AWARENESS, USAGE AND PERCEPTION OF E-RESOURCES AMONG THE POST GRADUATE STUDENTS OF MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY, MADURAI : AN EVALUATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

E-Resources are the most sought after information carriers employed by the students, scholars and teachers to perform their jobs well. The present study aims at identifying the awareness, usage and perception of e-resources among the post graduate students of Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai. 200 randomly selected students form the sample of the study. Questionnaires were used for collecting the data. The survey reveals that : 41 % (82) of the respondents use e-resources 2-3 times a week ; 48 % (96) of the respondents spend 2-3 hours a week in the use of e-resources ; Dr.T.P.M Library UGC Infonet centre is the most preferred location among 132 (52.8%) respondents for accessing e-resources ; 106 (43.8 %) respondents use e-resources to get to know current information, to improve their general knowledge and to get materials for preparing themselves for various competitive examinations ; usability is the major attractive force for using e-resources as per 74 (33.92 %) respondents followed by 48 (23.3 %) respondents who felt that accuracy is the main reason why e-resources are used by them ; slow access speed is the major problem faced by 29 % (60) of the respondents while accessing e-resources. Overloaded information on the internet is the major problem for 27.1 % (58) of the respondents ; 48 % (96) of the respondents are partially satisfied with the kind of e-resources made available in the University UGC INFONET. While 37 % (74) of the respondents are fully satisfied with the quantity and quality of e-resources made available in the University and 30.9 % (68) of the respondents need training on 'internet skills' and 30 % (66) of the respondents like to undergo training on 'information search and retrieval skills'.

Keywords : E-Resources, Post graduate students, Madurai Kamaraj University, purposes, access points, problems

1. INTRODUCTION

E-resources are short term for Electronic Resources or electronic information resources. These are collections of information in electronic or digital format that are accessed on an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, computer. These are published resources in electronic versions or format such as encyclopedias, pamphlets, e-books, e-journals, databases etc.

Electronic resources mean all our online materials including the catalogue, index, database, and full text as well as title lists that link to these.

2. TYPES OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

1. Web Sites
2. Online Databases
3. E-Journals
4. E-Books
5. Electronic integrating resources
6. CD-ROM
7. Diskettes
8. Audio, visual, and text files.
9. Other portal computer databases and
10. Open sources for reading and teaching through online or offline.

3. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

E-Resources are the murmuring words in the minds of all the students and scholars who search, re-search and de-search whole lot of information during their investigation. The e-resources have changed the very basis concept of literature review and the core of preparing preliminary contents to an investigation. The availability of these resources 24 X 7, 365 days, anywhere, any form, any medium and their ease of access have attracted millions of internet users to resort to various forms of resources in learning, re-learning and de-learning the conceptual framework of their study. Now, the users can get into the concepts discussed internationally and thus can give a global perspective to their study. Duplication of research and studies may be avoided. These e-resources widen the thoughts and ideas of the researcher. The researchers get to know new ideas, techniques and methods of carrying out their study with the help of widely proven and tested tools made available by the global scholar community.

The library professionals should conduct the need based user studies to identify the information requirements and information seeking behavior of the users so as to plan and execute the library policies and procedures accordingly. Get the demand, plan the programme, execute the plan and evaluate the effectiveness of the program implemented are the four essential steps in any library system. This study would like to address the following issues among others: To what extent the faculty and student are aware of e-resources? How competent they are in using e-resources? How long they have been using the e-resources? What problems are encountered by them in using such e-resources?

This study will also enable the library professionals to understand facets like what is the current demand of the users' community, new e-resources needed by faculty members and the students, the usage of currently subscribed databases and abstracts, the areas of training required etc. This research will be a bridge to remove the gap existing between what

we have and what they want in an e-library environment. Thus, this investigation gains significant in the present e-resources proliferated academic era.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Abubakar and Adetimirin (2015) investigated how computer literacy predisposes postgraduate students to use e-resources. The survey research design and multi-stage sampling technique were used to select 2726 postgraduate students from 16 Nigerian universities. A questionnaire and computer test was used to collect data and data was analysed using percentages and Pearson's product moment correlation. The postgraduates' computer literacy level was average (56.3%). They used only few of the e-resources in their libraries and the frequency of usage was low (weighted average X = 2.45). Computer literacy had positive relationship with postgraduates' usage of e-resources that was positive, very strong and significant (r= .740; df=2284; p< .05). This shows that the more the postgraduates' are exposed to computer literacy skills, the better the use of e-resources for their researches. Computer literacy is necessary to influence use of e-resources by the postgraduates' and therefore, computer literacy programme should be introduced for new entrant postgraduates.

Padma, Ramasamy and Niraimathi (2015) undertook a study find out the awareness and use of e-resources by the full time Ph.D scholars of four departments of 'School of Chemistry' at Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai. A sample size of 80 scholars was selected by random sampling method. The data required for the study was collected through a questionnaire. The findings of the study: 49 (65%) respondents locate information in the web with the help of Search Engines. Google has become the most popular search engine among the full time Ph.D scholars (92%). Keyword search is the favourite search strategy (40%). 31(41%) respondents have less than 6 months experience in using e-resources and 20(27%) respondents possess more than two years experience in utilizing the e-resources. 72 (96%) respondents are aware of Internet, 64 (85%) respondents are aware of e-journals/e-books and 63 (84%) respondents are aware about websites/home pages. 80% of the respondents use Internet and 39% of the respondents have not used the virtual conference ever.54(72%) respondents are expert in websites/Homepages and 42(56%) respondents are beginners in using e-journals/e-books. The major benefit of using e-resources is their ease of use (37%). 35 % of the respondents consider "Lack of knowledge for using e-resources' is the major constraint in using e-resources. Guidance from others is the main mode of learning about e-resources among the respondents (58%). 71% scholars want to attend some kind of training programme to learn to use e-resources. 15(20%) respondents need training in skills to get required information from various e-journals. Connectivity problem is the topmost limiting factor for 49% of the respondents and Lack of time is the major limiting factor for 23% of the respondents

Kwadzo (2015) carried out a study to examine the awareness level and usage of electronic databases by graduate students in the University of Ghana. The focus was on graduate students of Departments of Geography and Development Resource, and Information Studies. Questionnaire was used to collect the data. The findings were that students were

very much aware of the databases available to them as indicated by 96.9%and 93.8% indicated to use them. The studies has also established that majority of students knew about the databases from their lecturers and most of them accessed from the central library. Despite the claimed usage level, databases they focused on were few and many of them were not familiar with those in their discipline of study. Further, the limited number of the databases they knew about, they were satisfied with them and claimed the databases have impacted on their learning and research activities. In light of these findings it is recommended that librarians especially subject librarians should heighten the publicity of the databases and the research guides to both students and faculty so that they would become familiar with the databases and use them more and effectively.

Padma, Ramasamy, Chellappandi and Kathiravan (2014) attempted to trace out the awareness and use of e-resources by the engineering students of two engineering colleges viz. Pannai College of Engineering and Technology and Pandian Saraswathi Yadav Engineering college located in Sivagangai District. Sample size of 150 engineering students was selected by random sampling method. The data required for the study was collected through a questionnaire. The findings of the study: 86.67% of the respondent are aware the electronic resources. 81.33% of the respondents access the electronic resources. 39.34% of the respondents preferred to use E-journals. 32.79% of the respondents access the electronic resources regularly. 43.33% of the respondents learn through guidance from friends. 35.33% of the respondents use the electronic resources for research/project work. 29.33% of the respondents use the electronic resources for time saving. 34.67% of the respondents report that lack of facilities is the prime problem while using electronic resources. 23.33% of the respondents report that benefits of electronic resources over conventional documents for time saving. 54.67% of the respondents report that access of electronic resources is important. 46.67% of the respondents are satisfied with the use of electronic resources.

Rawat and Vithal (2013) aimed to assess and evaluate the exposure of ICT and the use of e-resources by the students of NTR College of Veterinary Science, Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Gannavaram, Andhra Pradesh with a view to know the exposure of ICT and e-resources to the student at their department or library. It aims to highlight the problems encountered by the students and suggests some remedial measures for its improvement. The author investigated the use of e-resources through a survey based on a structured questionnaire. The study confirmed that students of Veterinary Sciences are aware of the e-resources and use various types of e-resources, e-database, and e-journals. It suggests for the improvement in the access facilities with high internet speed and subscription of more e-resources for the students.

Dhanavandan, Mohammed Esmail and Nagarajan (2012) conducted a study to find out the utilization of e-resources among the students and faculty members of Krishnasamy College of Engineering and Technology, Cuddalore. . The sample consisted of 77students and 23faculty members. Majority of the users (42%) indicated that they preferred print version of resources for their convenience. In the aspect of frequency of visit, 29 % of users visits library weekly once and 7% of them rarely visits the library. 113 users sare aware of facilities and services of digital library and make use of it. 30% users visit digital library

weekly once and make use of it. Only 12% of the respondents use e-resources rarely. A total of only 24 respondents indicated they have at least 2years experience in using e-resources, an indicator that the concept of e-journals is still fairly new phenomenon. Most (45%) of the students use the e-resources for studying and 18.6 % of users for updating the knowledge. Half of the users (55 %) preferred electronic journals and e-books and 28 % of respondents preferred CDs/DVDs. The highest percentage (34%) of the users accesses 'IEL online'. Only 8 respondents felt that poor collection of resources is available in digital library.

5. OBJECTIVES

The present study is set with the objectives:

➢ To identify the socio-demographic profile of the respondents
➢ To study about the frequency of use of e-resources by the respondents.
➢ To elicit the awareness of the respondents on the availability of various types of e-resources.
➢ To find out number of hours per week spent by the respondents to access e-resources.
➢ To enlist the purposes of using the e-resources by the respondents.
➢ .To enlist the criteria used by the respondents to select and use various e-resources
➢ To depict the benefits of e-resources as enjoyed by the respondents
➢ To trace out the problems faced by the respondents in accessing and using e-resources.
➢ To study the satisfaction level of the respondents on the availability and use of e-resources and
➢ To identify the areas of training needed by the respondents on the use of e-resources

6. METHODOLOGY

The study undertaken by the researcher belongs to descriptive research study. The researcher has used sampling method in his survey study. The data collected are primary and secondary in nature. 200 PG students constitute the sampling frame of the study. The sampling techniques adopted are stratified random sampling. Questionnaire is the tool used by the researcher for collecting required data for the investigation. The primary data is collected from the PG students of the University.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1. GENDER-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1 depicts that out of 200 respondents selected as samples for the present study, 42 % (84) are male respondents and the remaining 58 % (116) are female respondents.

Table 1:GENDER-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	GENDER	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	MALE	84	42%
2	FEMALE	116	58%
TOTAL		200	100

(Source: Primary data)

7.2. SCHOOL-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 2 : SCHOOL-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	SCHOOLS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
1	SCIENCE	114	57%
2	SOCIAL SCIENCE	68	34%
3	HUMANITIES	18	09%
TOTAL		200	100

(Source: Primary data)

It is understood from Table 2 that out of 200 respondents taken for the study, 57 % (114) of them are from Science disciplines. While 34 % (68) of the respondents are from social science disciplines, the remaining 18 % (9) of the respondents are from the humanities disciplines. Thus, science and social science disciplines alone constitute 91 % of the respondents.

7.3. RESIDING SECTOR-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 3 : RESIDING SECTOR-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	RESIDING SECTOR	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	RURAL	124	62%
2	URBAN	56	28%
3	SEMI URBAN	20	10%
TOTAL		200	100

(Source: Primary data)

Table 3 exhibits that a majority of 62 % (124) of the respondents are hailed from rural areas. While 28 % (56) of the respondents are from urban areas, just 10 % (20) of the respondents are hailed from semi-urban areas. Thus, majority of the respondents are from rural background.

7.4 . FREQUENCY OF USING E-RESOURCES

TABLE 4 : FREQUENCY OF USING E-RESOURCES

S.NO.	FREQUENCY OF USING E-RESOURCES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	DAILY	72	36%
2	2-3 TIMES A WEEK	82	41%
3	2-3 TIMES A MONTH	32	16%
4	ONCE IN A MONTH	14	7%
	TOTAL	200	100

(Source: Primary data)

Table 4 illustrates that 41 % (82) of the respondents use e-resources 2-3 times a week. It is worthwhile to note that 36 % (72) of the respondents use e-resources daily. While 16 % (32) of the respondents use e-resources 2-3 times a month, just 7 % (14) of the respondents use e-resources once a month.

7.5 . HOURS SPENT IN A WEEK (USE OF E-RESOURCES)

TABLE 5: HOURS SPENT IN A WEEK (USE OF E-RESOURCES)

S.NO.	HOURS SPENT IN A WEEK (USING E-RESOURCES)	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	LESS THAN 1 HR A WEEK	36	18%
2	2-3 HRS A WEEK	96	48%
3	5-6 HRS A WEEK	24	12%
4	7-9 HRS A WEEK	20	10%
5	MORE THAN 10 HRS A WEEK	24	12 %
	TOTAL	200	100

(Source: Primary data)

It is made clear in Table 5 that 48 % (96) of the respondents spend 2-3 hours a week in the use of e-resources. While 18 % (36) of the respondents use less than an hour every week to utilize e-resources, 10 % (20) of the respondents devote 7-9 hours a week for using e-resources. 12 % (24) of the respondents each spend 5-6 hours and more than 10 hours a week in making use of e-resources.

7.6. ACCESS POINTS - E-RESOURCES

TABLE 6 : ACCESS POINTS - E-RESOURCES

S.NO.	ACCESS POINTS - E-RESOURCES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	DR.T.P.M. LIBRARY UGC INFONET	132	52.8
2	STUDENTS' AMENITY CENTRE, MKU	50	20.0
3	PERSONAL COMPUTER	52	20.8
4	NET CAFE	16	06.4
	TOTAL	250	100

(Source: Primary data)

It is inferred from Table 6 that Dr.T.P.M Library UGC Infonet centre is the most preferred location among 132 (52.8%) respondents for accessing e-resources. While 52 (20.8%) respondents' access e-resources with their personal computers with password protected Wi-Fi connectivity in the university campus, 50 (20%) respondents access their required e-resources in the Students' Amenity Centre of the University. Just 16 (6.4 %) respondents use Net Cafes to access e-resources.

7.7 . PURPOSE OF USING E-RESOURCES

TABLE 7: PURPOSE OF USING E-RESOURCES

S.NO.	PURPOSE OF USING E-RESOURCES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	RESEARCH WORK	52	21.49
2	CURRENT INFORMATION, GK & COMPETITIVE EXAMS	106	43.80
3	PROJECTS, ASSIGNMENTS AND SEMINARS	48	19.83
4	STUDY MATERIALS	36	14.88
	TOTAL	242	100

(Source: Primary data)

It is illustrated in Table 7 that 106 (43.8 %) respondents use e-resources to get to know current information, to improve their general knowledge and to get materials for preparing themselves for various competitive examinations. 52 (21.49%) respondents use e-resources to get information for carrying out their research work. While 48 (19.83 %) respondents use e-resources for completing their class projects/assignments / seminars, 36 (14.88 %) respondents access e-resources to get materials related to their academic studies.

7.8. REASONS FOR USING E-RESOURCES

TABLE 8: REASONS FOR USING E-RESOURCES

S.NO.	REASONS FOR USING E-RESOURCES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	RELIABILITY	38	18.45
2	ACCURACY	48	23.3
3	AUTHENTICITY	22	10.68
4	USABILITY	74	33.92
5	OBJECTIVITY	16	7.767
6	OTHER REASONS	08	3.883
	TOTAL	206	100%

(Source: Primary data)

Table 8 shows that usability is the major attractive force for using e-resources as per 74 (33.92 %) respondents followed by 48 (23.3 %) respondents who felt that accuracy is the main reason why e-resources are used by them. While 38 (18.45 %) respondents use e-resources because of their reliability, 22 (10.68 %) respondents resort to e-resources because of authentic information available therein. Objectivity of e-resources drew the attention of 16 (7.76 %) respondents. Thus, Usability, accuracy and reliability are the top three reasons for the use of e-resources by the respondents.

7.9. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN ACCESSING E-RESOURCES

TABLE 9 : PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN ACCESSING E-RESOURCES

S.NO.	PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN ACCESSING E-RESOURCES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	SLOW ACCESS SPEED	62	29.0
2	DIFFICULTY IN FINDING RELEVANT INFORMATION	46	21.5
3	OVERLOAD OF INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET	58	27.1
4	TOO LONG TO VIEW/DOWNLOAD PAGES	36	16.8
5	PRIVACY PROBLEM	12	5.61
	TOTAL	214	100%

(Source: Primary data)

It is clear from Table 9 that slow access speed is the major problem faced by 29 % (60) of the respondents while accessing e-resources. Overloaded information on the internet is the major problem for 27.1 % (58) of the respondents. 21.5 % (46) of the respondents opined that difficulty in finding relevant information is their biggest challenge in accessing e-resources. While 16.8 % (36) of the respondents faced the problem of spending too much time to view / download pages, privacy is the problem for 5.61 % (12) of the respondents.

7.10 . LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH E-RESOURCES

TABLE 10 : LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH E-RESOURCES

S.NO.	SATISFACTION WITH E-RESOURCES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	FULLY SATISFIED	74	37 %
2	PARTIALLY SATISFIED	96	48 %
3	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	30	15 %
TOTAL		200	100 %

(Source: Primary data)

It is inferred from Table 10 that 48 % (96) of the respondents are partially satisfied with the kind of e-resources made available in the University UGC INFONET. While 37 % (74) of the respondents are fully satisfied with the quantity and quality of e-resources made available in the University, 15 % (30) of the respondents are somewhat satisfied with the available e-resources.

7.11 . AREAS OF TRAINING REQUIRED

TABLE 11: AREAS OF TRAINING REQUIRED

S.NO.	AREAS OF TRAINING REQUIRED	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	INTERNET SKILLS	68	30.9
2	INFORMATION SEARCH AND RETRIEVAL SKILLS	66	30.0
3	OPEN SOURCE E-RESOURCES	24	10.9
4	SUBSCRIBED E-RESOURCES	62	28.2
	TOTAL	220	100

(Source: Primary data)

Table 11 makes it obvious that 30.9 % (68) of the respondents need to training on 'internet skills' and 30 % (66) of the respondents like to undergo training on 'information search and retrieval skills'. While 28.2 % (62) of the respondents call for training on the use of subscribed e-resources, 10.9 % (24) of the respondents require training programmes on the use of ' open source e-resources'.

8. SUGGESTIONS

❖ More e-books should be added to the existing e-resource collections.

❖ More full-text databases, e-theses, e-dissertations may be included in the library e-resource bank with a slant to social science materials.

❖ The speed of inter connectivity may be increased. Few leased / dedicated lines may be established exclusively for UGC INFONET centre.

❖ Information Literacy classes may be conducted to educate the users on the methods and tactics of finding and evaluating right information. How to extract specific information amidst the overloaded information explosion may be the focus of such classes.

❖ The students are least aware of e-journals and e-books. They should be introduced to the variety of e-journal and e-book packages subscribed by the university library for the benefit of students. The utility of such wonderful updated sources of information is to be demonstrated to them. Especially the M.Phil Scholars and Ph.D Research Scholars are to be trained in the use various e-journal and e-books subscriptions for their research work.

❖ The university library should conduct orientation programme every year for the fresh students of post graduate on the existence and usefulness of various e-resources made available for them in the university campus.

9. CONCLUSION

Studies and researches in social sciences have gained different momentum and perception these days thanks to the availability of lot of original research data and secondary data of both national and international issues at a click away in this Google World. The identification and exploration of information needs and information seeking behaviour of the post graduate students and the research scholars of the school of social sciences in the present age of information explosion needs a revisit when the freely accessible e-resources are found to be in leaps and bounds in the university campus. Their expectations, problems, needs and suggestions need to be addressed and acceded to. This study of perception and usage of e-resources among the PG students and Research scholars has projected some concrete feedback to the university authorities to think of certain remedial measures to maximize the use of available e-resources (Padma & Ramasamy, 2018).

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