

# Awareness of Information Literacy among Students of Arts and Science Colleges in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu: 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 (PMCC) 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 where to access 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

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the developing countries, the educational systems of universities and higher educational institutions are facing a major challenge today and it is the quality of students produced 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 the definition of Candy (1995) states that sufficiently attuned to the need for users learning skills it was cited by Aulich. Lifelong learning, learning throughout life and every learning which need one of the skills covered under information literacy. Bruce (2004) 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 as a hub which develops the characteristics that support learning throughout their life.

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” (American Library Association 2000)<sup>6</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. 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 direct, investigate, and assuming their needed information and convert them to a master of lifelong learning process.

In the early 1970s the basic idea of information literacy emerged with the advent of information technologies. Paul Zurkowski (1974) who was the former president of the United States information industries association was the first person to use the term information literacy (Kimani and Onyancha 2015). In general information literacy is the concept of creating awareness of how to locate access, evaluate and use 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.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Manthiramoothi, Saravanakumar and Thamaraiselvi (2018) 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 was 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 of information in an effective and efficient manner.

Shamin Aktar Munshi and Priyanka Nagar (2016) 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 met their information needs.

Bhoop Singh and Rajkumar Basker (2014) have examined the knowledge and awareness of information literacy among B. Tech students of engineering colleges of Jaipur, Rajasthan. The objectives of the study are to assess the information literacy skills of B. Tech students. Totally 400 questionnaires were distributed to 40 engineering & technical colleges of 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.

Manthiramoorthi, Thamaraiselvi and Perumalsamy (2014) 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.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objective was provided to fulfil the purpose of the study

1. To know the level of awareness of information literacy among the students.

2. To identify the purpose to access the information resources.
3. To know the search strategies tools to access the information resources.
4. To know the usage of library information resources.
5. To identify the level of satisfaction about the usage of information resources among the students.
6. To analyse the problems facing while access the information resources.

### IV. HYPOTHESES

1. There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and the purpose to access the information resources.
2. There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and search strategies tools.
3. There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and usage of library information resources.

### V. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using descriptive method and adopted a survey strategy through questionnaire as a tool to gathering data. The population of the study was considered as three arts and science colleges' students who are studying undergraduate and postgraduate in Tirunelveli were targeted. 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) questionnaire was received in filled and suitable for the study. The response rate is 80%. The collected data was analysed, interpreted and tabulated by using SPSS software to calculate the simple percentage and Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. Six questions were framed for the objectives and three statements were framed to test the hypotheses.

### VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data was analyzed and interpreted using the result of tables.

TABLE I LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF INFORMATION LITERACY

S. No.	Questions	Undergraduate Mean	Postgraduate Mean
1	Identify the information need	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 I shows that the level of awareness of information literacy among the students of arts and science colleges. According to the undergraduate students, they are aware to identify the information need with mean value (3.20) followed by (3.08) are somewhat aware to locate and access the information resources, (2.94) are less aware to evaluate the information resources, (2.90) and (2.40) are less aware about the existing information resources and economic, legal and social issues while access information resources.

Postgraduate students pointed that they are highly aware to identify their information need (4.50) followed by (4.20), (4.10) and (4.02) are aware to locate and access, analyse the existing and evaluate the information resources whereas (3.08) are somewhat aware of economic, legal and social issues while access information resources. Hence, it 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 II PURPOSE TO ACCESS THE INFORMATION RESOURCES

S. No.	Purpose	Undergraduate N = 150	Postgraduate N = 90
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 II reveals that the purpose to access their information resources. Out of 150 undergraduate students majority (48.67%) of the respondent are access their information resources to prepare study material for examination and assignment followed by (20%) of them are access information resources to write articles in journals, conference, and seminar (13.33%) of the respondents are using the information resources for research related work (11.33%) are access to update knowledge and (6.67%) of the respondents are access their information resources.

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

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

TABLE III SEARCH STRATEGIES TOOLS TO ACCESS THE INFORMATION RESOURCES

S. No.	Tools	Undergraduate N = 150	Postgraduate N = 90
1	Online Public Access Catalogue	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)

(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)

The above table show that majority (30%) of the undergraduate students are searching their needed information resources through friends and faculty members guidance followed by (26.67%) of them are browsing themselves through racks (20%) of the respondents are using online public access catalogue for searching the information resources (13.33%) of them are search by using shelf list whereas (10%) of the respondents are approach library staff to access the information resources.

Majority (35.56%) of the postgraduate students are searching their needed information resources through online line public access catalogue followed by (27.78%) are browsing through racks by themselves (16.67%) of them are searching through shelf list (14.44%) are access the information resources from the guidance of friends and faculty members whereas (5.56%) of the respondents are approach library staff to access the information resources.

The above findings concluded that majority of the undergraduate students are access the information resources through the guidance of friends and faculty members and very few of them are approach library staff. According to the responses of postgraduate students' majority of them are access the information resources though online public access catalogue and very few of them are approach library staff to access the information resources.

From the table IV indicates that the majority of the undergraduate students are always using book and reference books as the most preferred information resources followed by (4.52) followed by E-resources (4.34) and previous exam question papers (4.25) are using frequently as the information resources, (3.98) journals, magazines and newspapers are using occasionally among the students as information resources whereas (2.93) other information resources are using rarely.

TABLE IV USAGE OF LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES

S. No.	Information Resources	Undergraduate Mean	Postgraduate Mean
1	Books / Reference Books	4.52	4.60
2	Journals / Magazines / Newspapers	3.98	4.64
3	Previous Exam Question Papers	4.25	4.03
4	E-resources	4.34	4.84
5	Others	2.93	3.05

(Awalys-5, Frequently-4, Occassionally-3, Rarely-2, Never-1)

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

Hence, it stated that majority of undergraduate students are always using books and reference books and frequently using e-resources as the information resources whereas postgraduate students are always using e-resources and journals, magazines and newspapers as the information resources.

TABLE V LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ABOUT THE USAGE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES

S. No.	Opinion	Undergraduate N = 150	Postgraduate N = 90
1	Highly Satisfied	26 (17.33)	15 (16.66)
2	Satisfied	43 (28.66)	46 (51.11)
3	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	48 (32.00)	16 (17.77)
4	Dissatisfied	23 (15.33)	10 (11.11)
5	Highly Dissatisfied	10 (6.66)	3 (3.33)

(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)

Table V indicates that the level of satisfaction about the usage of information resources. Out of 150 undergraduate students majority of the respondents are express that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (32%) about the usage of information resources followed by (28.66%) of the respondents are satisfied with the usage of information resources (17.33%) of them are highly satisfied, (15.33%) of the respondents are dissatisfied and (6.66%) of them are highly dissatisfied.

The opinion of postgraduate students about the usage of information resources denotes that majority of the

respondents are satisfied about the usage of information resources (51.11%) followed by (17.77%) of them are in the neutral level of opinion about the usage (16.66%) of the respondents are highly satisfied (11.11%) of the respondents are dissatisfied and (3.33%) of them are highly dissatisfied.

Therefore, the finding of the above table concluded that majority of the respondents are in neutral level of opinion about the usage of information resources those who are studying undergraduate whereas majority of the postgraduate students are satisfied with the usage of information resources. The awareness of information literacy is less among the undergraduate students compares to the postgraduate students so the usage of information resources are not satisfied among the undergraduate students.

TABLE VI PROBLEM FACING WHILE ACCESS THE INFORMATION RESOURCES

S. No.	Problem	Undergraduate N = 150	Postgraduate N = 90
1	Lack of knowledge to locate and access	64 (42.66%)	13 (14.44%)
2	Lack of Time	14 (9.33%)	10 (11.11%)
3	Lack of Training	32 (21.33%)	28 (31.11)
4	Lack of Staff Cooperation	5 (3.33%)	2 (2.22%)
5	Lack of Infrastructure Facilities	35 (23.33%)	37 (41.11%)

(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)

Table VI shows that the problems facing while access the information resources, according to the opinion of undergraduate students' majority (42.66%) of the respondents are agreed that they have lack of knowledge to locate and access their needed information resources followed by (23.33%) of the respondents felt that lack of infrastructure facilities as another major problem facing while access the information resources (21.33%) of the respondents are felt lack of training (9.33%) are felt lack of time and (3.33%) of them agree that lack of staff cooperation as one of the problem facing while access the needed information resources.

Majority of the postgraduate students are agreed that (41.11%) lack of infrastructure facilities depress the usage of information resources followed by (31.11%) of them are felt that lack of training (14.44%) of the respondents are felt that they have lack of knowledge to locate and access their information resources (11.11%) of them are felt that there is no time to access the needed information and (2.22%) of them felt that there is no cooperation among the staff and students. Hence, it concluded that majority of the undergraduate students are agreed that they have lack of knowledge to locate and access the information resources and postgraduate students felt that there is a lack of infrastructure facilities which create problem while access the information resources.

**VII. TESTING OF HYPOTHESES**

The hypotheses were tested the Awareness of Information Literacy among Students of Arts and Science Colleges in Tirunelveli.

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

TABLE VII RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF IL AND PURPOSE TO ACCESS THE INFORMATION RESOURCES

		Level of Awareness of information literacy	Purpose to access information resources
Level of awareness of information literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.561
	Sig. (2.tailed)		0.023
	N	240	
Purpose to access information resources	Pearson Correlation	0.561	1
	Sig. (2.tailed)	0.023	
	N	240	240

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

To know whether there is any significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of IL and the purpose to access the information resources. The collected data of two variables were cross tabulated and the result is shown in the table VII. From the above table, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient  $r = (0.561)$  since, the significant level of Correlation is 0.023 which is greater than that of 0.01. So it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of information literacy and the purpose to access the information resources. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

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

TABLE VIII RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF IL AND SEARCH STRATEGIES TOOLS

		Level of awareness of information literacy	Search strategies tools
Level of awareness of information literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.996
	Sig. (2.tailed)		1.24
	N	240	
Search strategies tools	Pearson Correlation	0.996	1
	Sig. (2.tailed)	1.24	
	N	240	240

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

To identify if there is any significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of IL and the search strategies tools. The collected data of two variables were cross tabulated and the result is shown in the table VIII.

From the above table, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient  $r = (0.996)$  since, the significant level of Correlation is 1.24 which is greater than that of 0.01. So it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of information literacy and the search strategies tools. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

*Hypothesis 3:* There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of information literacy and usage of library information resources. To analyse if, there is any significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of IL and the usage of library information resources. The collected data of two variables were cross tabulated and the result is shown in the table IX.

From the table IX Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient  $r = (0.476)$  since, the significant level of Correlation is 0.035 which is greater than that of 0.01. So it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of information literacy and the usage of library information resources. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE IX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF IL AND USAGE OF LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES

		Level of awareness of information literacy	Usage of library information resources
Level of awareness of information literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.476
	Sig. (2.tailed)		0.035
	N	240	
Usage of library information resources	Pearson Correlation	0.476	1
	Sig. (2.tailed)	0.035	
	N	240	240

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

**VIII. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

The aim of the study is to analyse the awareness of information literacy among the students of arts and science colleges in Tirunelveli. It is a descriptive research using questionnaire as the data collecting tools. 240 responded was actively participated in this study they are from undergraduate and postgraduate studying students. Six questions and three hypotheses statement was framed to analyse the objectives of the study. The findings of the study are as follows.

1. 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.
2. Majority of the undergraduate students are access the information resources to prepare study materials for examination and assignment and very few of them are using for recreational activities. The post graduate students are access the information resources mostly to write articles in journals, conference and seminar.
3. Majority of the undergraduate students are access the information resources through the guidance of friends and faculty members and very few of them are approach library staff. According to the responses of postgraduate students' majority of them are access the information resources though online public access catalogue and very few of them are approach library staff to access the information resources.
4. Majority of undergraduate students are always using books and reference books and frequently using e-resources as the information resources whereas postgraduate students are always using e-resources and journals, magazines and newspapers as the information resources.
5. Majority of the respondents are in neutral level of opinion about the usage of information resources those who are studying undergraduate whereas majority of the postgraduate students are satisfied with the usage of information resources.
6. Majority of the undergraduate students are agreed that they have lack of knowledge to locate and access the information resources and postgraduate students felt

that there is a lack of infrastructure facilities which create problem while access the information resources.

7. There is a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of information literacy and the purpose to access the information resources.
8. There is a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of information literacy and the search strategies tools.
9. There is a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of information literacy and the search strategies tools.

The study concluded that majority of the undergraduate students are less aware about the information literacy compared to postgraduate students. In order increase the level of awareness of information literacy among the undergraduate students, the higher educational institutions should take necessary steps through librarians and faculty members to educate the concept of information literacy through online instructions, orientation program and provide training to locating and access the information resources.

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