



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

KNOWLEDGE OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AMONG THE WOMEN STUDENTS IN RURAL AREA AT VIRUTHUNAGAR DISTRICT

KEY WORDS: Information Literacy, SFR College for Women, ICT, literacy Skills.

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ABSTRACT

Information is an essential part of every society. This study details on the access of information literacy level of rural area women students. The data has been collected from "The Standard Fireworks Rajaratnam College for Women", Savakasi, Viruthunagar District. Among the 200 questionnaires distributed 185 questionnaires were collected back from the students. The survey has been taken according to the survey base the rural women students are having good knowledge in information literacy skills and ICT. This study clearly shows that the rural students have equal knowledge are information literacy and ICT compared to the metropolitan students.

INTRODUCTION

Information is very important in this world and the term "information literacy" has its root back in 1974. Professor Paul Zurkowski, the President of Information Industry Association, coined the term information skills to refer to people who are able to solve their information problems by using relevant information sources by applying relevant technology (Oviah, 2010)

The study reveals that the rural students have knowledge about information literacy compared to the city students. Information literacy knowledge plays a vital role in higher education. Information literacy helps to extend the learning beyond education. The information revolution has immensely improved the ability to access information, by the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively needed information.

About the College

"The Standard Fireworks Rajaratnam College for Women" was established in 1968, in memory of the late philanthropist **Thiru N.R.K.Rajaratnam**, whose pioneering spirit in business and industry has earned for himself an indelible niche in the annals of Sivakasi. Thiru Rajaratnam's matchless genius and tireless energy gave rise to the **"The Standard Group of Industries"**. The late Thiru K.A.A.Sankaralingam Nadar and Thiru K.A.A.Arunachalam Nadar and Thiru C. Chelladurai Nadar were the founder architects and stalwarts of this edifice of learning. They chalked out a programme for the dawn of higher education and **intellectual upliftment of rural women in and around Sivakasi** by generating the **"The Standard Fireworks Educational Charities Trust"**. It was their vision to liberate the rural women from their socio, economic and cultural constraints by intellectually equipping them to confront the challenges of everyday life. Under the leadership of the esteemed President Thiru Yennarkay R. Ravindran, the present Management Committee continues to liberally finance, monitor and endorse every step forward, initiated by this prestigious institution. "The Standard Fireworks Rajaratnam College For Women" was inaugurated by the Vice-Chancellor, Sri Meenakshi Sundaram, on 27th January, 1968. The College was initially housed in a modest building belonging to the "The Standard Group of Industries". The Trust has been renamed "The Standard Fireworks Charities" since Dec. 1984. The College is nestled & amidst a vast area of 25 acres, on the Sivakasi-Thiruthangal Road, since 1977. It is affiliated to the **Madurai Kamaraj University**.

OBJECTIVES

- To know whether the students have knowledge about information literacy through training programmes.
- To find out the sources used by the students.
- To know how the students access information.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meltzer, Maughan & Fry (1995) conducted a case study of undergraduate students of University of California, Los Angeles to investigate the use of library among students and to determine students' perceptions of the library. The findings of the study

revealed that majority of the students used the library to study their own material. 50% of the respondents favoured library staff over other means for seeking assistance in using library material. Majority of the students were inexperienced in using library's online system and weigh heavily in favour of 'print only' materials. Mittermeyer & Quirion (2003) conducted a survey of incoming first-year undergraduates in Quebec universities to determine their information literacy skills. The results revealed that 64.8% of the respondents were able to recognize significant words. 29.5% of the respondents had knowledge of using a library catalogue. 27.7% users had sufficient skills to use boolean operators. About half of the respondents knew that an encyclopaedia can familiarize the reader with a subject. 74.7% of the respondents understood the usefulness of periodicals. 52.7% users had good understanding of meta search engines and only 35.8% were able to interpret a bibliographic reference. The researchers also found that 78.2% of the respondents knew that bibliography can be used as a tool for finding related documents. 83.3% had skills to evaluate the information found on Internet while only 27.6% of the respondents knew when to quote a reference. The authors concluded with a hope that university authorities might implement the integration of information literacy competencies into the curriculum and affirmed the role of university libraries in their development and promotion. Moghaddaszadeh & Nikam (2012) carried out a survey of faculty members and research scholars of Bangalore University to explore their attitude towards information literacy. The findings of the study revealed that 68.6% of the respondents were able to identify different types of potential sources for information. 70.5% of the respondents preferred to evaluate the information sources and 65.6% of the respondents understood many of the ethical, legal and socio-economic issues surrounding information and information technology. A review of the literature reveals that no such study/ survey has been undertaken in the area of Punjab on the subject of information literacy. So the need was felt to do a comprehensive study on information literacy among the students of universities of Punjab and Chandigarh

METHODOLOGY

Survey design was used to conduct the study and structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Among 200 questionnaire distributed, 185 questionnaire were collected back. The data has been collected from "The Standard Fireworks Rajaratnam College for Women" situated at rural area of Viruthunagar district, Tamilnadu.

ANALYSIS

Table 1 Training to use information

| s.no | Training programme attended | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 123 | 66.5% |
| 2 | No | 62 | 33.51% |

The Table 1 shows that the total number of students is 185, out of which 123 (66.5%) of the women students attended information literacy training programme and 33.51% of the women students did not attend the training programme.

Table 2 Source wise Distribution

| S.no | No. of sources | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Books | 76 | 41% |
| 2 | Online journals | 40 | 21.6% |
| 3 | Print Journals | 21 | 11.35% |
| 4 | Database | 16 | 8.6% |
| 5 | Websites | 16 | 8.6% |

| | | | |
|-------|-----------|-----|------|
| 6 | Newspaper | 16 | 8.6% |
| Total | | 185 | |

The above Table 2 shows that the total number of students is 185, out of taken for study in sfr college for women out of which 76 (41%) of the students were using book for their information and 40 students are using online journals and 21 students were collecting information through print journals.

Table 3 Information Literacy wise Distribution

| s.no | Description | SD | D | No Opinion | AG | SA |
|------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | I know how to get information | 28 (15.13%) | 21 (11.35%) | 26 (14.05%) | 73 (39.45%) | 37 (20%) |
| 2 | I have ability to search right information | 17 (9.18%) | 11 (5.94%) | 19 (10.27%) | 87 (47.02%) | 51 (27.56%) |
| 3 | I can access the accessed information with defined requirement | 21 (11.35%) | 19 (10.27%) | 27 (14.59%) | 72 (38.91%) | 46 (24.86%) |
| 4 | I know the plagiarism | 17 (9.18%) | 13 (7.02%) | 21 (11.35%) | 87 (47.02%) | 47 (25.40%) |
| 5 | I know the copyright rules | 21 (11.35%) | 18 (9.72%) | 29 (15.67%) | 83 (44.86%) | 34 (18.37%) |

The above table 3 shows that the students information literacy were accessed with Linkert 5 point scale. The table shows that the majority of the women students have good information literacy skills.

CONCLUSION

A total of 185 students from “The students of the Standard Fire Works Rajaratnam College for Women” were randomly selected for this study. Information literacy skills among these students along with their regular study are very much important for building knowledge in this male domination society. The Standard Fireworks Rajaratnam College for Women management renders complete support for the development of students and faculty. Majority of the students exhibit good information literacy skills and ICT. The college has provided good environment equal to metropolitan city colleges and have excellent library services so that the students have good knowledge about information literacy skills and ICT.

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