



RESEARCH TRENDS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE IN TAMIL NADU : A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the current research areas in Library and Information Science among Research Scholars who are currently pursuing M.Phil and Ph.D programmes under fulltime and part-time schemes in various Universities/Colleges in Tamil Nadu. A structured questionnaire was designed and distributed among Research Scholars to collect the data for the research. It is found that the majority of respondents are doing research on “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics, followed by “Electronic Resources/Digital Libraries” and “User Studies/ Information Literacy”. It is further found that little attention was given for the areas such as “Library Management” and “Public Libraries”. It is observed that majority of respondents are doing Ph.D programme under part-time scheme. The study recommended that LIS Research Scholars should prefer to carry out research on “Information and Communication Technologies” (ICT) in order to create awareness and also to implement ICT in libraries.

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries and Information Centres (LICs) not only play the key role of repository of knowledge but also work as the purveyor of research activities. The information professionals engaged in LICs have been striving hard to improve the conditions of information environment. The realization that library is an important and dependable component for further research in any field stimulated the role of library in education. (Lahiri, 1996). Research is the arrival at a dependable solution to a problem through collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. Osuala (1993) states that, research is an important tool for advancing knowledge. Ochogwu (2007) states that “Research is needed in various operational activities of the library profession”, especially into why people do not consult the library. Research in librarianship is a core aspect of library education. Day (1997) observes that research means to “investigate the cause and effect of phenomenon as it affects the profession and come out with possible solutions”.

RELATED LITERATURE

Shivalinghaiah, Sheshadri and Keralapura (2009) investigated that research themes related to academic and public libraries received the most research focus and some sub-fields such as library services, library professionals, open source utilization, digitization technology, and exploring metadata, received less research attention. Mahapatra and Sahoo (2004) identified in the study that highest number of research have been carried out on “User Study” and also found that “Bibliometrics and Citation Analysis” are the most interest areas of research by

the LIS professionals. Kaba (2002) found that “Information technology” (OPAC, CD-ROM and the Internet) was the most popular research area among MLIS students, less number of research was carried out on information needs, library management, library use, and publishers/publishing, no research was done on history of libraries, cataloguing and classification, indexing and abstracting, cooperation or documentation. Kajberg (1996) found that the major research areas were “Cooperation, Networks, and Resource Sharing” and also revealed that theoretical aspects of librarianship and information science received little attention. Alemna (1996) analyzed that the major areas of interest were information technology, rural libraries and status/image of librarians. Ocholla and Ocholla (2007) studied that college librarians contribute less about technology, system-related issues and cataloguing. The main objective of study is, to identify the current research areas in Library and Information Science.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out among research scholars of Library and Information Science in various Universities and Colleges of Tamil Nadu, India. In order to carry out the study, a well structured questionnaire was designed and distributed among research scholars. A total of 105 questionnaires were distributed and 85 (80.95%) responded back. It was divided into two parts namely Personal Information and Research Areas. Moreover, the respondents were also asked to indicate the title of their research, Research Programmer and Research Schemes. The Research areas were grouped into six major titles like “Information and Communication Technologies”

(ICTs), “Electronic Resources /Digital Libraries”, “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics”, “Library Management”, “User Study/ Information Literacy,” and “Public Libraries” based on the interrelationship. The data thus collected were analyzed by SPSS.

RESULTS

The data were collected from the Librarians, Assistant Librarians, Library Assistants and Research Scholars who are currently pursuing research programmes such as M.Phil, Ph.D under full-time and part-time schemes and the same is given in Table 1.

were male and 25(29.4%) were female, majority of respondents are doing research under part-time 71(83.5%), whereas 14(16.5%) are doing research under full time. It is also revealed that 66(77.6%) 19(22.4%) of respondents are doing PhD and M.Phil programmes respectively.

Major Areas of Research

The major research areas of respondents are broadly categorized and ascertained under six major titles based on its interrelationship and same is given in figure 1. The respondents were asked to indicate the title of the research. It is found from figure 1 that majority of Research Scholars

Table 1. Demographic Information

S.No	Description	No	%	Total	
1.	Designation	Librarian	49	57.6%	85
		Assistant Librarian	15	17.6%	
		Library Assistant	8	9.4%	
		Research Scholars	13	15.3%	
2.	Gender	Male	60	70.6%	85
		Female	25	29.4%	
3.	Research Schemes	Full Time	14	16.5%	85
		Part-Time	71	83.5%	
4.	Research Programme	M.Phil	19	22.4%	85
		PhD	66	77.6%	

Table 2. Research Area by Gender

S.No	Description	Gender								Total
		Male n=60				Female n=25				
		M.Phil		Ph.D		M.Phil		Ph.D		
FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT			
1.	ICT	1	1	1	8	0	0	1	2	14
		25%	9.1%	33.3%	19%	.0%	.0%	20%	12.5%	16.5%
2.	Electronic Resources /Digital Libraries	2	4	0	6	0	0	1	6	19
		50%	36.4%	.0%	14.3%	.0%	.0%	20%	37.5%	22.4%
3.	Bibliometric/ Scientometric/ Webometrics	0	3	1	19	2	0	0	4	29
		.0%	27.3%	33.3%	45.2%	100%	.0%	.0%	25%	34.1%
4.	Library Management	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	4
		.0%	9.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	50%	40%	.0%	4.7%
5.	User study/Information Literacy	1	1	1	9	0	0	1	3	16
		25%	9.1%	33.3%	21.4%	.0%	.0%	20%	18.8%	18.8%
6.	Public Libraries	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
		.0%	9.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	50%	.0%	6.3%	3.5%

Table 3. Research Areas by Designation

S.No	Research Area	Librarian	Rank	Assistant Librarian	Rank	Library Assistant	Rank	Research Scholars	Rank	Total
1.	ICT	9	4	2	4	1	2	2	3	14
		18.4%		13.3%		12.5%		15.4%		16.5%
2.	Electronic Resources/Digital Libraries	11	2	4	2	1	2	3	1	19
		22.4%		26.7%		12.5%		23.1%		22.4%
3.	Bibliometrics/Scientometrics/ Webometrics	18	1	5	1	4	1	2	3	29
		36.7%		33.3%		50%		15.4%		34.1%
4.	Library Management	0	6	1	5	1	2	2	3	4
		.0%		6.7%		12.5%		15.4%		4.7%
5.	User study/Information Literacy	10	3	3	3	0	6	3	1	16
		20.4%		20%		.0%		23.1%		18.8%
6.	Public Libraries	1	5	0	6	1	2	1	6	3
		2.0%		.0%		12.5%		7.7%		3.5%

It is found from the table 1 that majority of respondents are working as librarians 49(57.6%), followed by Assistant Librarians 15(17.6%), Library Assistants 8(9.4%) and Research Scholars 13(15.3%). It is observed that 60 (70.6%)

(34.10%) are doing research on “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics,” followed by “Electronic Resources/Digital Libraries” (22.40%) and “User study/Information Literacy” (18.80%).It is further observed

that 16.50% of respondents are engaged in research on “Information and Communication Technologies” (ICT) and less number of respondents are doing research on “Library Management (4.70%) and “Public Libraries” (3.50%).

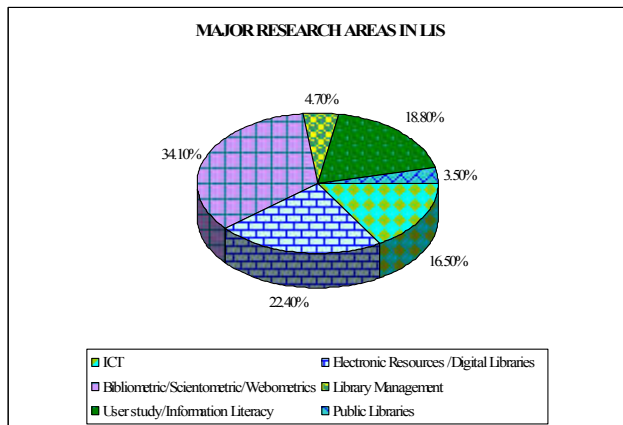


Fig. 1. Major Area of Research

Research Areas by Gender

The research areas are further ascertained by gender and the same is given Table 2. The respondents were asked to indicate the gender. It is found from table 2 that the majority of male respondents 19(45.2%) are doing Ph.D on “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics” under part-time scheme, whereas majority of female respondents 6(37.5%) are also doing Ph.D on “Electronic Resources/Digital Libraries” under part-time scheme. It is further observed that 9(21.4%) of male respondents are also doing Ph.D on “User Study/ Information Literacy” under part-time scheme and 4(25%) of female respondents are doing Ph.D on “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics” under part-time scheme. It is also revealed 2(50%) and 4(36.4%) of male respondents are doing research (M.Phil) on “Electronic Resources /Digital Libraries” under full time and part-time schemes respectively, whereas 2(100%) of female respondents are doing research (M.Phil) on “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics” and 1(50%) of them are doing research (M.Phil) on “Library Management” under full time scheme.

Research Areas by Designation

The study is also focused to find out the current research areas among Librarians, Assistant Librarians, Library Assistants and Research Scholars who are currently involved in the research and the same is given in Table 3. The respondents were asked to indicate the designation. The rank is assigned based on the frequency occurred against each research areas and the respondents. It is found from table 3 that majority of Librarians 18(36.7%,rank1), Assistant Librarians 5(33.3%, rank 1), Library Assistants 4(50%, rank 1) are doing research on “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics” whereas majority of Research Scholars 3(23.1%) are pursuing research on both “Electronic Resources and Digital Libraries” and “User Studies/Information Literacy” equally, followed by Librarians 11(22.4%), Assistant Librarians 4(26.7%), Library Assistants 1(12.5%) are involved in the research on “Electronic Resources / Digital Libraries”. It is further found that equal numbers of Research Scholars are doing research on

three areas such as “ICT” 2(15.4%), “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics” 2(15.4%) and “Library Management” 2(15.4%). It is found that 10(20.4%) of Librarians, 3(20%) of Assistant Librarians are doing research on “User Study/ Information Literacy”

Research Areas by Research Programme

The Research areas are further analyzed by the Research Programme such as M.Phil and Ph.D and the same is given figure 2.

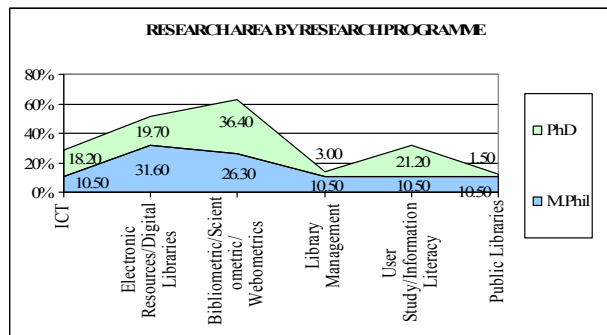


Fig 2. Research Areas by Research Programme

The respondents were asked to indicate the research programmes. It is found from figure 2 that majority of M.Phil Research Scholars (31.6%) are pursuing research on “Electronic Resources/Digital Libraries”, whereas majority of Ph.D Research Scholars (36.4%) are doing research on “Bibliometrics/Scientometrics/ Webometrics”. It is further observed that (26.3%) of M.Phil Research Scholars are doing research on “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics” and 21.2% of Ph.D Research Scholars are engaged in the research on “User Study/Information Literacy”. It is also found that same number of M.Phil Research Scholars (10.5%) is doing research on “ICT”, “Library Management”, “User Study/Information Literacy” and “Public Libraries” each. It is found that a good number of Ph.D Research Scholars (21.2%) is also doing research on “User Study/Information Literacy” and followed by (19.7%) are doing research on “Electronic Resources/Digital Libraries”, followed by “ICT”18.20%.It is also observed that only 1.50% of Ph.D Research Scholars are doing research on “Public Libraries”

Research Areas by Research Schemes

The Research areas of respondents are further analyzed based on Research Schemes such as Full-Time and Part-Time and the same is given in figure 3. The respondents were asked to indicate the research schemes. It is found from figure 3 that majority of Part-Time Research Scholars (89.70%) are doing research on “ “Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/Webometrics”, followed by “Electronic Resources / Digital Libraries”(84.20%), “ User Study/ Information Literacy” (81.30%) , “ICT” (78.60%), whereas majority of Full-Time Research Scholars (50%) are doing research on “ Library Management”, followed by “ ICT”(21.40%), and “User Study/ Information Literacy”(18.80%), ‘Electronic Resources / Digital Libraries” (15.80%) . It is further observed that 100% of Part-Time Research Scholars are doing research on “Public Libraries”, it is surprise to know that no Full-Time Research Scholar is involved in the research on “Public Libraries”.

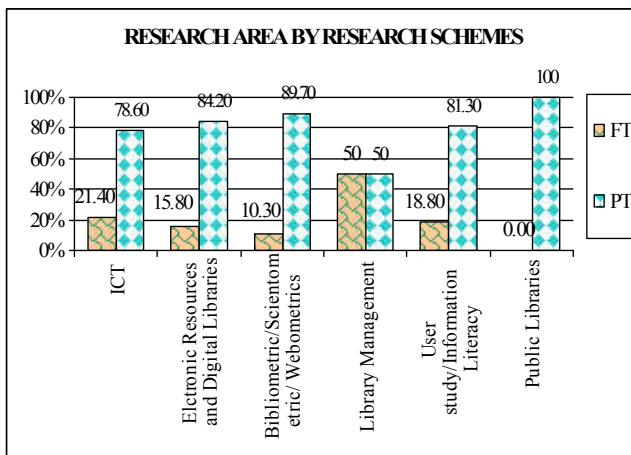


Figure 3. Research Areas by Research Schemes

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Research opportunities in Library and Information Science are widely available in Tamil Nadu. The Universities are also introduced research programmes such as M.Phil and Ph.D under both fulltime and part-time schemes. The working LIS practitioners can find sufficient time for their research apart from their routine works. The following recommendations are made based on the present study that

- The Research Scholars should also carry out research on topics related to Library Management, Public Libraries to solve the problems and take decision in the respective domains.
- The application of ICT in Libraries is an important role in digital environment. It is suggested that the Research Scholars should involve in the research on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The research results will help the LIS professionals to implement such technologies in the libraries.
- It is further suggested that the Research Scholars should adopt survey based research. Therefore, the research scholars can conduct an interview with the LIS professionals and get the required data for the research.

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