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S. Meena

Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-627012, Tamil Nadu, India.

Dr. P. Balasubramanian

University Librarian, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-627012, Tamil Nadu, India., bala_phd2010@yahoo.com

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**UTILIZATION OF E-RESOURCES BY THE DISTANCE LEARNERS OF MADURAI
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S.Meena

Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-627012,
Tamil Nadu, India.

Dr.P.Balasubramanian

University Librarian, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti,
Tirunelveli-627012, Tamil Nadu, India.
E.mail id: bala_phd2010@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The paper analyses awareness and usage of the E-resources by the distance learners of Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai. The users of resources and services like the internet, IT skills in the Madurai Kamaraj University study centre, Madurai are employed for the study. A well structured questionnaire methodology is used for collecting the data from post graduate students, research scholars, faculty members and study centre in Madurai Kamaraj University at Madurai. ICT based resources and services include OPCs, CD-ROMS online database, e-journals, e-books, internet resource, print on demand (POD), e-mail publishing, wireless publishing, electronic link and web publishing etc., are the main focus of the study on contemporary elite users.

Keywords: *E-Resources, E-Services, Information Communication and Technology and
Distance learners.*

Introduction:

The open and distance education systems throughout the world face many new and exciting challenges in the utilization of e-resources and it becomes a necessity for library and information providers, enable distance learners to have ready access to library and information services. The present study gives rise to a variety of concerns, issues, and developments making the provision of these services quite unique and easier to access. For the distance learners, the importance of wide reading beyond the course text is an essential component of the learning

process. This is a crucial support that libraries and librarians must provide to distance learners. Hence the study focuses on the level of utilization of the existing e-resources by the taken group of clientele and tries to give suggestions for further development in the area.

Review of Literature:

Kanta Kapoor (2010) studied and analyzed the use of electronic journals in comparison with the print collections in the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University Library. A detailed analysis was made on the use of lending services, xerox facility and usage of electronic resources such as Science Direct, Emerald Management Xtra, ACM, IEL Library, subscribed to the library. The findings showed that many more users at the university were accessing electronic journals, it was not affecting the use of the print collection. The number of transactions and photocopy requests of print articles were continuously on the rise. The results provided useful information on the use of electronic journals in comparison with the print collections in a university library.

Latha and Nagarjan(2010) conducted a survey on Users and Their Usability Assessment of Information Communication Technology and E-Resources in Special Libraries in Tamil Nadu. The study showed that the use of ICT and E-resources are very common among the scientists and research scholars of special libraries and a majority of the scientists and research scholars are dependent on Information communication technology and e-resources to get the desired and relevant information. But the practical use of e-resources is not up-to the worth when it is compared to investments made in acquiring these resources; secondly infrastructure and training programs should also be revised as per requirements. It is observed that the availability of e-resources in the special libraries is almost sufficient for all existing disciplines, but the infrastructure to use these resources is not adequate and hence the ability to meet the requirements of users is hindered.

Lewis and Mallaiah (2014) studied the use of electronic information resources by the students, faculty members and research scholars in the engineering college libraries of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts. The responses on awareness and satisfaction levels on various library resources were gathered using Likert 5 point scale. The analysis revealed that respondents do experience inadequacy of information resources in their college libraries. They also suggested that there is need to evaluate the library resources, facilities and services regularly to meet changing needs of the users.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the use of library resources and services by the distance learners at study centres under Madurai Kamaraj University.
- To study the usage of library services with respect to three different factors, such as
- Reference Materials b) Environmental factors c) Electronic equipment.
- To find out the issues on selection of e-resources and differences in different modes of access.

Need of the Study:

For the distance learners, these e-resources are very significant, and the possibilities of utilization of these latest resources should be improved and taken to the clientele with clarifications. Hence it is imperative to undertake a research in this area because it is essential to restructure the methods and implementation process. Further the study would surely create awareness among the distance learners as well as academics to know and get more relevant information for further implementing the steps to improve the library services to the distance learners.

Methodology:

The present study was conducted in Madurai Kamaraj University study centre libraries in the distance learning institutions by funding more money and available infrastructure facilities to be utilized for the student's easy access. Questionnaire method was used to collect the data from the respondents. A total of 225 questionnaires were distributed and 216 questionnaires were received after filling the data and the response rate was 96%, the data collected were converted into SPSS for data analysis.

Period of the Study: Data have been collected from January 2019 to April 2019.

Digital Analysis and Interpretation:

Madurai Kamaraj University offers many programmes to the students in our country. But prominent among these are MBA, MCA and MSW programmes. Minimum numbers of

enrolment are identified in these three courses. The frequency distribution of the programme of the study is presented below:

Table No.1 Distribution of Respondents According to their Programme of study

Sl. No.	Programme of Study	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	MBA	48	22.2
2	MCA	88	40.7
3	MSW	80	37.1
Total		216	100.00

Sources: Primary Data

Table No.1 presents the frequencies of the courses pursued by the Distance Learners covered by the study. It is seen that majority (40.7%) of the respondents has been from MCA course, followed by MSW (37.1%) and MBA with (22.2%) of the respondents. The distribution indicates that the study has covered all the three courses with adequate representation.

Chart No.1 Programme of Study

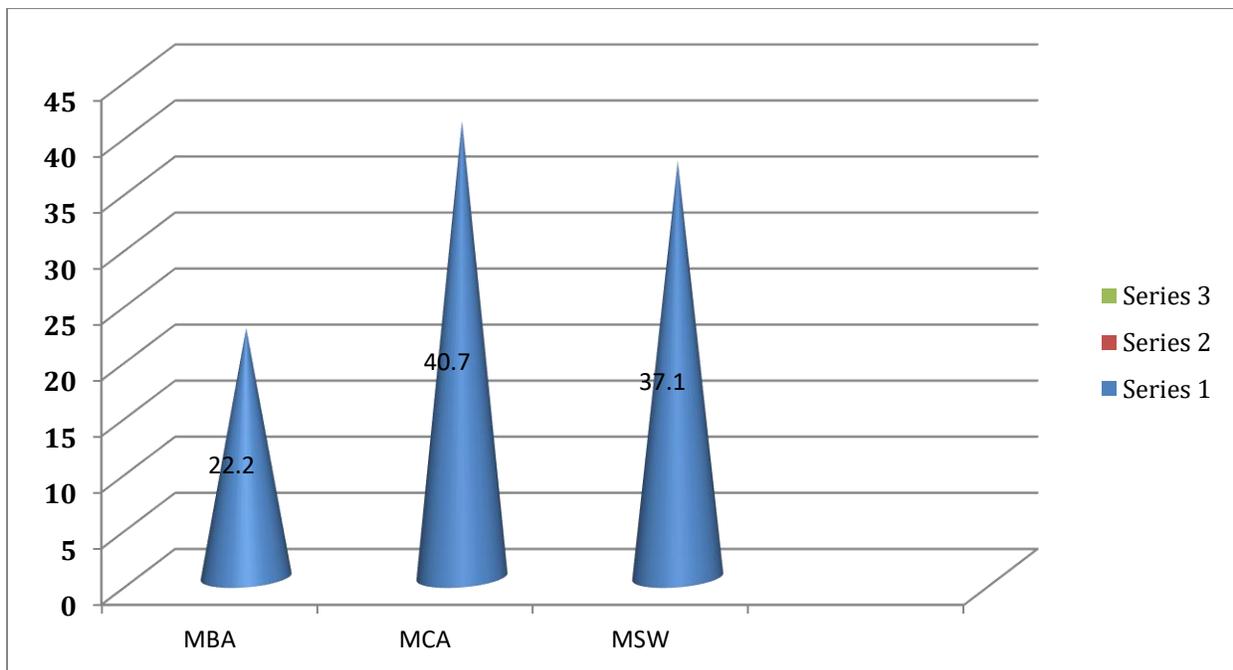


Table-2 Gender-wise distribution of Respondents

Sl. No.	Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	Male	92	42.6
2	Female	124	57.4
Total		216	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 presents the gender wise distribution of respondents out 216 Respondents, 92 are Male representing 42.6% of total sample and the remaining 124 are female representing to 57.4.

Table-3 Distribution of Age Group

The distance education courses offered by Madurai Kamaraj University are pursued by distance learners of different age. In this study three main classifications are considered and their distributions are represented in the following table.

Sl. No.	Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	Less than 25	82	38
2	26-35	98	45.37
3	36 and above	36	16.66
Total		216	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Different age groups of distance learners are distributed in the sample unit. It is observed a minimum of 45.4 percent are youngsters in the age group of 26-35 followed by 38 percent in the age group less than 25. A minimum of 16.6 percent distance learners are middle aged and aged in the range above 36.

Table No.4 distribution of Respondents Domicile

Sl. No.	Domicile	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	Rural	62	28.7
2	Urban	154	71.38
Total		216	100.0

Source: Primary Data

From the table No.4 it is inferred that only 43.6 percent of the respondents are from urban areas and that majority of 57% of the respondents are from rural areas.

Table No.5 Distribution of Employment Status

Sl. No.	Employment Status	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	Professional	48	22.2
2	Employed	128	59.3
3	Self Employment	40	18.5
Total		216	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table No.5 indicates that the study has featured three categories of respondents based on their employment status, majority (59.3%) of the respondents have been from the employed category, as wage earners constitute the major segment in any nation. This group is followed by professionals (22.2) and then by self-employed who constituted 18.5% of the total sample.

Table No.6 Respondents' awareness of ICT based Resources and services.

Academic Status	Awareness about the ICT			
	Very Good	Good	Poor	Total
P.G. Students	60 (57.15)	25 (23.80)	20 (19.05)	105
Research Scholars	24 (57.14)	10 (23.80)	08 (19.05)	42
Faculty Members	37 (53.62)	20 (28.98)	12 (17.39)	69
Total	121 (56.01)	55 (25.46)	40 (18.51)	216

Source: Primary Data

Awareness of ICT based resources and services, out of 216 total respondents 121 (56.01%) respondents have very good awareness of the use of ICT based resources and services, 55 (25.46%) respondents have good awareness of the use of ICT based resources and services and 40 (18.5%) respondents have poor awareness of the use of ICT based resources and services with regard to 105 PG students 57.15 percent of respondents have very good awareness of the use of ICT based resources and services and 19.05 percent of respondents have poor awareness of the use of ICT based resources and services among 88 research scholars 57.14 percent of respondents have very good awareness of the use of ICT based resources and services and 19.05% percent of respondents have poor awareness of the use of ICT based resources and services. From the total 69 faculty members, 53.62 percent of respondents have very good awareness and 17.39 percent of the faculty members have poor awareness of the use of ICT based resources and services.

Findings and Suggestions:

1. The distance learners agreed the arrangements for separate reading and conference room. They meticulously identified the availability of audio/visuals and seating capacity and satisfied with usage of hardware and software facilities and teleconferencing facilities in the centres. They expressed their agreement for disorganized library shelves and frequent power failure and disagree with difficulty in locating the specific references.

2. They accepted the maintenance of serenity in Madurai Kamaraj University Libraries.
3. They accepted the functioning of library in proper timings and it is catering to the needs of the learners. The atmosphere in the study centre is convenient for learning purpose.
4. They optimistically agreed with poor quality cassettes and improper arrangement of materials. The present timings of Madurai Kamaraj University Study Centre are convenient for the Distance Learners.
5. The distance learners with different place of domicile possess the various opinions about the convenience in the communication and transport. They differ significantly and in fact the rural distance learners find difficulties in transportation to visit the library.
6. The main problem with the internet is that it is difficult to locate the required information, because of information overload. Though internet has advantages, it still has inherent disadvantages. Arts and science colleges' users need training on how to use a system design based on user seeking behaviour.

Recommendations:

1. Journals, magazines and updated study materials should always be available in the library. More number of copies must be kept in the library.
2. Every information should be transparently displayed in the library premises i.e. counseling, practical schedule, recently published books, etc.,
3. They suffer from commutation problems. In fact, rural distance learners find it difficult to reach the study centres for getting the information. So telephones must be kept properly in all study centres to obtain information immediately.

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