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ANALYTICAL STUDY OF INFORMATION NEED AND USE PATTERN OF RESOURCES BY THE RESEARCH SCHOLARS OF ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Information is an extremely complex task involving the interaction among users, the information need, and the information resources. The heterogeneous environment which users confront in academic libraries today increases the complexity, as not only the format of information, but also the number of resources seems to grow exponentially. The objective of this study is to know the need and purpose of the use of information resources among the research scholars of Alagappa University. Among the other thing, this study examined the preferences of the scholars towards printed materials and electronic materials and patterns of using e-resources. The sample respondents chosen for this study consists of Research Scholar of Alagappa University from various disciplines. The findings of this study reveal the personal experiences and perceptions they have had on practices. In this way the present study analyzed the information need and the use pattern of resources by the users of Alagappa University library.

Keyword: *Information needs, Use pattern, Technologies, Electronic Resources, Information Sources, Information Usages*

Introduction

Information is the basic material for the decision making process. People need information, right from the organizational level to the personal level, from the highly educated and experience person to school children, from a very famous person to an ordinary person, for taking the right decision in every step of life. In this information age there is so much of information being generated that we are challenged with growth of information which leads to information outburst, exponential information trash. Thus, information seeking is a kind of communication behavior, which surely be influenced by many factors. Technological advancements and innovations have changed today libraries from store house to gateways of information. ICT has completely changed the scenario of traditional libraries and meaning of storage, preservation and dissemination

Information need is often understood in information science as evolving from a vague awareness of something missing and as culminating in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning. Information need is described as an anomalous state of knowledge or a gap in individual's knowledge in sense-making situations.

Information is applied to various areas of human activities. These include growth of knowledge & wisdom, decision making & management, research & development, manufacture

& industry, education, training & academic writing. It is information, which after tested over a long period of time by a continuous stream of minds resulting in its acceptance as truth, become wisdom, as information is a vital input in research education & training, industry & manufacturing.

Literature Search

Balasubramanian, P and Baladhandayutham, A (2008) discussed the results of a study of the information use pattern of faculty members of Madurai Kamaraj University in Madurai. Data were collected from seven schools in Madurai Kamaraj University. Results show that one hundred and thirty five respondents (45 percent) seek information for preparing lectures. Forty four percent of faculty members access more information from Internet. Seventy six percent of respondents read information materials in English and twenty percent read materials in Tamil. Most of the respondents used Google.com for searching information. They use frequently e-mail for communication. It is found that 25 percent of respondents use the Biotech database. Majority of respondents faced the common problem while seeking information i.e. lack of time and unavailability of information.

Khan, G., & Bhatti, R. (2012) reported the results of a study of information needs and seeking behavior of the law faculty members in the University of Peshawar and its seventeen affiliated law colleges, Khayber Pakhtookhawa (North Western Frontier Post NWFP, Pakistan). Their preferences regarding various information sources, channels, methods, library use patterns, convenient study places, satisfaction level and problems encountered by them in their information needs and seeking have been explored through quantitative survey. A structured questionnaire was designed and distributed among one hundred randomly selected law faculty members. The response rate was 86%. Results of the study revealed that majority of the law faculty member were not satisfied with the provision of libraries in their colleges. They showed dissatisfaction regarding the sources, resources, services and facilities provided by the law colleges' libraries. They preferred information in printed form and English language for preparing lecturers and other academic purposes. The study also found them dissatisfied regarding IT facilities i.e. computers and internet in their libraries. To meet their instant academic and research needs most of them had developed personal collections at homes and offices. A significant number of law faculty members appreciated the cooperative attitude of the library staff. The study suggested the provision of IT based sources and facilities and the assessment of teaching communities' information needs for planning better users' oriented services and developing effective library collection.

Research Methodology

The survey questionnaire method was used for the study. Structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to the different groups of users of Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out the frequency of visit, length of time spent, information access pattern used, search engines used, use pattern of the information

sources, awareness level of the existing facility, the ease with which the users can handle the e-resources and the purposes for which they were accessed and the like. The total population includes 270 registered users of the library made up of Research Scholars from Alagappa University. A questionnaire has been prepared in such a way that the respondents could easily understand the items. A total number of 285 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents. The investigator could collect questionnaires from only 270 out of 285 respondents among whom the questionnaires were distributed. This constitutes 94.7% (270/285) of the total response.

The problem under the study is “Analytical study of Information Need and use Pattern of Resources by the Research Scholars of Alagappa University”

Objectives of the study

- i. To identify the purpose of information needs by the Research Scholars of Alagappa University;
- ii. To find out the preferred place for information usage and time spent per week by the Research Scholars;
- iii. To find out the use patterns of various sources of Researchers in Alagappa University;
- iv. To identify the difficulties obtaining information from online search;
- v. To study the information needs of the M.Phil and PhD scholars;
- vi. To examine and understand the common problem faced by the users to access the information resources;

Analysis and Interpretation

Table – 1

Demographic Profile of the respondents

S.No	Demographic Profile	Frequency	%
1.	Gender		
	Male	104	38.52
	Female	166	61.48
	Total	270	100%
2.	Age Group		
	20-24	76	28.15
	25-29	123	45.55
	30 and above	71	26.30
	Total	270	100%
3.	Domicile		
	Urban	112	41.48
	Semi – Urban	62	22.96
	Rural	96	35.56
	Total	270	100%

4.	User Category		
	M.Phil	128	47.41
	Ph.D	142	52.59
	Total	270	100%

The above table – 1 categorize the demographic details of the respondents of an Analytical study of information need and use patter of resources among the research scholars of Alagappa University.

It is found from the above table that 61.48% of the research scholars are female and 38.52% of them are male.

It is understood from the above table that 45.55% of the respondents are in the age group of 25-29, 28.15% respondents are in the age of 20-24 and 26.30% are of 30 and above.

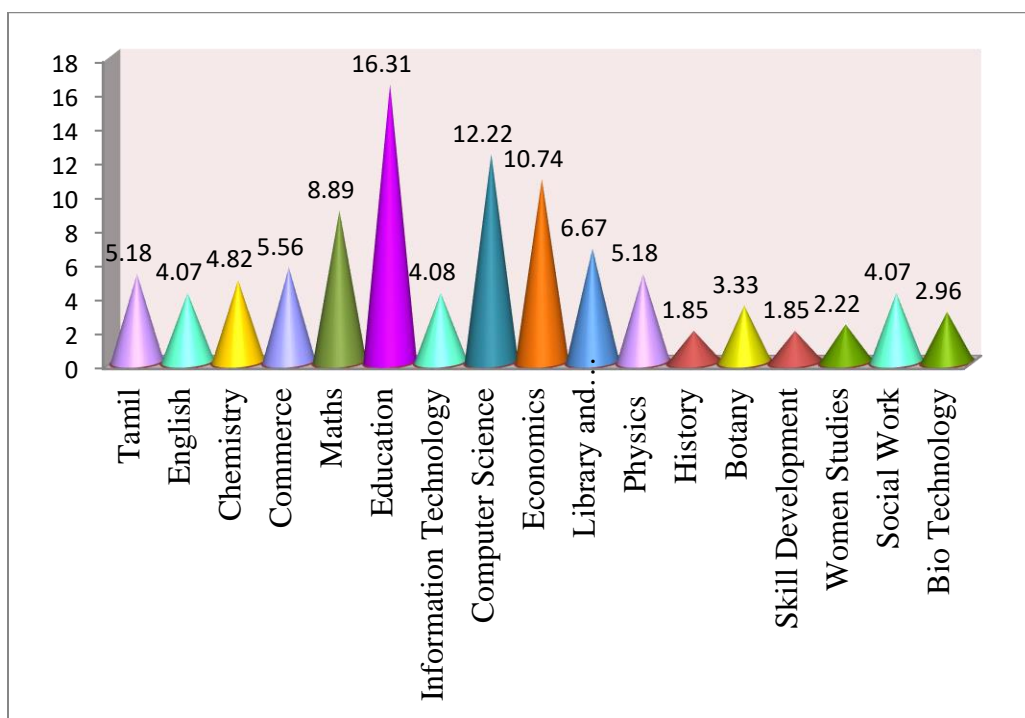
It is evident from the above table, 41.48% of research scholars are from urban area, 35.56% of the respondents are were living in semi-urban and 22.96% of the respondents are from rural background.

It is observed from the above table that 52.59% of the respondents were doing PhD and 47.41% of the respondents are doing their M.Phil in Alagappa University.

Table – 2
Distribution of Respondents by their department

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Tamil	14	5.18
2.	English	11	4.07
3.	Chemistry	13	4.82
4.	Commerce	15	5.56
5.	Maths	24	8.89
6.	Education	44	16.31
7.	Information Technology	11	4.08
8.	Computer Science	33	12.22
9.	Economics	29	10.74
10.	Library and Information Science	18	6.67
11.	Physics	14	5.18
12.	History	5	1.85
13.	Botany	9	3.33
14.	Skill Development	5	1.85
15.	Women Studies	6	2.22
16.	Social Work	11	4.07
17.	Bio Technology	8	2.96
	Total	270	100%

Chart – 1

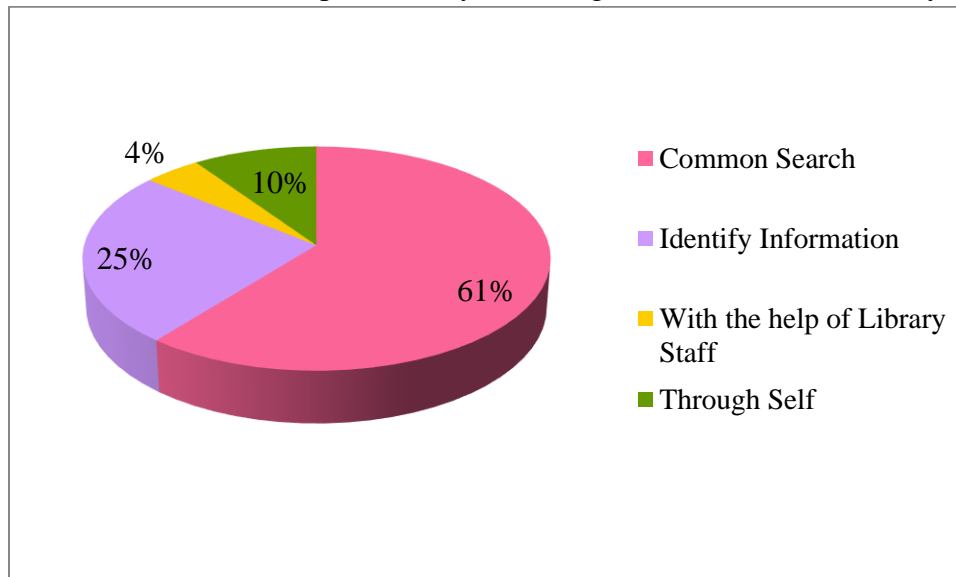


There are many departments are functioning in Alagappa University. Some departments are used for this study. It is noted from the above table and chart that the respondents major of studies. 16.31% of the respondents are from education department, 12% are from the department of Computer Science, 10.74% are in Economics, 8.89% of the scholars were doing research in the department of Maths, 6.67% are in Library and Information Science, 5.56% are from Commerce department, 5% of the respondents are in the department of Tamil and in Physics, 4% of the research scholars were from the departments of English, Chemistry, Information Technology and Social Work, 2.96% and 2% were from Department of Bio Technology followed by Women Studies and the least 1.85% of respondents carries two departments, they are Department of History and Skill Development.

Table – 3
Distribution of the respondents on by their searching of resources

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Common Search	164	60.74
2.	Identify Information	68	25.19
3.	With the help of Library Staff	12	4.44
4.	Through Self	26	9.63
Total		270	100%

Chart – 2
Distribution of the respondents by searching of resources in the library



It is evident from the above chart – 2 denote the respondents of searching resources in the Alagappa University Library. 61% of the respondents are searching the library for materials by way of common search, 25% of the respondents are searching by identifying information, 10% of the research scholars are searching by their own and only 4% of the respondents are only getting help through library staff members for search library resources.

Table – 4
Distribution of respondents by frequency of using the library

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Daily	154	57.03
2.	Weekly	69	25.56
3.	Fortnightly	31	11.48
4.	Monthly	16	5.93
Total		270	100%

It is highlighted from the above table that more than half (57.03%) of the respondents were using library daily, 25.56% of the respondents are using weekly, 11.48% of the respondents are going to library only fortnightly and very few (5.93%) of the respondents were visiting the university library at monthly.

Table – 5
Distribution of the respondents for accessing library

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Internet	57	21.11
2.	Online Resources	41	15.18
3.	E-Journals	89	32.97
4.	E-Books	62	22.96
5.	E-Thesis & Dissertation	14	5.19
6.	Subject Gateways	7	2.59
Total		270	100%

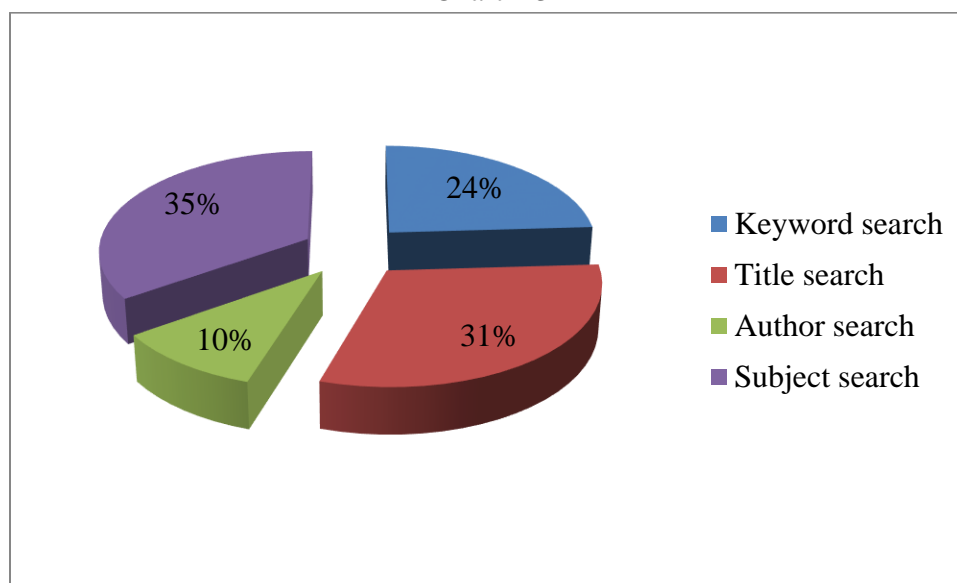
It is clear from the above table, 32.97% of the research scholar are using E-Journals, 22.96% and 21.11% are followed by E-Books and Internet, 15.18% of the respondents were using online resources, 5.17% are using Electronic Thesis and Dissertations and finally only 2.59% of the respondents are using subject gateways.

Table – 6
Distribution of the respondents by their way of searching techniques

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Keyword search	65	24.07
2.	Title search	83	30.74
3.	Author search	28	10.37
4.	Subject search	94	34.81

Total	270	100%
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Chart – 3



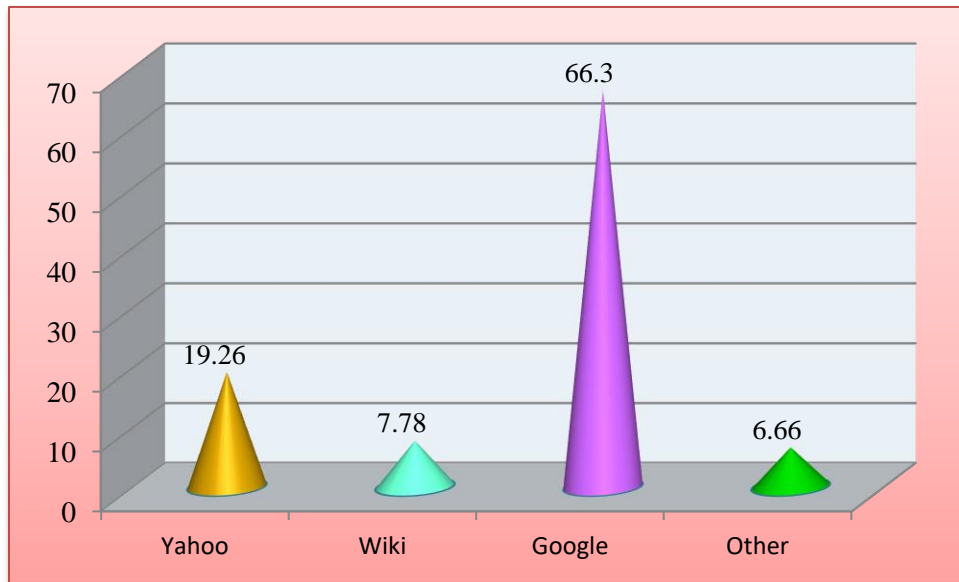
The above table 7 and chart 3 defines the respondents by their way of searching techniques. 34.81% of the research scholars were searching materials by giving the subject name, 30.74% of the respondents were searching by title, 24.07% of the respondents were used to search by keyword search and only 10.37% of the research scholars were searching by giving author name.

Table – 7

Distribution of the respondents of using search engine

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Yahoo	52	19.26
2.	Wiki	21	7.78
3.	Google	179	66.30
4.	Other	18	6.66
Total		270	100%

Chart – 4



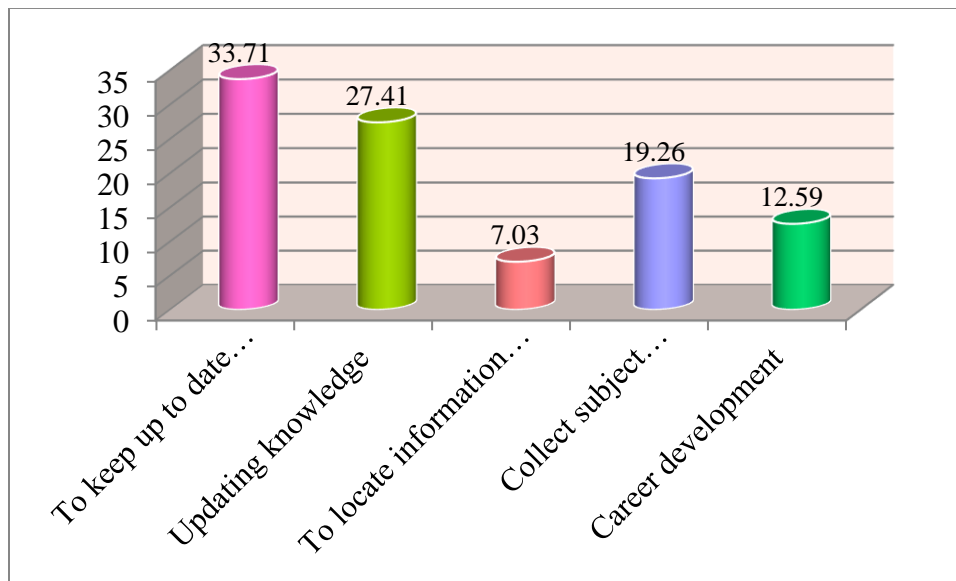
It is understood from the above table that 66% of the respondents prefer Google for searching, 19% of the scholars were prefer Yahoo, 7.78% and 6.66% were continued by Wiki and other search engines.

Table – 8

Distribution of the respondents for purpose of using the university library

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	To keep up to date with current record	91	33.71
2.	Updating knowledge	74	27.41
3.	To locate information for your arraignment or project	19	7.03
4.	Collect subject information	52	19.26
5.	Career development	34	12.59
Total		270	100%

Chart – 5



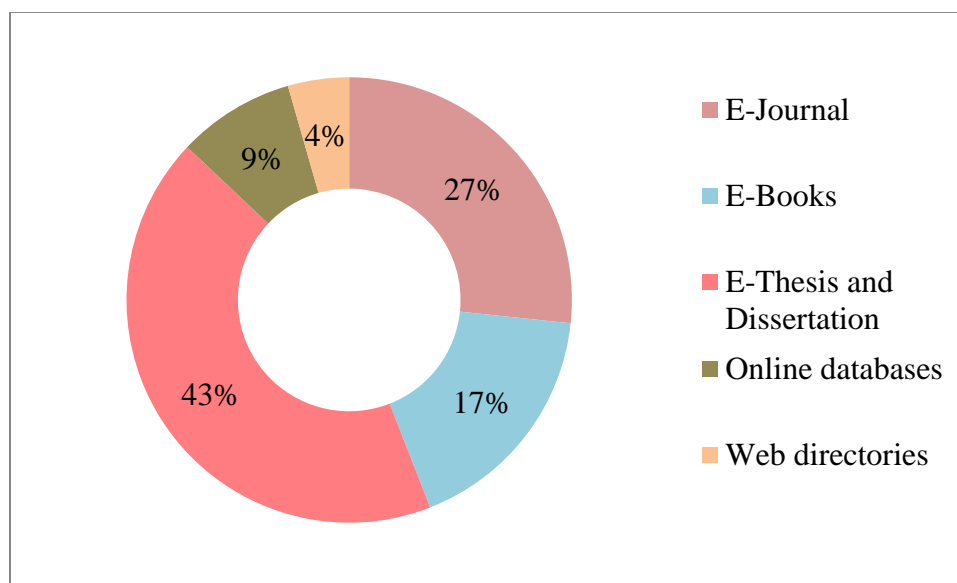
It is found from the above table and chart that 33.71% of the respondents were using university library to keep up-to-date with current affairs, 27% of the scholars were using to update their knowledge, 19% of the respondents were used to collect subject based information, 12.59% of the scholars were using university library to develop their career and finally 7% of the respondents were using to locate information for assignment and projects.

Table – 9

Distribution of the respondents on awareness of E-Resources

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	E-Journal	72	26.67
2.	E-Books	47	17.41
3.	E-Thesis and Dissertation	116	42.96
4.	Online databases	23	8.52
5.	Web directories	12	4.44
Total		270	100%

Chart – 6



It is observed from the above table and chart that highest percentage 42.96% of respondents were fully aware of Electronic Thesis and Dissertation, 26.67% of scholars were aware of E-Journals, 17.41% of respondents were fully aware of E-Books, 8.52% of the respondents on online databases and only 4.44% of the respondents were aware of web directories.

Table – 10

Distribution of the respondents on difficulties in obtaining information from online search

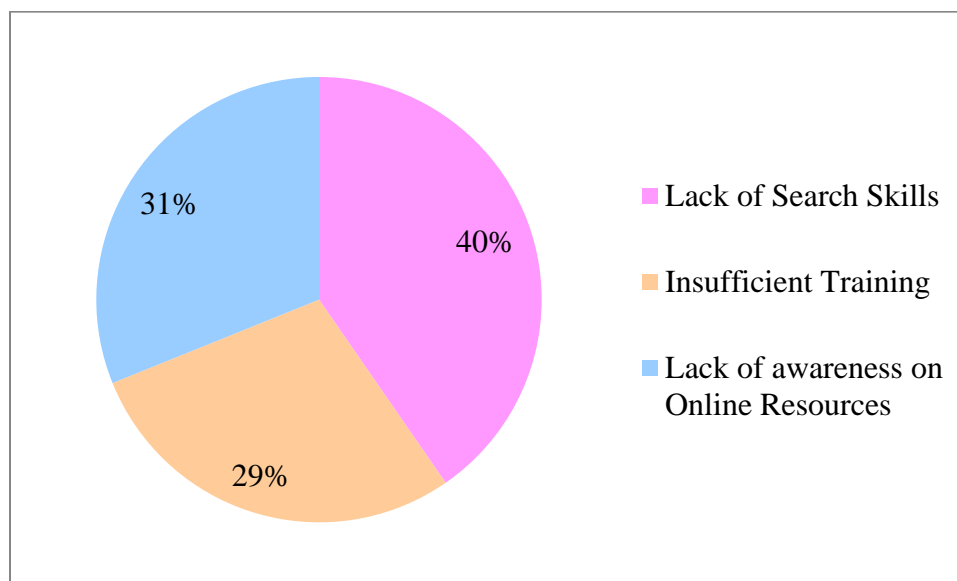
S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Lack of Sufficient computer	44	16.30
2.	Unfamiliarity	31	11.47
3.	Too much information available	14	5.18
4.	Very few online resources only available in my field	51	18.89
5.	Lack of time for searching	8	2.97
6.	Restriction of some resource access/no full text	42	15.56
7.	Lack of guidance and training	31	11.48
8.	Server down/Network Problem	49	18.15
Total		270	100%

The researcher wants to know the difficulties involved by the research scholars of Alagappa University while obtaining information from online search. 18.89% of the respondents felt that, only few information's are available in the net sources for their respective field, 18% of the respondents said that there is a problem in network while searching for information, 16% of the respondents felt that there is lack of computers available in university library, 11% of the scholars were said that information available in net are sometimes are unfamiliar and also the same 11% were said that there is a lack of guidance and training for using online resources, 5% of the respondents were said too much of unwanted information's are available while for some and finally 2.97% of the scholars felt that lack of time for searching for an information In online.

Table – 11
Distribution of the respondents for not using the library electronic resources

S.No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Lack of Search Skills	109	40.37
2.	Insufficient Training	77	28.52
3.	Lack of awareness on Online Resources	84	31.11
Total		270	100%

Chart – 7



Finally the researcher asked the research scholars to fill out the question for not using the library electronic resources. In this regard the above table 11 and chart 7, represents that 40% of the respondents were agree that they are lacking of searching skills, 31% of the respondents were

felt that, they are not having much awareness on online resources and 28.52% of the respondents felt that they have an insufficient training on electronic resources.

Major Findings

- i. 61.48% of the research scholars are female and 38.52% of them are male;
- ii. 45.55% of the respondents are in the age group of 25-29, 28;
- iii. 41.48% of research scholars are from urban area;
- iv. 52.59% of the respondents were doing PhD;
- v. 16.31% of the respondents are from education department;
- vi. 61% of the respondents are searching the library for materials by way of common search;
- vii. 57.03% of the respondents were using library daily;
- viii. 32.97% of the research scholar are using E-Journals;
- ix. 34.81% of the research scholars were searching materials by giving the subject name;
- x. 66% of the respondents prefer Google for searching;
- xi. 33.71% of the respondents were using university library to keep up-to-date with current affairs;
- xii. 42.96% of respondents were fully aware of Electronic Thesis and Dissertation;
- xiii. 18.89% of the respondents felt that, only few information's are available in the net sources for their respective field;
- xiv. 40% of the respondents were agree that they are lacking of searching skills;

Suggestions

There is a need to make a plan for effective way to utilize the library resources and services. Some suggestions which have been received by the research scholars are given under. They are:

- i. Need of advance training for researchers;
- ii. Use of library sources should be included in research curriculum;
- iii. Need to arrange orientation programmes or periodically training programmes for research scholars by the library staff members in library handling of technologies, computers, networks should be developed;
- iv. Access of E-Resources should be available at University hostels through local University networks;
- v. There is a need to market the library services;

Conclusion

Several experts have conducted a number of works in the field of usage of electronic information resources. The perspective of the present study is to find out the information need and use pattern of resources by research scholars of Alagappa University. There is a lack of expertness and awareness of electronic resources available in university library among the research scholars of Alagappa University. Serious efforts should take to conduct studies in the

use pattern of information resources and related technologies used by scholars and teacher of the university, which is much needed in this electronic information era.

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