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## **Awareness of Information Literacy among Students of Arts and Science Colleges in Tirunelveli – A Study**

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### ***Abstract***

The paper deals with the awareness of information literacy among students of Arts and Science colleges in Tirunelveli. The objectives of the study is to identify the level of awareness of information literacy among students, to know the purpose of accessing library resources, to identify the search strategy tool used to access information, to know the level of usage of library resources, to identify the problem faced while accessing information and to know the level of satisfaction among students about their information literacy skills. This study deals with survey method and questionnaire tool was used for data collection. The research sample consists of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The questionnaires were distributed randomly among the sample of 300 students in the selected three Arts and Science colleges in Tirunelveli. The collected data was analysed, interpreted and tabulated by using statistical tools like simple percentage and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMSS) with the help of SPSS software. This study can be used to know how to locate, access, and evaluate the right information in right time. It helps the librarian and faculty members to guide the students as to where they can access the right source of information and how to evaluate their needed information and to satisfy the information users in an easy manner.

**Keywords:** Information Literacy, Awareness, Students, Arts and Science Colleges, Library.

### **Introduction**

In the developing countries, the educational systems of universities and higher educational institutions are facing a major challenge today and it is concerned with the quality of students produced by these educational systems who are not fit in the knowledge

society. Due to the lack of proper learning process among the students in the higher educational institutions, the system of education is unable to produce students who can become critical, analytical and creative thinkers. According to Candy (2002)<sup>1</sup> information literacy is sufficiently attuned to the need for users learning skills, lifelong learning, learning throughout life and every learning which need one of the skills covered under information literacy and it was cited by Aulich. Bruce (2002)<sup>2</sup> who explained that information literacy is central to achieving both personal empowerment and economic development. So information literacy is acting as an inevitable and essential component in universities and higher educational institutions in the twenty-first century. The concept of information literacy can be developed among the students by setting a goal to turn out the higher educational institutions into a hub which develops the characteristics that support learning throughout their lifetime.

Information literacy is “a set of abilities requiring students to recognize when information is needed and to have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information” (ACRL, 2000, p.1)<sup>3</sup>. The set of skills needed to find retrieve, analyse and use information. Information Literacy means to empower people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals(Horton & UNESCO, 2008, p18)<sup>4</sup>. It helps in the study to measure the level of information literacy among the students in all disciplines. Information literacy forms the basis for self learning throughout their life. It creates self confidence which directs them based on the needed information and transforms them to master a lifelong learning process.

In the early 1970's the basic idea of information literacy emerged with the advent of information technologies. Paul Zurkowski (1974)<sup>5</sup> former president of the United States information industries association was the first person who introduced the concept and the term information literacy in his proposal submitted to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. In general information literacy is the concept of creating awareness about locating, accessing, evaluating and using information that facilitates lifelong learning process in the higher educational institutions and university environment. This information literacy concept is essential in higher educational institutions to enhance the utilization of library information resources in an effective way.

## **Reveiw of Literature**

Manthiramoorthis, Saravanakumar and Thamaraiselvi (2018)<sup>6</sup> examined the information literacy skills among job seekers in Chennai city. Survey method was used for the study. The population of the study was District Central Library, State Central Library and circle libraries users. From the population the sample was selected. Questionnaire tool was used to gather data among the job seekers who were using public library. The findings of the study was that majority of the respondents are searching jobs in central government sector. Their level of awareness of information literacy is moderate and they were facing problems like lack of training, lack of knowledge of search techniques and their internet searching skills were low. The suggestions given by the study was that the public library should instruct by giving orientation about how to locate, search, evaluate and use information in an effective and efficient manner.

Shamin Aktar Munshi and Priyanka Nagar (2016)<sup>7</sup> conducted a study to examine the information literacy skills among the postgraduate students at Aligarh Muslim University, India. The purpose of the study was to know their basic needs of information and their search strategies to access information in the library as well as web based resources. The findings of the study could explore that students are aware with the available information sources in the library. Google is the most preferred search engine among the students. The study also suggested that in order to improve their information literacy skills, the library should take some valuable steps like motivational lectures, workshop, conference and online literacy program etc which will help to instruct students as to where to locate, access and how to evaluate information to meet their information needs.

Bhoop Singh and Rajkumar Basker (2014)<sup>8</sup> have examined the knowledge and awareness of information literacy among B.Tech students of engineering colleges of Jaipur, Rajasthan. The objective of the study was to assess the information literacy skills of B.Tech students. Totally 400 questionnaires were distributed to 40 engineering and technical colleges in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The result shows that information literacy skills are essential and should be provided. It plays a vital role among the students of engineering colleges. Therefore the suggestion of the study is that there is a need among the students to increase their information literacy skills.

Manthiramoorthis, Thamaraiselvi and Perumalsamy (2014)<sup>9</sup> had carried out a survey to study about the information literacy among engineering students in Chennai. The purpose of the study was to analyse the various information literacy programs provided by the

libraries in engineering colleges, to know the purpose and to identify the proficiency level of information literacy provided by the libraries among the students. The result of the study reveals that 84.5% of the students agree that development of ICT and web tools are efficiently providing information literacy resources. The suggestion of the study is that in order to increase the knowledge of information literacy skills, the engineering college libraries should instruct their users about information literacy through printed, online information literacy instruction and orientation program.

### **Objectives**

The following are the objectives of the study :

1. To know the level of awareness of information literacy among the students.
2. To identify the purpose of accessing the information resources.
3. To know the search strategy tools used to access the information resources.
4. To know the usage of information resources.
5. To identify the level of satisfaction of information resources among the students.
6. To analyze the problems faced while accessing the information resources.

### **Hypotheses:**

1. There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and the purpose of accessing the information resources.
2. There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and search strategy tools.
3. There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and usage of information resources.

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted using descriptive method and adopted a survey strategy through questionnaire as a tool for gathering data. The population of the study was three Arts and Science college students who are doing undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Tirunelveli city. From the population, the sample was selected randomly. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among the sample out of which 240 (150 from UG and 90

from PG) filled in questionnaires were received. The response rate is 80%. The collected data was analysed, interpreted and tabulated by means of simple percentage and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses by using SPSS software. Six questions were framed for the objectives and four statements were framed to test the hypotheses.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data was analyzed and interpreted using the results provided in the tables.

**Table 1: Level of Awareness of Information Literacy**

Table 1: Level of awareness of information literacy

SL. No	Questions	Undergraduate Mean	Postgraduate Mean
1	Identify the information needed	3.20	4.50
2	Locate and Access of information resources	3.08	4.20
3	Evaluate the information resources	2.94	4.02
4	Analyze the existing information resources	2.90	4.10
5	Economic, Legal and Social issues	2.40	3.08

(Highly aware-5, Aware-4, Somewhat aware-3, Less aware-2, Very less aware-1)

Table 1 shows the level of awareness about information literacy among the students in the Arts and Science colleges. According to the undergraduate students, they are aware about identifying the information needed (with the mean value 3.20) followed by respondents who are somewhat aware to locate and access the information resources (with the mean value

3.08). Respondents who are less aware to evaluate the information resources, less aware about analysing the existing information resources and who have economic, legal and social issues while accessing information resources have the mean values 2.94, 2.90 and 2.40 respectively.

Postgraduate students pointed that they are highly aware about identifying the information they needed (with the mean value 4.50) followed by respondents who can locate and access information resources (with the mean value 4.20) followed by respondents who can evaluate the information resources (with the mean value 4.10). The respondents who can analyze the existing information resources have the mean value 4.02 whereas respondents who are somewhat aware of economic, legal and social issues while access information resources have the mean value 3.08.

Hence, it was concluded that majority of the respondents are highly aware about their information needs and most of the respondents are somewhat and less aware about the economic, legal and social issues of information resources.

**Table 2: Purpose of Accessing the Information Resources**

Table 1: Purpose to accessing the information resources

<b>SL. No</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Undergraduate N = 150</b>	<b>Postgraduate N = 90</b>
1	To prepare study materials for examinations and assignment	73 (48.67)	12 (33.33)
2	To write articles in journals, conference, seminar	30 (20.00)	35 (38.89)
3	Research related work	20 (13.33)	27 (30.00)
4	Update Knowledge	17 (11.33)	11 (12.22)
5	Recreational	10 (6.67)	5 (5.56)

**(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)**

Table 2 reveals the purpose of accessing the information resources. Out of 150 undergraduate students, majority of the respondents (48.67%) access information resources to prepare study material for examination and assignment followed by 20% of respondents who access information resources to write articles in journals, conference, and seminar. The percentage of the respondents who use the information resources for research related work, to update knowledge and recreation were found to be 13.33, 11.33 and 6.67 respectively.

According to the postgraduate students, majority of respondents (38.89%) access the information resources to write articles in journals, conference and seminar followed by 30% of them who use information resources for research related work, 33.33% respondents access the information resources to prepare study materials for examination and assignment whereas 12.22% respondents access information resources to update knowledge and 5.56% of the respondents access it for recreational activities.

Hence, it was concluded that majority of the undergraduate students access the information resources to prepare study materials for examination and assignment and very few of them are using it for recreational activities. The postgraduate students access the information resources mostly to write articles in journals, conference and seminar.

**Table 3: Search Strategy tools used to Access the Information Resources**

Table 1: Search strategy tools

<b>SL. No</b>	<b>Tools</b>	<b>Undergraduate N = 150</b>	<b>Postgraduate N = 90</b>
1	Online Public Access Catalogue(OPAC)	30 (20.00)	32 (35.56)
2	Self browsing through racks	40 (26.67)	25 (27.78)
3	Search using shelf list	20 (13.33)	15 (16.67)
4	Approach library staff	15 (10.00)	5 (5.56)



5	Friends and faculty members guidance	45 (30.00)	13 (14.44)
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(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)

The above table shows that majority of the undergraduate students (30%) depend on the guidance from friends and faculty members to search their needed information resources followed by 26.67% of them who browse through racks, 20% of the respondents use Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) for searching the information resources, 13.33% of them search by using shelf list whereas 10% of the respondents approach the library staff to access the information resources.

Majority of the postgraduate students (35.56%) search for their needed information resources through Online Public Access Catalogue followed by 27.78% of them who browse through racks, 16.67% of them search through shelf list, 14.44% respondents access the information resources by getting guidance from friends and faculty members whereas 5.56% of the respondents approach library staff to access the information resources.

The above findings concluded that majority of the undergraduate students depend on the guidance from friends and faculty members to access the information resources and very few of them approach library staff. According to the response received from the postgraduate students, majority of them access the information resources though Online Public Access Catalogue and very few of them approach library staff to access the information resources.

#### Table 4: Usage of Information Resources

Table 4: Usage of information resources

SL. No	Information Resources	Undergraduate N-150 Mean	Postgraduate N-90 Mean
1	Books / Reference Books	4.52	4.60
2	Journals / Magazines / Newspapers	3.98	4.64
3	Previous Exam Question	4.25	4.03

	Papers		
4	E-resources	4.34	4.84
5	Others	2.93	3.05

(Always-5, Frequently-4, Occasionally-3, Rarely-2, Never-1)

The above table indicates that majority of the undergraduate students are always using books and reference books as the most preferred information resources (with the mean value 4.52) followed by E-resources (with the mean value 4.34) and previous exam question papers (with the mean value 4.25) which are frequently used as the information resources. Journals, magazines and newspapers (with the mean value 3.98) are used occasionally among the students as information resources whereas other information resources (with the mean value 2.93) are rarely used.

The opinion about the usage of information sources among the postgraduate students reveals that majority of the respondents are using e-resources (with the mean value 4.84) as the most preferred information resources followed by journal, magazines and newspapers (with the mean value 4.64) followed by books and reference books (with the mean value 4.60) and previous exam question papers (with the mean value 4.03) which are used frequently by the respondents as the information resources whereas other information resources (with the mean value 3.05) are used occasionally.

Hence, it can be stated that majority of undergraduate students always use books and reference books and frequently use e-resources as the information resources. But on the other side, postgraduate students always use e-resources and journals, magazines and newspapers as the information resource.

**Table 5: Level of Satisfaction of Information Resources**

Table 5: Level of satisfaction

SL. No	Opinion	Undergraduate N = 150	Postgraduate N = 90
1	Highly Satisfied	35 (23.33)	21 (23.33)

2	Satisfied	50 (33.33)	36 (40.00)
3	Neither satisfied Nor dissatisfied	40 (26.67)	25 (27.78)
4	Dissatisfied	15 (10.00)	5 (5.56)
5	Highly dissatisfied	10 (6.67)	3 (3.33)

(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)

Table 5 denotes that majority of the undergraduate students are satisfied (33.33%) with the usage of information resources followed by 26.67% of them who are neutral, 10.00% of the respondents are dissatisfied and 6.67% of them are highly dissatisfied with the usage of information resources.

According to the postgraduate students, majority of the respondents are satisfied (40.00%) with the usage of information resources followed by 27.78% of them who are neutral about it, 5.56% of the respondents are dissatisfied and 3.33% of them are highly dissatisfied with the information resources.

Hence, it is stated that majority of the students are satisfied with the information resources and very few students are dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied with the information resources.

**Table 6: Problems Faced While Accessing Information Resources**

Table 6: Problem facing while access information resources

SL. No	Problems	Undergraduate N = 150	Postgraduate N = 90
1	Lack of information literacy	55 (36.67)	27 (30.00)
2	Lack of time	10 (6.67)	6 (6.67)
3	Lack of ICT	25 (16.67)	10 (11.11)
4	Lack of search techniques	45 (30.00)	44 (48.89)

5	Others	15 (10.00)	3 (3.33)
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(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)

Table 6 shows that majority of the undergraduate students are facing problems such as lack of information literacy (36.67%) followed by lack of search techniques(30.00%). While 16.67%, 10.00% and 6.67% of the respondents feel that it is lack of ICT , other problems and lack of time are the problems faced by them respectively.

Majority of the postgraduate students are face the problems like lack of search techniques (48.89%) followed by lack of information literacy (30.00%), 11.11% of the students are facing the problem of lack of ICT, 6.67% respondents feel it is lack of time whereas 3.33% of them have other problems while accessing information resources.

Hence, it can be concluded that majority of the undergraduate students are facing the problems as a result of lack of information literacy and postgraduate students are facing problems as a result of lack of search techniques while accessing the information resources.

### Testing of the Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested on awareness of information literacy among students of Arts and Science colleges in Tirunelveli city.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and the purpose of accessing the information resources.

**Table 7: Relationship between the students' level of awareness of IL and Purpose of**

		Level of Awareness	Purpose to access
Level of Awareness of Information Literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.955
	Sig. (2. tailed)		0.001
	N	240	240
Purpose of Access Information Resources	Pearson Correlation	0.955	1
	Sig. (2. tailed)	0.001	
	N	240	240

### accessing IR

\*Level of Significant is 0.01 (2.tailed)

In order to analyse whether there is a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of information literacy and their purpose of accessing information

resources, the collected data relating to the two variables were cross tabulated and the result is shown in table 7.

From the above table, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient  $r=0.955$ . Since, the significant level of Correlation is 0.001 (which is less than 0.01) so it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of LIR and the usage of the resources.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and search strategy tools.

**Table 8: Relationship between the students' level of awareness of IL and Search**

		Level of Awareness	Search strategies tools
Level of Awareness of Information Literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.665
	Sig. (2. tailed)		0.001
	N	240	240
Search strategies tools	Pearson Correlation	0.665	1
	Sig. (2. tailed)	0.001	
	N	240	240

**strategy tools**

\*Level of Significant is 0.01 (2.tailed)

In order to find out whether there is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and search strategy tools, the collected data pertaining to the two variables were cross tabulated and the result is shown in table 8.

From the above table, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient  $r=0.665$ . Since the significant level of Correlation is 0.001 (which is less than 0.01) so it is can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and search strategy tools.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and usage of information resources.

**Table 9: Relationship between the students' level of awareness of IL and Usage of IR**

		Level of Awareness	Usage of IR
Level of Awareness of Information Literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.905
	Sig. (2. tailed)		0.001
	N	240	240
Usage of Information resources	Pearson Correlation	0.905	1
	Sig. (2. tailed)	0.001	
	N	240	240

\*Level of Significance is 0.01 (2.tailed)

The collected data of the two variables were cross tabulated to examine whether there is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and usage of information resources and the result is shown in table 9.

From the above table, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient  $r=0.905$ . Since, the significant level of Correlation is 0.001 (which is less than 0.01) so it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and usage of information resources.

### Findings and Conclusion

The findings of the study “awareness of information literacy among students of Arts and Science colleges in Tirunelveli” are given below:

1. According to the undergraduate students, they are aware to identify the information need (with mean value 3.20) whereas the Postgraduate students pointed that they are highly aware to identify their information need (with the mean value 4.50).
2. Out of 150 undergraduate students, majority of the respondents (48.67%) access information resources to prepare study material for examination and assignment and out of 90 Postgraduate students, 38.89% access the information resources to write articles in journals.
3. Majority of the undergraduate students(30%) search their needed information resources with the guidance of friends and faculty members whereas the majority of the postgraduate students(35.56%) search for the needed information resources in Online Public Access Catalogue.
4. Majority of the undergraduate students(with the mean value 4.52) always use book and reference books as the most preferred information resources while the usage of information sources among the postgraduate students reveals that majority of the respondents are using e-resources (with the mean value 4.84) as the most preferred information resources.

5. Majority of the undergraduate and postgraduate students who are satisfied with the usage of information resources is 33.33% and 40.00% respectively.
6. Majority of the undergraduate students (36.67%) are facing the problem of lack of information literacy whereas Majority of the postgraduate students(48.89%) face the problem of lack of search techniques while accessing information resources.

The study concluded that the undergraduate and postgraduate students have some knowledge about information literacy. In order to educate the students about information literacy, to provide them the skills required to access the needed information, to overcome the problems while accessing the needed information and to address the economic, legal and social issues with respect to information literacy, the librarian should conduct various training workshops, seminars and related programs.

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