



INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF RESEARCH SCHOLAR IN THE COLLEGES AFFILIATED TO BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates researcher's information seeking behaviour in a comparative study of three colleges affiliated to Bharathidasan University. The design of the study is cross sectional survey of researchers in the libraries and the population comprised of 150 users from various colleges. The instrument used to generate data is the questionnaire and the data generated was analyzed to frequency, bar charts, percentages and mean. The outcome of the study reveals that research scholar in the colleges seeking for information in writing papers and chapters for conference / Book / Articles, preparing notes and assignments / seminars. The results provide an insight into the challenges associated with information seeking behaviour of research scholar in the colleges such as lack of comprehensive book collection, and lack of e-journals.

KEY WORD: Information Seeking Behaviour, Research Scholar, e-journals, e-books, Competence, Infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

Information is one of several basic resources that are needed and utilized by human beings for their development and prosperity. Information has now become a vital resource. The world has now moved from the industrial revolution into the information revolution. Technological advances have made information a new basic resource of matter and energy. Information is an aggregation or processing of data to provide knowledge and intelligence. Education and research activities require more and more information. Besides students and teachers, researchers who are engaged in doing research in various subjects specifically in the field of science, need information on a continuing basis and are considered the biggest users of information. So, most of the information systems and services have been developed in academic institutions and universities to satisfy these requirements of students, teachers and researchers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INFORMATION

There is no field of human activity wherein information is not a component. Whether it is research and development, business and industry, government affairs, education and training, the information has to be acquired, processed, stored, retrieved and disseminated for communication. Information generation, dissemination, transfer and communication take place between people through diverse channels and media, in a variety of contexts and environments.

The information handling activities are to be based entirely on the needs of the users. The user categories have different needs for information depending upon their functions, responsibilities and duties.



Information is utmost important for teaching, research and development. Moreover, information is growing in ever increasing volume and rate, in every field of human activity. So, the information is required to be reprocessed and repackaged for different types of users to suit their needs.

NEED FOR INFORMATION

The first need of a scientist, technologist and technician is that they must be aware of what is currently going on in their respective field of work. A research worker does not want to repeat the mistake of others. Scientists and technologists need to keep up-to-date, to know not only what appeared in print, but also what has not yet appeared in print at the moment.

RESEARCH

The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English lays down the meaning of research as 'A careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch to gain new knowledge'. According to Clifford Woody, 'research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. Research is an honest, exhaustive, intelligent searching for facts and their meanings or implications with reference to a given problem. It is the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data.

Research is an activity of solving problem, which leads to more knowledge, using methods of enquiry, which are currently expected as adequate by scholars in the field. Research is an almost important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress and for enabling man to adjust to his environment, to accomplish his purpose, and to resolve his conflicts. Although it is not the only way, it is certainly one of the more effective ways of solving scientific problems.

According to **J.W. Best**, research is considered to be the more formal, systematic, intensive process of carrying on the scientific method of analysis. It involves a more systematic structure of investigations usually resulting in some sort of formal record of procedures and a report of results or conclusions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study is to investigate research scholar's information seeking behaviour in a comparative study of three colleges affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli district, which will enable libraries and academic librarians deliver standard services.

It is also aimed to determine kinds of information are needed by the research scholars, discovers the purpose for information seeking by research scholars as well as find out challenges faced by researchers while seeking information in those colleges, i.e.

- Kinds of information needed
- Reasons for information seeking behaviour
- Challenges associated with information seeking behaviour of research scholars.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review suggests a method and a technique of dealing with a problematic situation, which may also suggest avenues of approach to the solution of similar difficulties, a scholar may be facing. It can provide the investigator with new ideas and approaches, which may not have occurred. It also assists the researcher in evaluating own research efforts by comparing them with related efforts done by others.

Kim and Chi (2014) stressed over the swift development of this technical era in which information and communication technologies spread all over the world rapidly but it created a generation gap as the most effective exclusion of elderly. The authors found that conducted the study in Korea's metropolitan areas to emphasize the different ways of information seeking behavior as well as the factors that affected the attitudes of elderly people. The major findings of this field study revealed that the elderly people gave

accent to interpersonal relationships while they sought information. It also reflected that they sought information. It also reflected that they actively seek information from human information sources, which in turn triggers further information seeking. No doubt seniors use a number of digital devices but they faced hurdles which prevented them to search information of their interest by using these digital devices. Hence the present study focused on meaningful insight which became a helping hand to investigate new seniors who parted the generation gap by possessing/imbibing the digital literacy in future.

Parveen Kumar (2013) reviewed studies has been undertaken to identify the Information Seeking Behaviour by the faculty members of the BPS Women University in Khanpur. The study was based on questionnaire method. The major finding of the survey reveal useful facts about the study was faculty member uses Google for searching information. The majority of faculty says unavailability of information on the internet. His study reveals that the majority of faculty members sought information for preparing lectures, keeping knowledge up to date and research work. Faculty members used several methods to seek information, but they prefer to consult a knowledgeable person in the field.

Rupp-Serrano and Robbins (2013) reviewed studies has been undertaken to explore the Information Seeking Behaviour were used by academic educational faculty members of twenty large public research Universities. They reflected with an observation how frequently educational faculty accessed information & also examined how they prepared themselves up-to-date on current developments in the field. The present study also highlighted about electronic sources used by information seekers. Simultaneously the faculty emphasized the importance of electronic access to scholarly journals, library databases and value of books whether print or electronic for fulfilling the information and research needs.

Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Post Graduate Students of School of Economics at Madurai Kamaraj University: A User Survey, Padma P Ramasamy, K Sakthi Renugadevi, 2013, this study was conducted with a sampling population of 50 post graduate students of school of economics, Madurai Kamaraj University with a specific purpose to trace out their information needs and information seeking behavior. A structured questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool. The findings of the study revealed that 26% of the respondents use the internet of web pages and 24% of the respondents use the on line e-resources to get information; 22% are using the internet daily in the library; 48% resources available in the library and 21 of the (42%) are good in using such resources.

Natarajan (2012) surveyed a description about electronic resources (e-resources) and their different types. With the help of study undertake the Information seeking behavior of students, researchers and faculty in this electronic environment was discussed. The role of library professionals in making the e-resources available to different types of user community was elaborated. Hence it had been concluded that the availability of e- resources & easy to access helps the students and researchers to avail their benefit in research.

Bhatia and Rao (2011) studied the information seeking behavior of students at Dev Samaj College, Chandigarh and found that although students used internet but less than fifty percent of the respondents were not aware about e-resources. Students used search engines as a major source to access e-resources for their information needs & for the purpose of updating knowledge on their subjects of interest. Limited resources & services available in the college library affected students information seeking & gathering activities. In order to overcome the hindrances in accessing the e-resources, the study recommended to organize awareness programmes on use of e-resources and to provide training on web searching to the students.

Raja (2010) in his study on information seeking behavior of researches of central drug research institute (CDRI), Lucknow, found that most researchers visited the library weekly to collect reading material. The OPAC & photocopying were the most used services for searching & most researchers preferred to search by subject literature searches was performed using the library's international network. Most users used the internet services for e-mail & faced the problem of slow downloading. Newspapers & bibliography services were most used research services. Most researches used the library's e-journals and attended conferences, seminars & workshops frequently. Most users were satisfied with the services provided by the

library & there was a good application of information communication Technology in the library. Information seeking behavior differed from one discipline to another & from one institution or library to another. A sizable number of users were not satisfied with library opening hours. The study suggested that library information system must be capable of handling the complex information need & demands of researchers.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology, comprised of two words i.e. ‘research’ and ‘methodology’. Method means the mode or rule. Methodology means a system of methods and rules applicable to research or work in a given science or art. It is connected basically with what principles and techniques to follow for collecting data, information and material for a given research. This study was carried out using a survey method. The research instrument adopted for the study is questionnaire. The instrument was structured to compare relevant information about information seeking behaviour of research scholar in the Arts and Science Colleges. The population of the study was 150 research scholars of various institutions. The data collected through questionnaire were analyzed using simple percentages for easy analysis and interpretation.

Data analysis & Discussion

The data from the retrieved questionnaire are hereby analyzed using simple statistic.

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Fig.1: Gender distribution of respondents

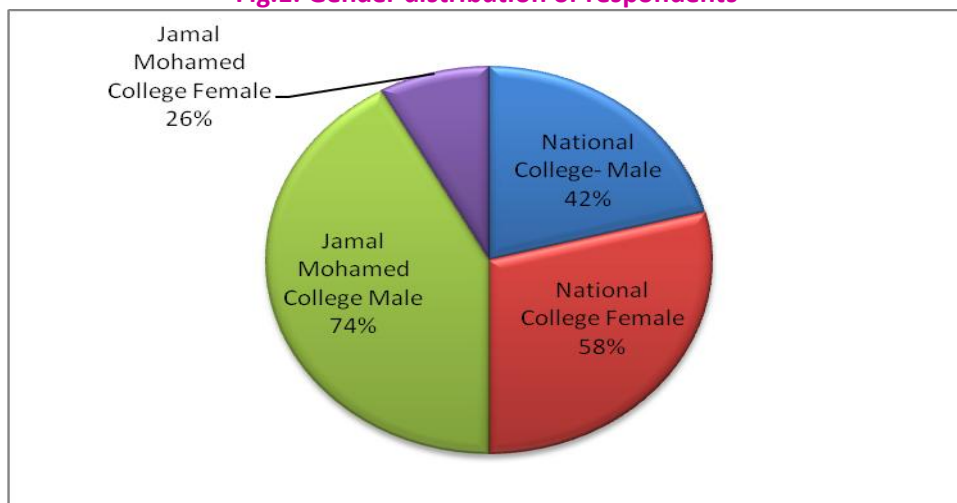


Fig. 1 shows that in the ‘National College’ 58% of the respondent’s Female while in ‘Jamal Mohamed College’ 74% of the respondent’s Male. In ‘St. Joseph College’ 84% of the respondents is Male. When compared to three colleges, in general, Male participants are involved more than Female participants.

Fig.2: Discipline wise respondents

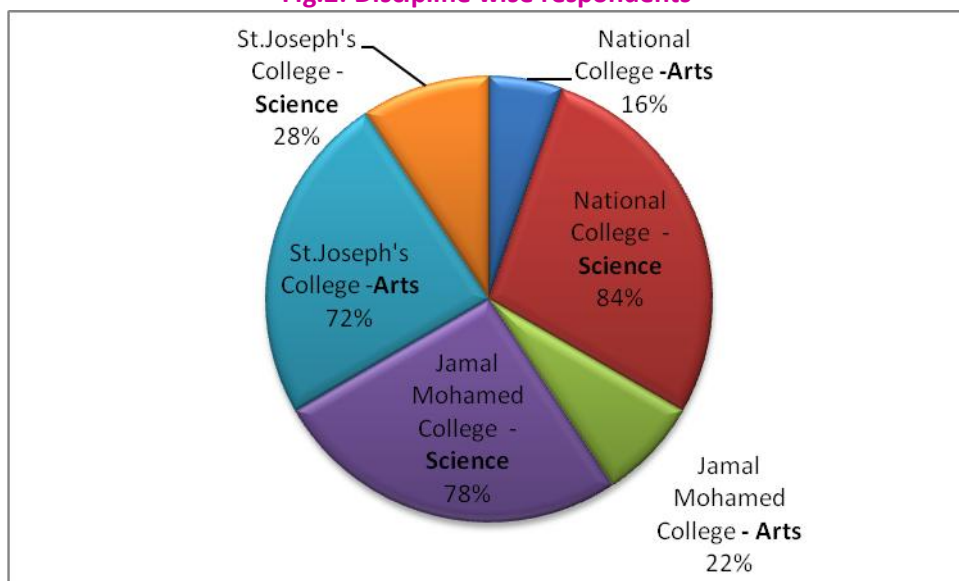


Fig.2 reveals that in 'National College' 84% of the research scholars in Science discipline while in 'Jamal Mohamed College' 78% in Science discipline and in St. Joseph's College 72% of the respondents in Arts discipline. This is indicated that most of the respondents are belongs to Science discipline.

Fig.3: Visit of the Library

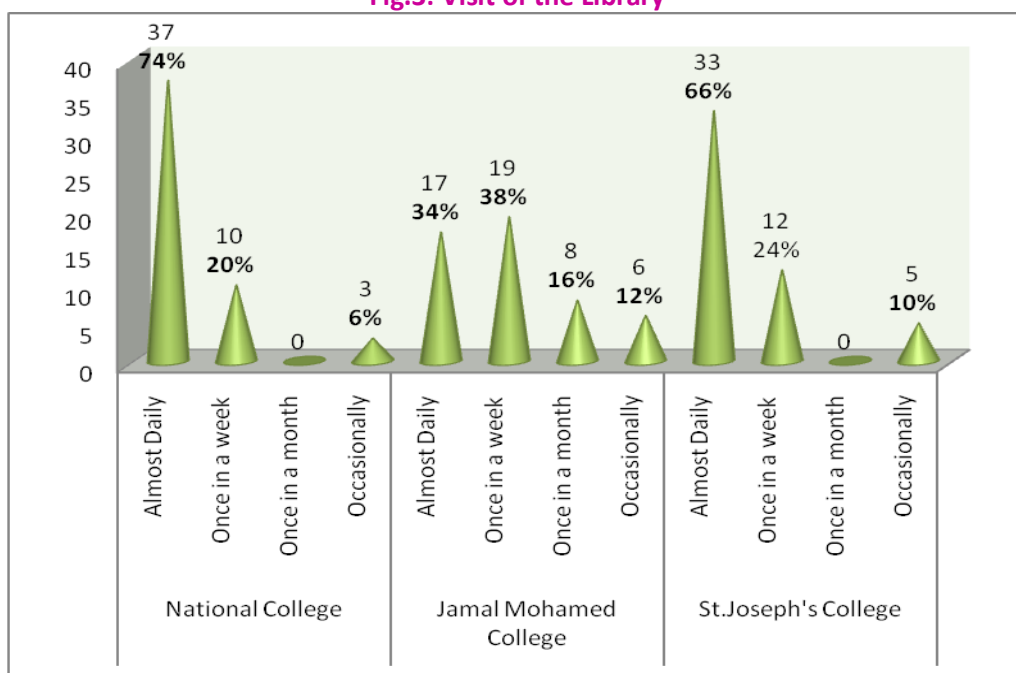
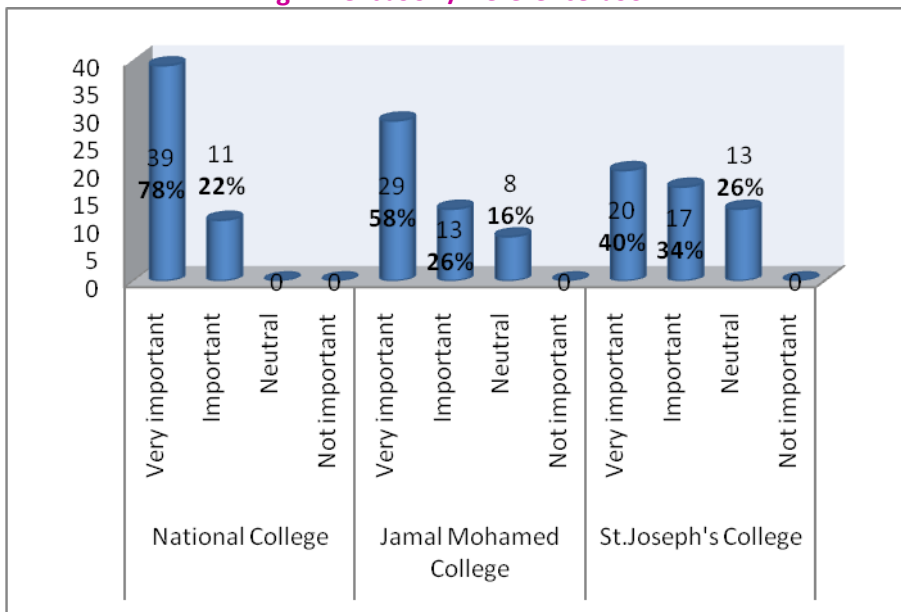


Fig.4 shows that from 'National College Library' 74% of the respondents almost daily visited to the library. In 'Jamal Mohamed College' majority of the respondents (38%) are visited the library once in a week, whereas in 'St. Joseph's College there is 'NIL' responses in the option of once-in-a-month visited to the library.

II. TYPES OF INFORMATION MATERIALS CONSULTED

Fig.4: Textbook / Reference book



From Fig.4, analysis showed that in the ‘National College’ 78% of the respondent’s expressed that the consulted of ‘Textbook / Reference book’ is ‘very important’ whereas only 16% from ‘Jamal Mohamed College’ are in ‘Neutral’ while 34% from ‘St. Joseph’s College’ in ‘important’.

Fig.5: Dictionaries / Encyclopedias

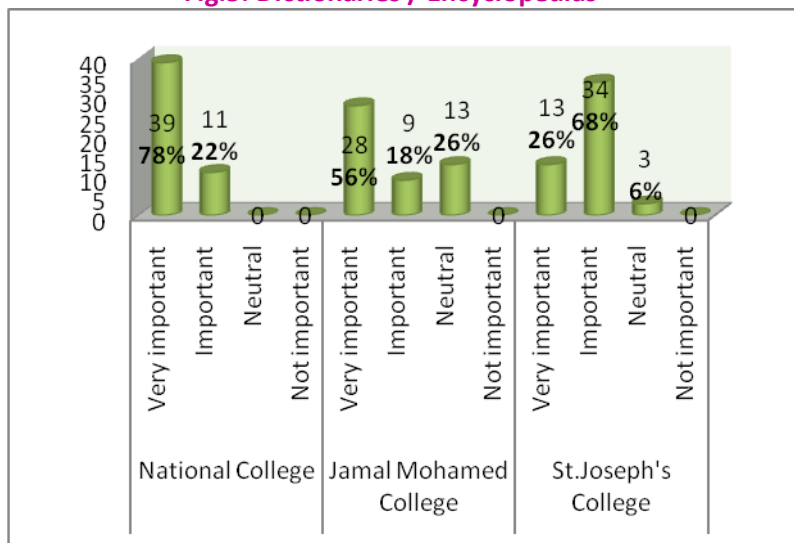


Fig.5 shows that majority (78%) of the respondent in the ‘National College’ are referred ‘Dictionaries / Encyclopedias’ is ‘very important’ whereas in ‘Jamal Mohamed College 18% considered it is ‘important’ while in ‘St. Joseph’s College’ only 6% are in ‘Neutral’.

Fig.6: Proceedings of the conferences / seminars

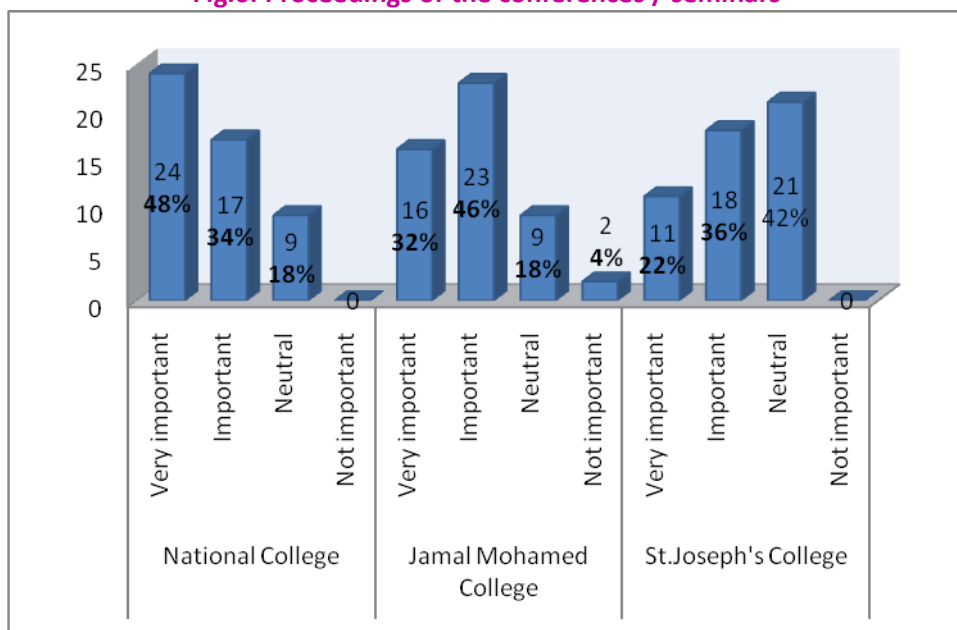


Fig.6 showed that 48% identified 'very important' in consultation of 'proceedings of the conferences / seminars' whereas in the 'Jamal Mohamed College' 4% of the respondents considered it is 'Not important' while in the 'St. Joseph's College' 42% of the respondents are in 'Neutral'.

III. REASONS FOR INFORMATION SEEKING

Fig.7: Writing papers / Chapters for conference / Book / Articles

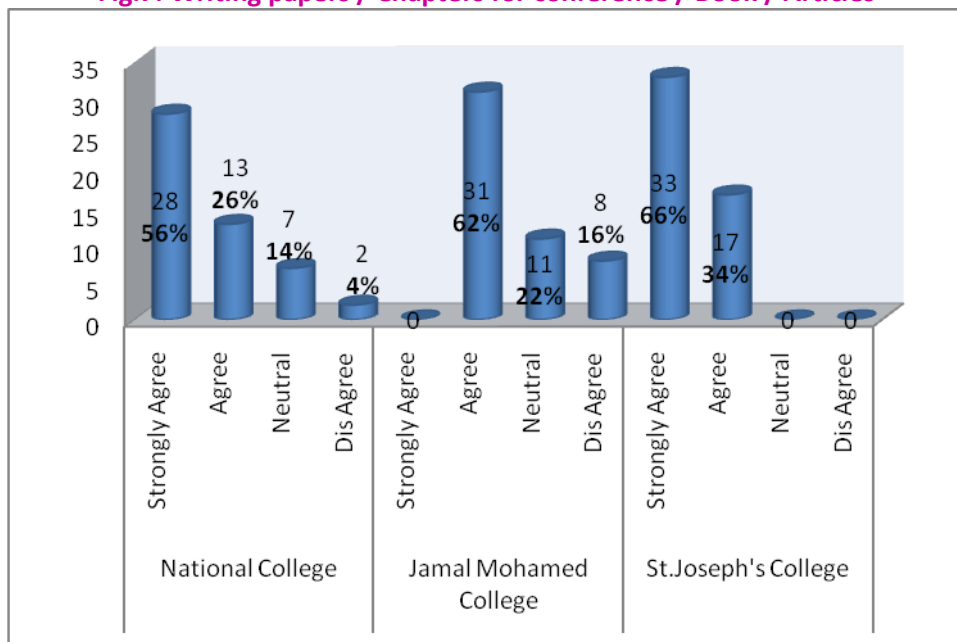
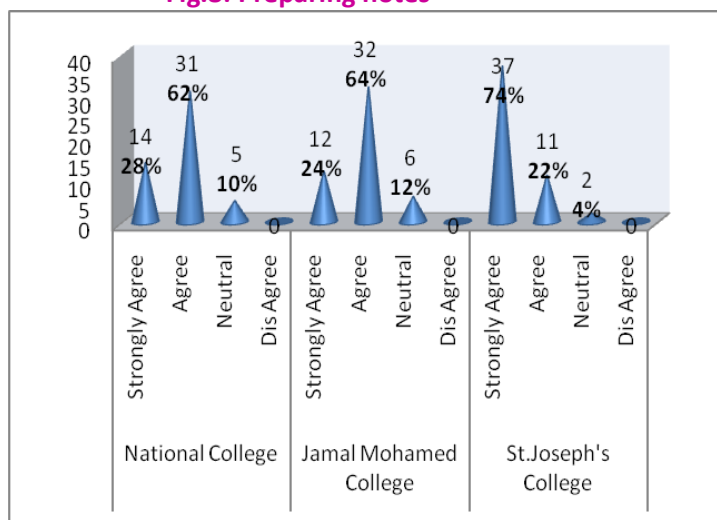


Fig.7 shows that in the 'National College' there is 56% respondent's in 'Strongly Agree' option for their 'writing papers / chapters for conference / book / articles' whereas in the 'Jamal Mohamed College' 16% of the respondent's in 'Disagree' while in the 'St. Joseph's College' there is 'NIL' responses, in the options of 'Neutral' and 'Disagree'.

Fig.8: Preparing notes



From Fig.8, analysis showed that (62%) from 'National College' respondents in 'Agree' option for their 'notes preparing' while in the 'Jamal Mohamed College' 12% of the respondents in 'Neutral' whereas in the 'St. Joseph's College' 74% of the respondents are in 'Strongly Agree'.

Fig.9: Preparing for assignments / seminars

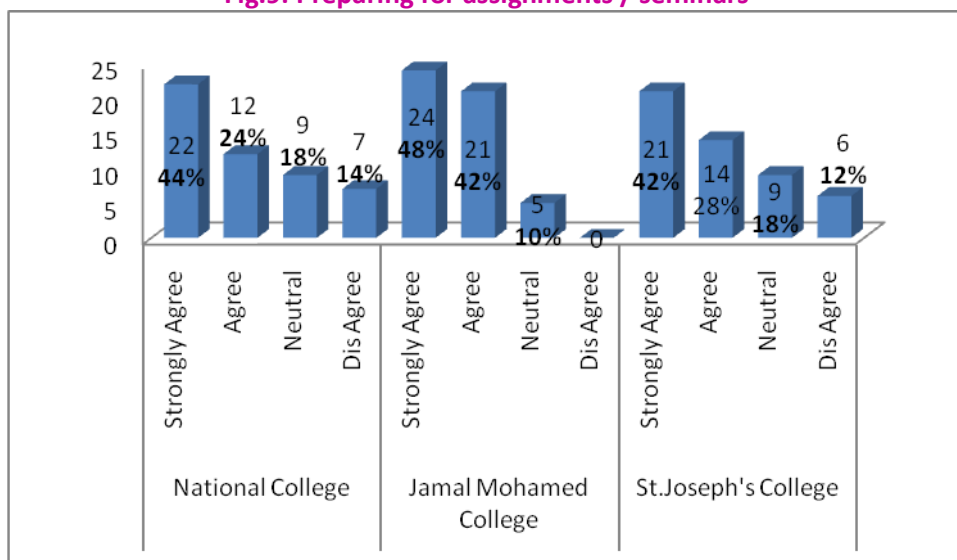


Fig.9 shows that in the 'National College' there is 44% respondents are in 'Strongly Agreed' option for their 'preparing assignments / seminars' whereas in the 'Jamal Mohamed College' 0% of the respondents in 'Disagree' while in the 'St. Joseph's College' 18% of the respondents in 'Neutral'.

III. CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF 'RESEARCH SCHOLAR'

Fig.10: Lack of comprehensive book collection

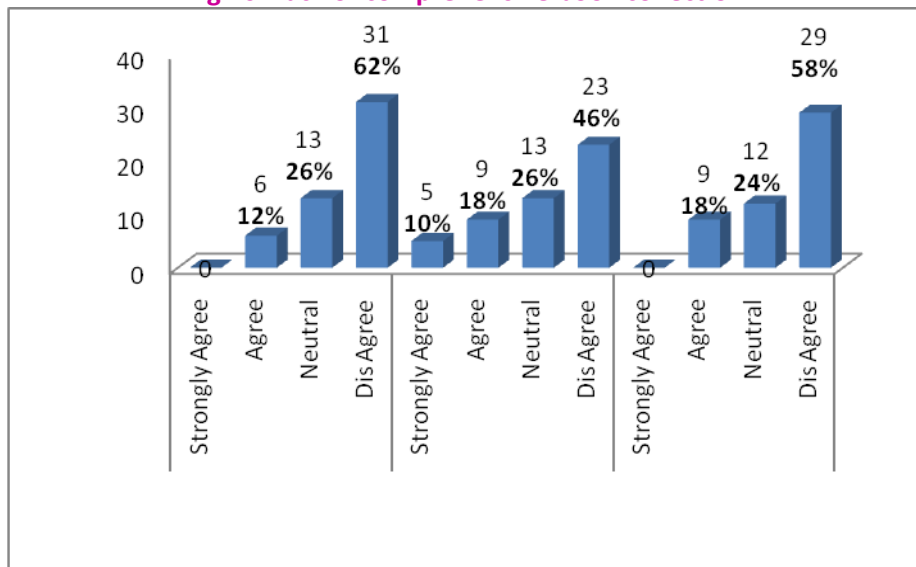
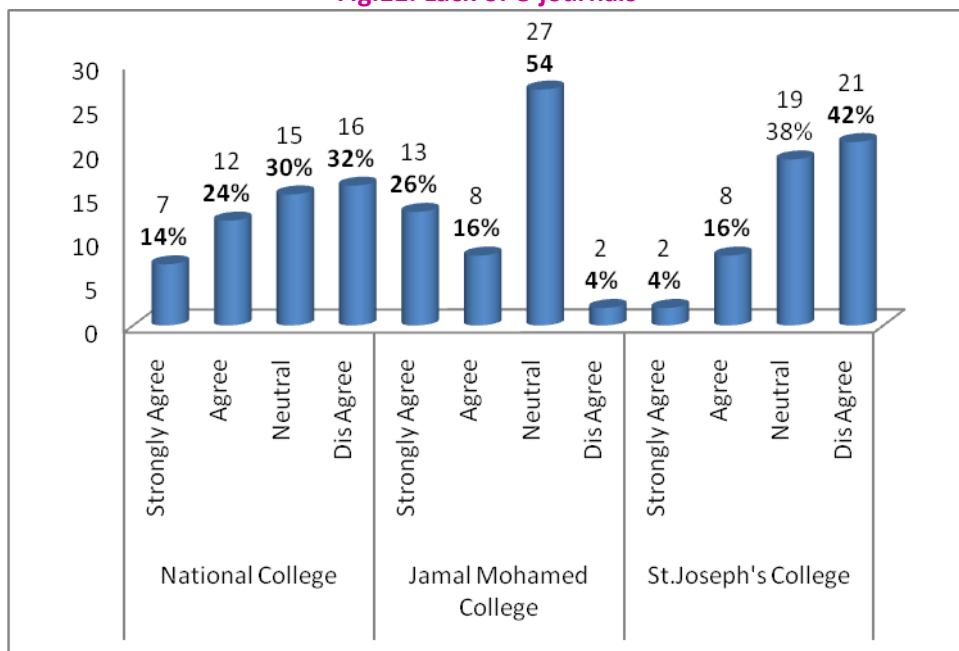


Fig.10 showed that (62%) identified in the 'National College' in 'Disagree' option for 'Lack of book collection' while in the 'Jamal Mohamed College' 10% of the respondent's in 'Strongly Agree', whereas in the 'St. Joseph's College' 14% indicated of the option is 'Neutral'.

Fig.11: Lack of e-journals



From Fig.11, analysis showed that (32%) from 'National College' respondents in 'Disagree' option for 'lack of e-journals' while in the 'Jamal Mohamed College' 26% of the respondent's in 'Strongly Agree' whereas in the 'St. Joseph's College' 38% of the respondents in 'Neutral' option.

FINDINGS:

- In general, the result shows that, in the three colleges 'Male' participants are involved more than 'Female' participants.
- Most of the respondents belong to 'Science' discipline.
- Majority of the respondents visited 'almost daily' to the library in the 'National and St. Joseph's Colleges' while in the 'Jamal Mohamed College' majority of the respondents visited 'once in a week' to the library.
- In the three colleges, the majority of the respondents are consulted of 'Textbook / Reference book' is 'very important'.
- Majority of the respondents in the 'National College' considered 'proceedings of the conferences / seminars' are 'very important'. In 'St. Joseph's College 36% of the respondents in 'important' and 4% of the respondents in 'Jamal Mohamed College' considered it is 'Not important'.
- In 'writing papers / Chapters for conference / Book / Articles' in the colleges of 'National' and 'St. Joseph', from the respondents the option of 'Strongly Agree' is placed in majority. But in the 'Jamal Mohamed College' it is in 'Agree'.
- Majority of the respondents utilized library resources for 'notes preparing' in the option of 'Agree' is in 'National' and 'Jamal Mohamed' Colleges, but in the St. Joseph's College it is in 'Strongly Agree'.
- In 'Preparing assignments / seminars', 'Strongly Agree' option is placed from the majority of the respondents in all the three colleges.
- In the three colleges majority of the respondents identified there is faced no major challenges in the 'Book collection' of library.
- In the challenges of 'Lack of e-journals', in 'National College' 14% of the respondents, in 'Jamal Mohamed College' it is 26% and in 'St. Joseph's College' it is 4% are indicated in the option of 'Strongly Agree' respectively.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Information is a vital and indispensable product of the modern society. It grows from experience, observation, interaction and cultivation of knowledge. It is intended for socio-economical development. Nature of information needs varies from one individual to another depending upon subject of interest, and area of specialization. From the above, it is evident that researchers seek information mainly when writing assignment and articles and to preparing notes. Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

- The researchers should be encouraged on the importance of 'almost daily' visit to the library.
- Information Literacy programmes will be effective to create and handle e-resources.
- Encourage the research scholars to use the resources and services of libraries in order to overcome the difficulties faced by them in the use of information.
- More facilities such as 'e-books', 'e-journals', 'reference materials' and 'proceedings of the conferences / seminars' should be made available in the college libraries.
- It has been established that Internet is an important tool in the information world. However, to utilize the resources of Internet to its maximum, it is necessary to make the users well versed in the Net.
- Create awareness among the research scholars regarding the types of sources, their importance and usefulness for getting the information.
- Use of Non-book materials – should be encouraged and improved.

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