondents were male and the rest of (63.48%) respondents were female. The results revealed that the majority of respondents were female and it shows that female students are interesting to involve in this study and ranked first.
- It was identified that the majority of 51.315% of respondents was in the age group of 31-35 years and found that the average number of 38.33 % was identified overall study period.
- Among 115 postgraduate students, 84.35% of respondents were unmarried whereas the remaining 15.65% of them were married during the period of study. The result shows that the majority of the respondents from the School of Mathematics are belong to the category of unmarried who seek the information.
- It was identified that the majority of 59.13% of respondents were not using the OPAC whereas 40.87% of respondents were using OPAC effectively.
- Usage of digital library analyzed and found 44.35% of respondents were using the digital library to collect information for their research purpose and followed by 25.22% of users are using the digital library to get education related information.
- The maximum numbers of 31.31% of respondents are facing the problem while downloading the research papers and the least number of 1.74% of respondents are not aware about the digital library information which are available in the library.
- It was found that among the 115 respondents, 61.74% of users are fully satisfied to use the information resources and followed by 16.53% of respondents are partially satisfied and only 12.17% of users are dissatisfied using information resources.

To improve and provide better services to the needs of the user community, the following suggestions can be implemented with certain considerations for the users of the University Library.

1. It was noted that more number of respondents suggested that there is a slow speed of internet connections. So, majorities of the students recommended making high speed network for communication with intranet.
2. Training program for students at all levels is to be provided how to use the Digital Library and how to get e-resource facilities and more user awareness

program on e-resource shall be conducted at regular intervals.

3. It is suggested that number of Library staff should be increased and they shall provide more guidance to the students for their study.
4. As there is lack of subject wise journals and the University Library shall start more new Journal publication for all departments.

## 7. REFERENCE

- [1] Kaushik, Sanjay K., and Jaswant Singh Khanchi. (2007). Reading Habits of Rural Under-Graduate Students. *Library Herald*, 45(1), 61-69.
- [2] Meho, Lokman I., and Stephanie W. Haas. (2001). Information-seeking behavior and use of social science faculty studying stateless nations: A case study. *Library & Information Science Research*, 23(1), 5-25.
- [3] Mishra, O.P., Yadava, N., & Bisht, K. (2005). Internet Utilization Pattern of Undergraduate Students. *University News*, 43(13), 8-12.
- [4] Prabhavathi, D. (2011). Information Seeking Behavior of Postgraduate students of SPMVV, Tirupati (AP): A Study. *International Journal of Digital Library services*, 1,34.
- [5] Velmurugan, C. (2013). Use and user perception of electronic information resources: A case study of Siva Institute of Frontier Technology, India. *Chinese Librarianship: an International Electronic Journal*, 36. Retrieved from: <http://www.iclc.us/cliej/cl36chandran.pdf>
- [6] Wiberley, S.E. and Jones, W.G. (1995). Patterns of Information seeking in the humanities. *College & Research Libraries* 50(6): 638-645.
- [7] Velmurugan, C (2010). Understanding on Internet and its Usages amongst students of International Schools in Chennai, India, *Pearl: A Journal of Library and Information Science*, April-June, 2010, 117-121.