



User Perception on Information Sources and Services in Central Universities in South India: An Evaluative Study

Prakash. B¹ and D.B. Patil²

¹Government First Grade College, Manhalli, Tq and Dist: Bidar 585403 (KS)

²Department of Library and Information Science, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga

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Abstract

Central University Libraries in India are currently at various stages of advancement in services and sources. This paper presents the results of a research study conducted to survey the user perception on information sources and services. It describes the availability and use of information sources by the post graduate students and research scholars of the Central university of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The study concluded that, in need and relevant information sources should be procured and skilled manpower and sufficient fund should be made available by which problems facing by users can be solved.

Keywords: Information seeking, users perceptions, information resources and services, central universities, south india.

Introduction

Libraries are seen as repositories of human experiences and knowledge. Although libraries have changed significantly over time, their cultural roles have remained essentially the same. Libraries are still responsible for acquiring and providing access to books, periodicals, and other information media that meet the educational, recreational and informational needs of their users.

Central Universities (CU) are universities established by Acts of Parliament by Government of India. They impart education on a wide range of general, special, technical and professional disciplines in variety of courses ranging from Diploma/Degree to Doctoral level in the country. Libraries as an important integral part of central university education system by providing suitable information material useful for study, teaching, education, and research purposes. CU libraries in India are actively involved in using IT to computerize their operations and offer information services to their users.

Literature Review: It could be observed that there are various research studies highlighting the studies on library resources and services in number of higher institutions including the universities. The present paper studies on the information resources and services of central universities on which a very handful of research has been found.

Gowda and Shivalingaiah concluded that the preferences of users depended upon the nature of resources available in libraries, while usage of electronic resources depended upon the type of IT infrastructure available in libraries¹. Sudha and Harinarayana found that non-professional students and female students expressed more involvement in knowing current affairs by their teachers than other respondents. Students from Kannada

medium and students studying in urban area revealed more encouragement by teachers than their counterparts². Gowda and Shivalingaiah in study of use of library facilities and services of a university library disclosed the significant differences in the satisfaction level of research scholars of different disciplines with facilities and services of libraries³. Pushpalatha and Mallaiah studied use of information resources in chemistry at Mangalore University library and found that Online Public Access Catalogue and assistance of library staff were the primary means to locate needed documents. About 58.92% PG students rated library collection as adequate to meet their information needs, whereas 40% research scholars and 83.33% of the teachers considered at partially adequate⁴.

Lakan brought forward that power outages, slow Internet service and insufficient computers were the factors affecting the provision and use of electronic information resources at Ahmadu Bello University⁵. Moghaddam and Talawar disclosed a growing interest in the use of electronic journals as the users had free access to electronic journals at all hours⁶. Rao and Babu found that more than three fourth respondents are visiting libraries for research studies and to write research papers, while a few users used e-resources. Authors suggested for right choice between print and electronic sources of information for collection development, Internet based services, resource sharing⁷.

Bansode and Pujar conducted a study to ascertain the use of the Internet by research scholar in science, social sciences and humanities. Users were using the Internet mainly for communication purpose that is e-mail as compared to information retrieval. There was need to give training on the use of the Internet so that researchers use appropriate tools and techniques to obtain information⁸. Khaiser and Madhu

“Expectations and Perceptions of the Users of the National Law School of India University Library (NLSIU): A Study”. Investigators ascertained the expectations and perceptions of users about the facilities and services offered by National Law School of India University Library. It was found that 88% users visited library daily, but faculty members were not the regular visitors to library. All the users rated library as an excellent, very good or good. Users wanted easy access to library and new books on emerging subjects⁹.

Naushad Ali and Hasan took a survey of teachers to assess the library and information services of Aligarh Muslim University library. Approximately 86% users responded to questionnaire. Survey brought to light that most of the users were visiting library to collect teaching material and borrow books, while approximately 14% teachers visited for research purpose. Majority of the teachers were not satisfied with overall functioning of library¹⁰. Shivalli concluded that reading habits of the users get affected with the non-availability of the required information in libraries¹¹. Babafemi found that more than 90% users rated library material as inadequate. Journals in stock were outdated and 14% users advocated the need to subscribe more journal titles¹².

Objectives of the Study: The primary objectives of the study are to identify: i. Purpose of visiting the Library and the time

spent on information resources, ii. Motivational factors for using information sources, iii. Frequency of using information resources to support their academic need, iv. Extent of relevance and usefulness of information sources, v. Problems faced in searching information sources,

Methodology

Scope and Methodology Followed: There are eight Central Universities in south India. The present study limited to those universities which are introduced in the year 2009 by the Parliament Act of India which includes Central University of Karnataka, Central University of Tamil Nadu and Central University of Kerala. Further users studies limited to Post Graduate Students and Research Scholars. A well-defined questionnaire has been adopted to collect the relevant data by visiting each university in the month of November 2013.

Results and Discussion

Time spent on reading information resources: Table-2 shows that 34% of the users from all the three universities spend less than 01 hours per day in library following 31% from 01 to 02 hours, 18% from 02 to 03 hours, 11% from 03 to 04 hours and only 06% spends more than 04 hours in a library.

Table-1
The Central Universities and Study Population covered

Sl. No	University	Questionnaires Received			
		PG Students	Research Scholars	Total	Percentage
1	Central University of Karnataka	182	40	222	43
2	Central University of Kerala	102	25	127	24
3	Central University of Tamil Nadu	170	0	170	33
	Total	454	65	519	100

Table-2
Time spent on reading information resources

#	Time Spent per day (In Hrs)	Universities												Grand Total	%
		Central University of Karnataka				Central University of Kerala				Central University of Tamil Nadu					
		PG	RS	Total	%	PG	RS	Total	%	PG	RS	Total	%		
1	0 to 01	55	9	64	29	52	4	56	44	59	0	59	35	179	34
2	01 to 02	67	11	78	35	27	6	33	26	52	0	52	31	163	31
3	02 to 03	35	9	44	20	11	7	18	14	29	0	29	17	91	18
4	03 to 04	16	7	23	10	9	6	15	12	19	0	19	11	57	11
5	Above 04	9	4	13	6	3	2	5	4	11	0	11	6	29	6
	Total	182	40	222	100	102	25	127	100	170	0	170	100	519	100
	PG : Post Graduate Students, RS: Research Scholars														

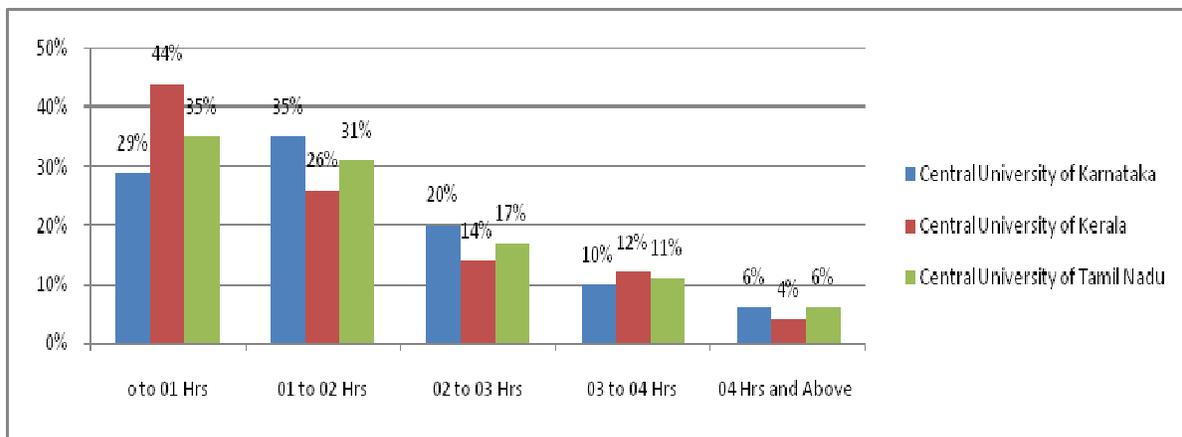


Figure-1
 Time spent on reading information resources

Table-3
 The Purpose of Visiting the Library

Purpose of Visiting	Frequency (n=519)	Percentage
Research Work	349	67
Preparing Class Notes	483	93
To update Knowledge	511	98
Writing Research Papers	176	34
To Borrow Books	492	95
To Consult Reference Sources	467	90
To use Internet/ CD-ROM Databases/ Online Resources	502	97

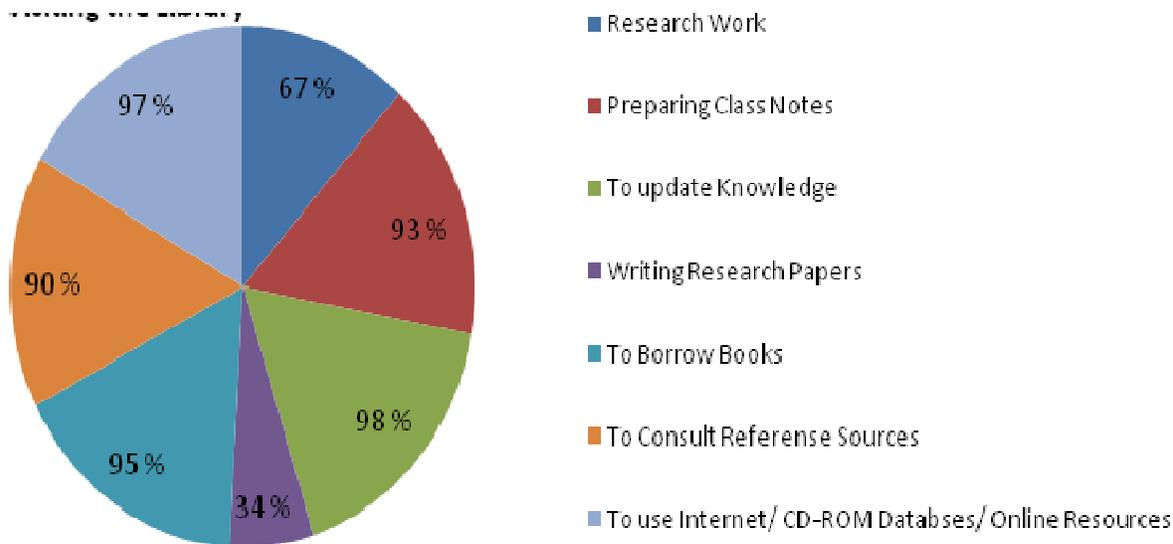


Figure-2
 Purpose of Visiting the Library

To update the knowledge is the main purpose of visiting the library (98%), to use the electronic resources is 97%, to borrow the books is 95%, to prepare the class notes is 93%, to consult references sources is 90%, but for writing research papers or for any other research work is low as 67% and 34% respectively table-3.

Motivational Factors for the Information Seeking by the Respondents: Need for information seeking is presented in the table-4. To avoid embarrassment in the classroom and to get praise from lecturers or colleagues is the factor felt little as 30%, felt moderately by 24% and felt strongly by 10%. The factor to get success in chosen profession is felt moderately by 41%, felt

little by 38%, felt strongly by 49% and did not felt at all is by 12%. More than 90% of the respondents seek information to satisfy their personal interest. To keep up with the current affairs is influenced by more than 95% of the respondents. To acquire knowledge factor is respondents by 49% who felt moderately, 39% felt strongly and only 10% felt little. Maximum number of respondents seeks information to complete assignments and to get better grades that is 97%.

Frequency of use of Information Sources to Support Academic Purpose: Table-5 presented the frequency of use of information sources to support academic purpose. 61% of the respondent's uses books very frequently, scientific journals are used by 46% very frequently and 41% frequently and only 9% used rarely. 5% of the respondents never used the conference/seminars proceeding but remaining respondents has used the same. 36% of the respondents use thesis and dissertation sometimes while 4% never used. More than 50% of the respondents used reference sources while 3% use rarely and 4% never. Only 11% of the respondents use OPAC very

frequently, 36% frequently and 33% sometimes and only 2% respondents not used the OPAC. All the respondents use the news papers and magazines except 3% respondents who use rarely. Internet services are used by 46% very frequently, 39% frequently, 10% respondents uses sometimes and only 5% uses rarely.

Relevance and Usefulness of Information Sources Available in the Library: Table-6 reveals the relevance and usefulness of information sources available in the library. Books and reference sources are using at the maximum level, 8% and 6% of the respondents felt to little extent. 32% of the respondents felt scientific journals are useful to full extent and only 3% said not at all useful. 36% and 34% of the respondents felt to some extent and to little extent regarding conferences/seminar proceedings. Library OPAC and also News papers and Magazines is felt considerably relevance and useful. Internet based services is felt to greater extend (33%), to full extent (32%) to some extent by (19%) to little extent by (15%) by the respondents.

Table-4
Motivational Factors for the Information Seeking by the Respondents

Psychological Need Factors	Did not feel at all	Felt Little	Felt Moderately	Felt Strongly
To get praise from lecturers/colleagues to avoid embarrassment at being unable to answer	186 (36%)	154 (30%)	125 (24%)	54 (10%)
Need for success in chosen profession	63 (12%)	196 (38%)	211 (41%)	49 (9%)
To satisfy a personal interest	51 (10%)	47 (9%)	259 (50%)	162 (31%)
To get reinforcement of values and thinking and keep up with current affairs	22 (4%)	45 (9%)	124 (24%)	328 (63%)
To acquire knowledge	11(2%)	53(10%)	253(49%)	202 (39%)
To complete assignments and get better grades	13 (3%)	59 (11%)	246 (47%)	201 (39%)

Table-5
Frequency of use of Information Sources to Support Academic Purpose

Information Sources	Very Frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Books	316 (61%)	139 (27%)	43 (8%)	21 (4%)	0 (0%)
Scientific Journals	241 (46%)	211 (41%)	58 (11%)	9 (2%)	0 (0%)
Conference/Seminar Proceedings	109 (21%)	129 (25%)	169 (33%)	86 (17%)	26 (5%)
Thesis and Dissertations	59 (11%)	149 (29%)	185 (36%)	107 (21%)	19 (4%)
Reference Sources (Dictionaries, Encyclopedia, Handbooks, Yearbooks, Dictionaries etc.,)	281 (54%)	154 (30%)	43 (8%)	18 (3%)	23 (4%)
Library Catalogue (OPAC)/ Union Catalogue	58 (11%)	186 (36%)	173 (33%)	91 (18%)	11 (2%)
Newspapers and magazines	311 (60%)	142 (27%)	49 (9%)	17 (3%)	0 (0%)
Internet based e-journals, database & archives	239 (46%)	201 (39%)	51 (10%)	28 (5%)	0 (0%)

Table-6
Relevance and Usefulness of Information Sources Available in the Library to Support their Academic Achievement

Information Sources	To Greater Extent	To Full Extent	To Some Extent	To Little Extent	Not at all
Books	158 (30%)	171 (33%)	149 (29%)	41 (8%)	0 (0%)
Scientific Journals	158 (30%)	165 (32%)	124 (24%)	59 (11%)	13 (3%)
Conference/Seminar Proceedings	54 (10%)	71 (14%)	189 (36%)	179 (34%)	26 (5%)
Thesis and Dissertations	58 (11%)	67 (13%)	198 (38%)	181 (35%)	15 (3%)
Reference Sources (Dictionaries, Encyclopedia, Handbooks, Yearbooks, Dictionaries etc.,)	177 (34%)	175 (34%)	138 (27%)	29 (6%)	0 (0%)
Library Catalogue (OPAC)/ Union Catalogue	117 (23%)	122 (24%)	189 (36%)	91 (18%)	0 (0%)
News papers and magazines	191 (37%)	171 (33%)	98 (19%)	59 (11%)	0 (0%)
Internet based e-journals, database & archives	171 (33%)	168 (32%)	101 (19%)	79 (15%)	0 (0%)

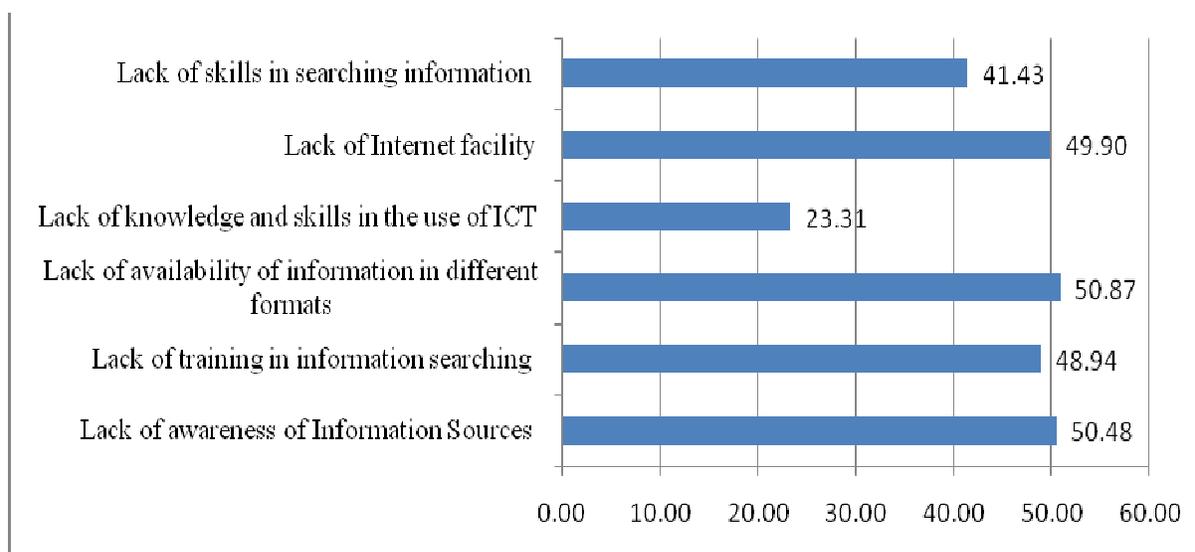


Figure-3
Problems faced in searching information sources

Problems faced in searching information sources: It is noted that no problem framed has not crossed more than 50% of the respondents, thus it is clearly shows half of the respondents are not having above mentioned problems. Respondents facing the problems like, skills in searching information by 41.43%, internet facility by 49.90%, skills of ICT by 23.31%, information in different format 50.87%, training in information searching 48.94% and lack of awareness of information sources by 50.48%.

Findings and Suggestions: The study has revealed that considerable numbers of respondents are using the library. It is found that less number of users are visiting the library for research purpose which should be encourage by library staff and also by faculty members. Information sources like scientific journals, conference and seminar proceedings, thesis and

dissertations and references sources are used by fewer respondents for which faculty members by giving project work and other then curriculum work may make more use of these sources by users. Some of the problems are also facing by the users which should be eradicated by making necessary arrangement by the library.

Conclusion

The paper concludes by suggesting that, it is the responsibility of library staff and faculty members of the university to procure in need and relevant sources of information with necessary format in the scope of ICT developments. Faculty members should motivate the students in using library resources. Library needs skilled and sufficient staff and sufficient fund to fulfill all the necessities of the users and to competent in the world.

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