Use and Awareness of E-resources Among The Postgraduate Students: A Study of Sanatan Dharma College, Ambala Cantt

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Abstract

Today many of the educational resources are being created in electronic form only. There are e-books which don't have their print versions. The students today are digitally literate and fond of social media. Electronic devices like personal computers, laptops, tablets and smart phones and their accessories have become technologically more advanced, cost effective and affordable in the last few years. Similarly the Internet data has become cheaper and speed wise very faster through 3G and 4G networks. In such an environment it is assumed that the students frequently use the digital devices and resources to fulfill the information needs. Educational institutes are also acquiring various e-contents for the students and faculty by purchasing or subscribing the paid membership of various organizations, e-consortiums and digital libraries. On the other hand we may also find the digital divide and gaps in the Indian society. There is dividing of rural and urban, poor and rich and other cultural and demographical divides. In such a scenario it is imperative and useful for the libraries to know the awareness and use of the e-resources by their users to formulate the policies and plans for the future development. The present study was conducted to find the use and awareness of e-resources among the 76 postgraduate students of Sanatan Dharma College, Ambala Cantt.

INTRODUCTION

Advances in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) are taking place very fast and so is its application in different areas of the society including education. The young generation which comprises mostly the students is born and grown in the digital era is hence more technology savvy than the other sections of the society. It is assumed that using electronic format of everything is their preference over the other formats in various areas like games, study, drawing or painting, entertainment (music), banking, shopping, communication etc. That is why a large number of educational resources are now available in electronic or digital format and are growing with a very fast speed/rate. E-resources have their own advantage over the print like easy browsing, searching and anytime and anywhere (remote) accessibility etc. Today many of the educational resources are being created in electronic form only. There are e-books which don't have their print versions. Studying information technology has become the compulsory part of the syllabi or courses at different levels of school and college education. The students today are digitally literate and fond of social media. Electronic devices like personal computers, laptops, tablets and smart phones and their accessories have become technologically more advanced, cost effective and affordable in the last few years. Similarly the Internet data has become cheaper and speed wise very faster through 3G/4G and 5G networks. As a result we see that the smart-phones in the hands of every college and university student and they are found using it in every corner of the campus of the institutions. Various academic

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processes and functions like admissions and examinations etc. can be completed online only. In such an environment it is assumed that the students frequently use digital or electronic devices and resources to fulfill the information requirements of their courses of study. Digital resources are also being made available through the digitization of the existing resources and creation of new digital resources in digital format only. Educational institutes are making various e-contents available to the students and faculty at free of cost by subscribing or by paid membership of various organizations, e-consortiums and digital libraries. Central and state governments are also providing access and promoting the use of digital information in additions to the various other agencies. Almost all the popular newspapers and magazines are now available the electronic form and most are either free or free access with purchase of print. On the hand we may also find the digital divide and gaps in the Indian society. There is dividing of rural and urban, poor and rich and other cultural and demographical divides. In such a scenario it is imperative and useful for the libraries to know the awareness and use of the e-resources by their users to formulate the policies and plans for the future development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A large amount of literature is available on use and awareness of e-resources by the academic library users. A brief review of a few of such studies is being given here for the comprehensive knowledge of the topic.

Ramkrishna and Urs (2017) conduct a study to ascertain the use of electronic information resources among the 113 PG students of in different disciplines like dental, management and technology, pharmacy, nursing and physiotherapy of the Oxford Group of Institutions, Bangalore. The researchers found that the students were aware of the e-resources. Around 80% of the students were using e-resources daily and highest number of MDS students were using e-resources frequently as compare to other disciplines. All the respondents were using e-resources to complete their dissertation/thesis work.

Balesh Kumar and Ram Kumar (2015) conducted a study to find out the effect of usage of social networking sites to support educational initiatives, which received much attention. The finding of the study shows that majority of the students have good knowledge of basic ICT skills and Internet application. More than 75% of the respondents own either PC or laptop. The study revealed that 80% respondents spend significant amount of time on using social networking sites. All the respondents were of the view that the use of social networking sites improves learning effectiveness and quality.

Borgohain and Soni (2015) also conducted a study on use and awareness of electronic resources by undergraduate students of Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information & Communication Technology (DA-IICT), Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The study revealed that the majority of users were aware of the e-resources available in the Resource Centre and students were frequently using online databases. It was also reported that there was a problem of slow internet speed in accessing the e-resources.

Priyadarshani (2015) in her study on awareness in usage of e-resources among users at agricultural college and research Institute, Madurai found that almost all respondents were fully awareness about the available e-resources, such as freely available through internet, e-journals, e-books, e-data archives, e-magazines, e-thesis and dissertations, e-newspapers, e-dictionaries, e-encyclopedia, CD-ROM databases and online databases.

Tyagi (2011) in his study on use and awareness of electronic information sources at IIT Roorkee, India found that most of the users were aware of the availability of e- journals, but many of them used these as the supplementary way to use information. It was also reflected by the study that there was a growing interest in online journals among the user at IIT Roorkee library.

METHODOLOGY

A self-structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from the respondents. Random sampling was used to select the sample for the study. The questionnaire contained the 6 questions related to the use and awareness of E-Resources among the students. The sample consisted of 76 postgraduate level students of commerce and science stream (M.Com.-General, M.Com. – IT, M.Sc. - Applied Physics and M.Sc. - Mathematics). The questionnaires were distributed to the students who visited the library and also who were found available in the classroom after the class was over on a specific day. The data thus collected were entered in the MS-Excel worksheet and analyzed to get the results.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the use and awareness of e-resources among the postgraduate level students of S.D. College, Ambala Cantt. More specifically the objectives are as under:

1. Use of different electronic/digital devices by the students
2. Ownership of different type of electronics devices by the students
3. Use of different type of e-resources by the students
4. Problems in using the e-resources by the students

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Table-1: Stream wise Distribution of the Respondents

Stream	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
Commerce	33	43.5%
Science	43	56.5%
Total	76	100

Table -1 shows that the total number of respondents is 76 which comprise of 33 from commerce stream (M.Com- General and M.Com-IT) and 43 from science stream (M.Sc.-Applied Physics and M.Sc. Mathematics). Only the commerce and science postgraduate level students were chosen for the purpose of the study with the assumption that they have good exposure to essential ICT tools and applications.

Table-2: Gender wise Distribution of the Respondents

Stream	Male	Female
Commerce	2	31
Science	1	42
Total	3 (4%)	73 (96%)

Distribution of the respondents according to their Gender has been given in the table-2 which shows that most of the respondents are female (96%). This is due to the majority of the students pursuing these courses in the college are female.

Table-3: Use and Ownership of Digital Devices

Devices	Use of Devices		Ownership	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Personal Computer or Laptop	54 (71%)	22 (29%)	52 (68.4%)	24 (31.6%)
Tablet	20 (26.3%)	56 (73.7%)	04 (5.7%)	72 (91.3%)
Smartphone	73 (96%)	03 (4%)	73 (96%)	03 (4%)

The response of the students regarding the use and ownership of the digital or electronic devices has been given in the above table. It shows that majority of the students use and own either personal computer or laptop however there was significant number of students i.e. 22 (29%) still don't use the computer or don't know how to use it. It shows that still there is a need of computer literacy programs for the students. However most of the students (96%) use and own the smart phones. But still there were students (4%) who did not own and use smart phones in this age of ICT. Tablet is not so popular among the students and around three fourth of the students don't use it and tablet is owned by only 4 students (5.7%).

Table-4: Frequency of Use of Digital Resources

Sr. No	E-Resources/ Frequency	Frequently	occasionally	Rarely	Never
	Internet	61 (80.2%)	11 (14.5%)	03 (4%)	01 (1.3%)
2	Email	24 (31.5%)	30 (39.5%)	17 (22.4%)	05 (6.6%)
3	CD ROMs	01 (1.3%)	13 (17.1%)	27 (35.5%)	35 (46.1%)
4	E-Books	10 (13.1%)	10 (13.1%)	17 (22.4%)	39 (51.3%)
5	E-Journals	02 (2.7%)	11 (14.5%)	18 (23.6%)	45 (59.2%)
6	E-Newspapers	12 (15.8%)	13 (17.1%)	30 (39.5%)	21 (27.6%)
7	Online database	06 (7.9%)	9 (11.8%)	28 (36.9%)	33 (43.4%)

Frequency of the use of digital resources by the students has been shown in the table- 4. The table shows that most of the students use Internet. 61 students (80.2%) use Internet frequently and only 1 student (1.3%) had never used Internet. There were only 5 students who don't have email ID or don't use email. Only 31.5% students use email frequently and a large number of students i.e. 47 (62%) uses email occasionally or rarely. Only one student has responded that he/she uses the CD ROM frequently rest of the students either don't use the CD ROM or uses rarely or occasionally. More than 50 % of the students have never used e-books only 13.1% students use e-books frequently. The table shows that most of the students don't read e-newspaper frequently. Only 15.8% students read e-newspaper frequently whereas 27.6% students have never read newspaper in electronic form. It means the students still prefer to read books and newspapers in print form.

E-journals and online databases are not being used by the students so frequently. It might be that either these resources are not relevant or useful for them or not required by them to complete their courses.

Table-5: Problems in Use of E-resources

S. No.	Problems	Yes	No
1	Lack of digital infrastructure	29 (38.2%)	47 (61.8%)
2	Inadequate E-resources	33 (43.1%)	43 (56.6%)
3	Lack of awareness of E-resources	41 (53.9%)	35 (46.1%)
4	Lack of time	47 (61.8%)	29 (38.2%)
5	Lack of computer- digital literacy	33 (43.4%)	43 (56.6%)

The above table shows the response of the students on problems in using the e-resources. Majority of the students (61.8%) were of the view that adequate digital infrastructure is available hence it is not the problem in using the e-resources, however a significant number of students (38.2%) replied that lack of the digital infrastructure is a problem in using the e-resources. Similarly majority of the students were of the view that lack of e-resources and lack of digital literacy was not the problem in using the e-resources, but lack of time (61.8%) and lack of awareness of the e-resources (53.9%) are the majour problems or barriers in use of the e-resources.

Findings of the study and Conclusion

- Majority of the students use and own either personal computer or laptop.
- A significant number of students i.e. 22 (29%) still don't use the computer or don't know how to use it. It shows still there is a need of computer literacy programs for the students.
- Around one third of the students still don't possess the computer or laptop.
- Most of the students (96%) use and own the smart phones. But still there were students who did not own and use smart phones in this age ICT.
- Tablet is not so popular among the students and around three fourth of the students don't use it or don't know how to use it and it is owned by only 4 students (5.7%).
- 80% of the students use Internet frequently.
- Only 31.5% of the students use e-mail frequently.
- CD ROM is out of trend or use. That is why all the students except one have responded that they either don't use the CD ROM or uses it rarely or occasionally.
- E-books are also not popular among the students. Only13% students use e-books frequently and 51% never used the e-books.
- A very small number of students use e-journals frequently and app. 60% of the students never used the e-journals
- A small number of students (15.8%) use e-newspapers frequently and 27.6% never used e-newspapers
- A very small number of students uses online database.
- Majority of the respondents were of the view that lack of time (61.8%) and lack of awareness of the e-resources (53.9%) are the problems or barriers in using of the e-resources.

On the basis of the findings of the study it may be concluded that there is a need to create awareness among the students about the availability and use of the digital resources. Teachers and the library need to take initiative to promote the use of the e-resources. They also need to incorporate ICT in the teaching methodology. More useful and relevant to the courses of the study e-resources need to be acquired. Special training on the use of ICT and e-resources need to be organized/provide. The college should also make necessary infrastructural arrangements and take other necessary steps to promote the use of e-resources among the students for the better academic achievements.

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