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## INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR AMONG PG STUDENTS/SCHOLARS AND SCIENTISTS IN KERALA, INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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**Abstract:** *We live in an age where information explodes beyond anyone's imagination and everyone in this world depends on information. Whether a child or an adult everybody uses information. The people seek information for various purposes. In this study, let us discuss how the post graduate students, scholars and scientists in Kerala, one of the southern states of India. This study deals with the information seeking behavior in connection with Library and its services.*

**Keywords:** *Information, behavior, Library, PG Students, Scholars, Scientists*

### PREAMBLE

The information seeking behavior of scientists, scholars and even students had witnessed a huge change in the recent past. One of the more recent advances in this realm has been electronic publishing, specifically the production of electronic journals. Electronic journals (also known as e-journals) have altered the way scholarly information is disseminated throughout much of the world, especially in the fields of the "hard sciences" where, on average, many scientists could be described as early adopters of innovation. In other words, they possess a rather high degree of innovativeness and are the second group to adopt an innovation (Rogers, 1995). E-journals have not only affected the way information is spread, but the way information is acquired and how scientific researchers seek that needed information. There is no doubt that this particular innovation has changed the information behaviors of scientists but the important questions that still remain are: How has the innovation affected these behaviors and have these changes affected the role of the library as an information provider?

Though librarians and information specialists do possess some knowledge about these issues, there is still much to learn in this area. During the time of frequent change in technology, it is becoming increasingly important to keep up with the constant fluctuation in



user information needs. Thus, more effort is called for if answers to these 2 questions are to be found. Information professionals will then gain a better understanding of their user populations and how to serve the user's needs. The major goal of this research is to acquire insights relative to how electronic journals have changed the information-seeking behavior of investigators and in turn, affected end-user access to the library.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The study aims the following objectives:

1. To find out purpose of information seeking behavior of PG Students/Scholars and Scientists in Kerala.
2. To find out the average time spent in Library by the respondents in information seeking.
3. To find out the satisfaction level of Library resources and services by respondents.
4. To find out the various sources consulted by the respondents in information seeking.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In their study Pirolli and Card's "Information Foraging" brought out the psychological theory that all people are informers. Their article specifically examines the means by which information-seeking, gathering, and consumption are adapted to the fluctuation of information in the environment. Pirolli and Card state that, "The structure of the interface between people and information repositories in the external world determines the time costs, resource costs, and opportunity costs of different information foraging and sense-making strategies"

## **METHODOLOGY**

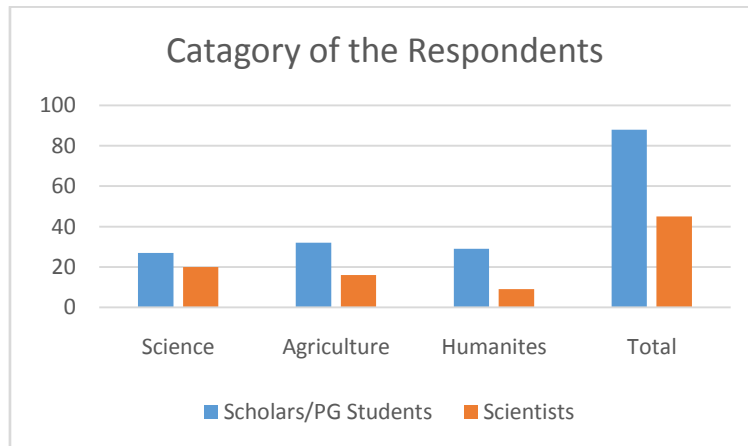
The study is based on survey method and questionnaire tool. A well structured Questionnaire was prepared to collect data from the Post Graduate students, Scholars and few scientists of Kerala. There were about 88 Post Graduate Students/Scholars out of 100 and 45 Scientists out of 60 have responded. On the whole out of 175 only 133 of them responded. The percentage of the respondents is 76%

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**



**Table 1 Category of Respondents by Subjects**

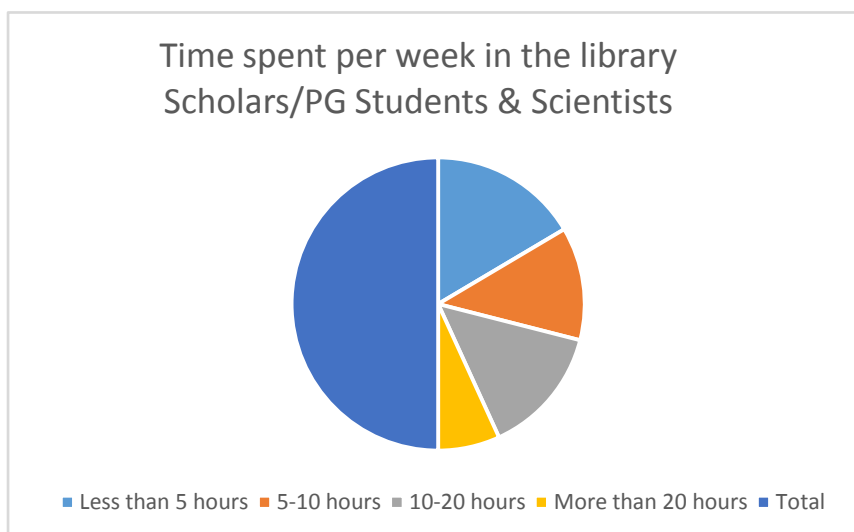
Category of Respondents			
Specialization	Scholars & PG Students	Scientists	Total
Science	27	20	47
Agriculture	32	16	48
Humanities	29	9	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>133</b>



The above table and chart describes that there were 47 scholars, PG Students and Scientists in Science, 48 in Agriculture. 38 such respondents in humanities.

**Table 2 Time Spent Per Week in the Library**

Specialization	Scholars/PG Students	Scientists	Total	Percentage
Less than 5 hours	29	5	34	25.57
5-10 hours	22	30	52	39.09
10-20 hours	25	8	33	24.81
More than 20 hours	12	2	14	10.53
Total	88	45	133	100

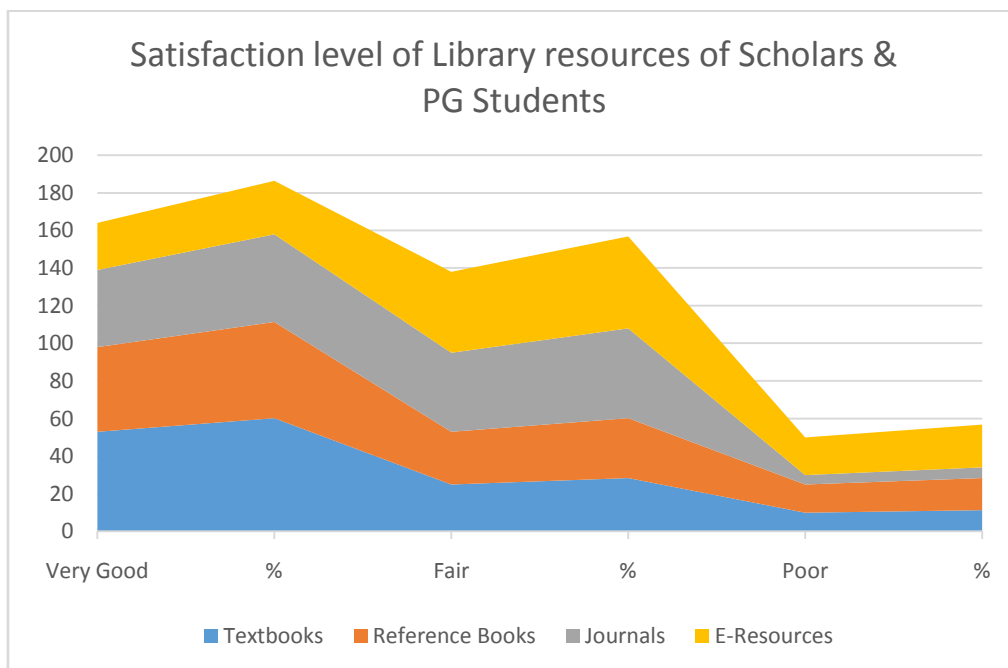




It is understood from the above table and chart that there are only about 10.53 % of the respondents uses the Library for more than 20 hours in a week. Less than half of the respondents i.e. 39% of them uses the library 5-10 hours per week.

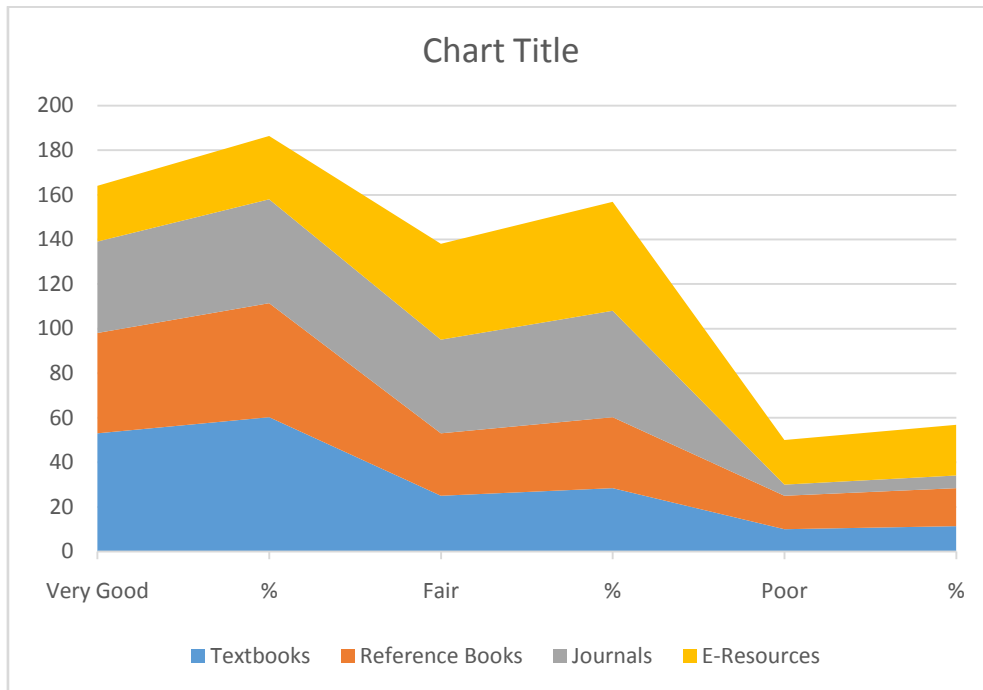
**Table 3 Satisfaction Level of Library Resources of Scholars & PG Students**

Satisfaction level of Library resources of Scholars & PG Students (n=88)							
Category of Resources	Very Good	%	Fair	%	Poor	%	Percentage
Textbooks	53	60.22	25	28.40	10	11.36	100
Reference Books	45	51.13	28	31.81	15	17.04	100
Journals	41	46.60	42	47.72	5	5.68	100
E-Resources	25	28.40	43	48.86	20	22.72	100



**Table 4 Satisfaction Level of Library Resources by Scientists**

Satisfaction level of Library resources of Scientists (n=45)							
Category of Resources	Very Good	%	Fair	%	Poor	%	Percentage
Textbooks	22	48.88	20	44.46	3	6.66	100
Reference Books	19	42.22	22	48.9	4	8.88	100
Journals	20	44.44	15	33.34	10	22.22	100
E-Resources	15	33.33	20	44.45	10	22.22	100



**Table 5 Satisfaction Level of Library Services**

Services	Scholars & PG Students (n=88)				Scientists (n=45)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Location of Documents by staff	72	16	39	6		
OPAC	66	22	30	15		
CAS/SDI Services	30	58	12	33		
ILL	10	78	22	23		
Circulation	70	18	37	8		

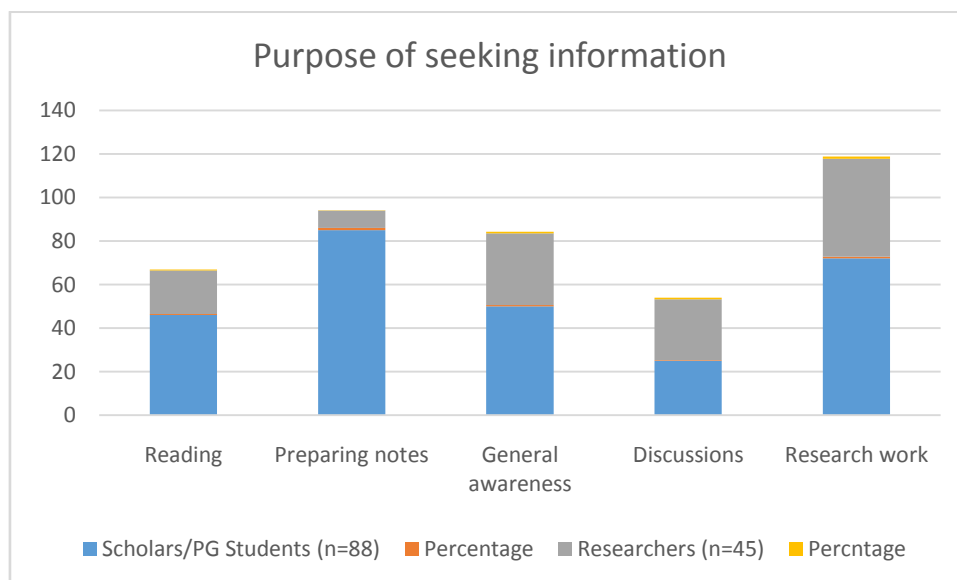
The above table vividly describes that 72 Scholars & PG Students and 39 of Scientists were satisfied by the helpful behavior of Library staff in locating the desired documents. In the same way 66 Scholars & PG Students along with 30 of Scientists were happy about the OPAC service provided by the Library, 30 of student/scholar respondents and 12 of scientists were satisfied about the CAS & SDI service.

Regarding the Inter Library Loan service, only 10 of students category and 22 of Scientists were happy whereas the majority of the respondents felt that the library should improve in this service which they felt it vital. The majority of them were happy about the circulation service.



**Table 6 Purpose of Seeking Information**

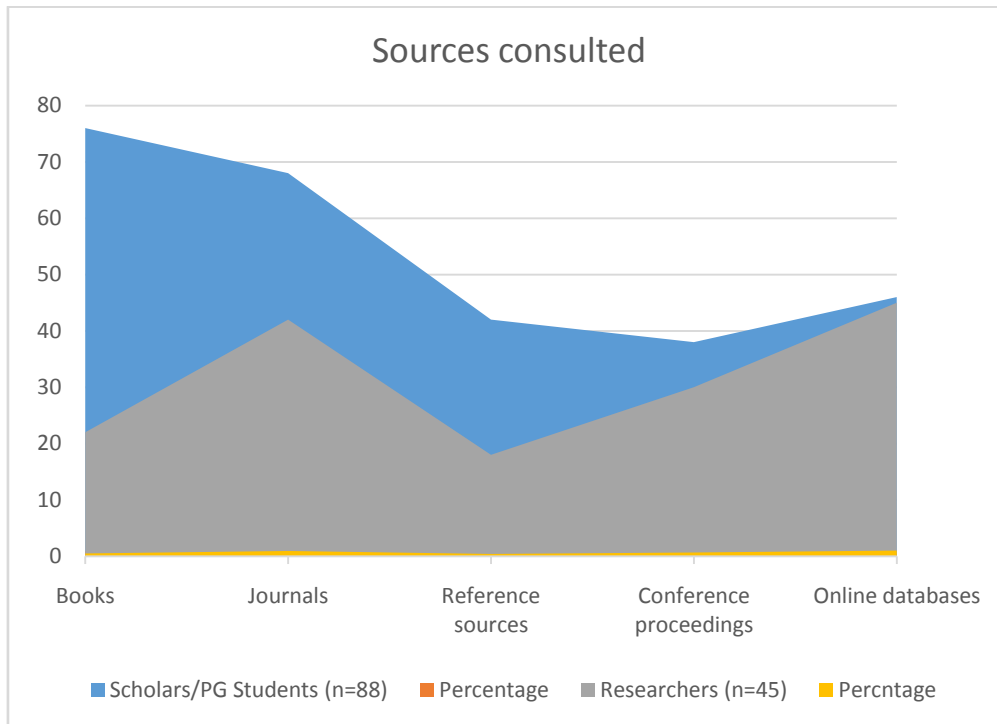
Purpose	Postgraduates (n=88)	Percentage	Researchers (n=45)	Percentage
Reading	46	52%	20	44%
Preparing notes	85	97%	8	18%
General awareness	50	57%	33	72%
Discussions	25	28%	28	62%
Research work	72	82%	45	100%



The above table and charts gives us the clear picture of purpose of seeking information by Scholars/PG Students & Scientists in Kerala. The vast majority of Scholars & PG students i.e. 97% of them goes to Library to prepare notes for various purposes and whereas only 18% of the scientists visit the library for the same purpose. 100 % of the Scientists and 82% of the Scholars/PG students use the library for research work. Library is also used for discussion purpose by scientists around 62% and Scholars level by 28%. The respondents also expressed that they use the library for reading various materials and also get general awareness.

**Table 7 Sources Consulted**

Sources	Scholars/PG Students (n=88)	Percentage	Researchers (n=45)	Percentage
Books	76	86%	22	49%
Journals	68	77%	42	93%
Reference sources	42	47%	18	40%
Conference proceedings	38	43%	30	66%
Online databases	46	52%	45	100%



The Scientists mostly rely on the Online databases and Journals both on Print and e-journals whereas the PG Students and scholars depend on books and journals. The above table shows that 100% of scientists dependent on and consult Online databases but only 46% of the other category uses the databases. On the other hand 86% of the Students and scholars depend on books whereas only 49% of the scientists consult books for their research work. Conference proceedings are moderately consulted both by Students and Scientists.

## CONCLUSION

It's a challenge for the present era's librarians to make the resources available and also to disseminate it to the right reader at the right time. The study reveals that the information seeking behavior is increasing day by day and at the end of the users satisfaction is to be measured to provide and to improve the library services.

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