

**A Study on Usage of Reference Sources in Kanyakumari District Polytechnic Colleges**

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**Abstract:**

*This study tried to analyse the usage of reference sources in Kanyakumari district Polytechnic college library users. The researcher identified for this study only the Polytechnic College Library users of Kanyakumari District. This study is to analyze the usage of reference sources for the staff members and students of Polytechnic Colleges in Kanyakumari district. It analyzed the frequency of using reference books and challenges facing in general knowledge books usage.*

**Keywords:** Reference books, General knowledge books, usage, challenges.

**Introduction**

Library is a collection of information. It is organized for use and maintained by people, institution or a private individual. More traditionally saying, a library is a collection of books. A library contains books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, documents, microform, compact discs, e-books, databases and other formats. Books help to improve knowledge by giving information. They are the source of knowledge and wisdom. They essentially help in improving the quality of life.

**Reference Sources**

Reference sources are meant for preliminary perusal and consultation. Hence, these are less frequently used. Reference sources are encyclopaedias, dictionaries, geographical sources, biographical sources, yearbooks, almanacs, directories, and handbooks. Reference books are

different in their purpose from ordinary books, therefore, a different approach is required for their study and evaluation.

### **Review of Literature**

**Jeyakala, Mary and Kannan (2018)** carried out a study on “ A comparative study on usage of generalia books in Polytechnic colleges of Kanyakumari district and Tirunelveli district”. The study revealed that on comparing both the districts it is found that majority of the respondents 31 per cent of the users in Kanyakumari district Polytechnic college libraries use dictionaries and most of the respondents (38%) in Tirunelveli district Polytechnic college libraries use Handbooks. It is also revealed that comparing both the districts it is found that majority of the respondents 26.6 per cent of the users faced challenges in inadequate reference books in Kanyakumari district Polytechnic college libraries and most of the respondents in Tirunelveli district Polytechnic college libraries faced challenges in periodicals are not arranged properly on the shelves.

**Ramasamy and Padma (2015)** carried out a study on the titled “Use of reference Sources by the Secondary School Students: A case study of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Narimedu, Madurai, Tamilnadu”. The study revealed that maximum number of students are familiar with library and reference services provided by library. Most of students are visited library during their library period only. It was found that most of the students are familiar with reference book and types of the reference materials. The study also revealed that students mostly use reference sources like Dictionary, Encyclopaedia and year book. 50% of students need help while finding information from reference book. 100% of students are familiar with Internet access with the help of Google search engine

**Adithyakumari and Talawar (2011)** conducted a survey on “Reference sources collection in university libraries of Karnataka: a study”. The study revealed that reference sources collection, that is handbooks, manuals, bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, biographies, directories, yearbooks and almanacs, geographical sources, indexing and abstracting sources in seven university libraries of Karnataka. Among the reference collection, dictionaries and encyclopaedias were more in number as against geographical sources of information and directories in university libraries with its number of users. There was a need a strengthen the collection of almanacs, maps and atlases, gazetteers, indexing abstracting and statistical sources in all the university libraries under study.

### **Definition for Reference books**

Reference book is a book (as a dictionary, encyclopaedia, atlas) intended primarily for consultation rather than for consecutive reading. A library book that may be used on the premises but may not be taken out. Encyclopaedia, dictionary, directory, yearbooks, gazetteers, patent, thesis , autograph, government publications, and so on are preserved in a separate section in the library which are called as reference books.

### **Need and Significance of the study:**

The purpose of the study is to present that how reference sources play a vital role in polytechnic college libraries. Polytechnic education is an important tool that builds and encourages scientific temper of professional skills and moulds young minds to study, ponder and achieve. The polytechnic institute which provides professional education at a certain basic level must also ensure sufficient information provision to its students. The students and staff members

refer these books for competitive examinations and also for their higher education. So a huge amount of money is spent for collecting these books by the management authorities for their libraries. Therefore, it is necessary to study the usage of reference sources in Polytechnic Colleges.

### **Scope of the study**

The researcher has chosen Polytechnic College Libraries of Kanyakumari district. There are 22 Polytechnic colleges available in Kanyakumari district with well established Libraries. Among them 10 colleges in Kanyakumari district are selected and analyse the usage of reference sources for the study.

### **Objectives**

- To find out the usage of reference books
- To evaluate the user satisfaction of reference sources
- To identify the challenges of user while using reference books.

### **Methodology**

Survey method is used to collect primary data. Questionnaire method will be followed to collect the relevant data. Purposive random sampling will be followed for collecting the data. To collect data and other necessary information related to the research topic, a structured and well designed 215 questionnaires were distributed in each Kanyakumari district Polytechnic colleges. Fifteen rejected due to the incomplete data and only 200 were selected in each district for analysis. The collected data were tabulated, and applied simple percentage is calculated and analysed.

**Limitation of the study**

The researcher has selected only few colleges and respondents in Kanyakumari district Polytechnic College libraries.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected from the students of Polytechnic Colleges in Kanyakumari district are presented in the tabular form to find out the challenges of using reference sources. It is hoped that the tables sufficiently and correctly represent all responses which are classified on the basis of their relevance.

**Table 1**

**Usage of Generalia books**

S.No	Type of respondents	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	Faculty members	40	20
2	Students (S)	160	80
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows the Kanyakumari district Polytechnic Colleges total final year students are around 7402 and faculty members are 1392. The table depicts the questionnaire distributed among respondents were 200. Out of these respondents 20% of the population under study consists of faculty members and 80% respondents are students.

**Table 2****Usage of reference books**

Reference books which contain the desired information are considered secondary sources of information. These include encyclopaedias, dictionaries, handbooks, directories, almanacs and yearbooks and so on. Usage of reference books summarized in table 2.

**Usage of reference books**

S.No	Reference books	Kanyakumari District	Per cent
1	Encyclopaedias	20	9.5
2	Dictionaries	55	27.2
3	Handbooks	23	10.9
4	Directories	15	7.1
5	Almanacs	52	24.8
6	Bibliographies	15	7.2
7	Geographical sources	20	9.5
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

Table 2 shows that out of 200 total respondents 9.5 per cent of respondents used reference books in encyclopaedia, 27.2 per cent used in Dictionaries, 10.9 per cent used in Handbooks, 7.1 per cent used in directories, 24.8 per cent used in Almanacs, 7.2 per cent used in Bibliographies and 9.5 per cent used in Geographical sources as reference books in the Kanyakumari district Polytechnic College libraries.

It concluded that on usage of reference books in Kanyakumari district Polytechnic college library users use reference books.

**Table 3****Respondents knowledge of the Reference materials**

S.No	Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	No comment
1	I know what constitute reference materials in the library	95 (47.5)	55 (27.5)	45 (22.5)	5 (2.5)
2	I have the knowledge and skill to search reference materials in the library	96 (48)	65 (32.5)	25 (12.5)	14 (7)
3	I am familiar with a variety of reference materials and I know they contain a wealth of information	105 (52.5)	48 (24)	43 (21.5)	4 (2)

Source: Primary data

Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents 150 (75%) had knowledge of what constitute reference materials in the library while only 5 (2.5%) of the total respondents did not know constitute reference materials in the library . Also, the majority of the respondents 161, (80.5%) claimed to have knowledge and skill on how to search reference materials while 25 (12.5%) said they did not have the knowledge and skill to search reference materials in the library. A larger number of the respondents 153 (76.5%) were familiar with a variety of reference materials and knew that they contain a wealth of information while 43(21.5%) of the

respondents were not they familiar with a variety of reference materials and knew that they a wealth of information.

**Table 4****Level of utilization reference Materials**

S.No	Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	No comment
1	I use reference materials frequently	87 (43.5)	68 (34)	40 (20.0)	5 (2.5)
2	I only consult online reference sources because they are easier to use	65 (32.5)	96 (48)	25 (12.5)	14 (7)
3	I only use the dictionary, not any other reference material.	43 (21.5)	105 (52.5)	48 (24.0)	4 (2)
4	I do not know how to use reference materials other than the dictionary	63 (31.5)	48 (24)	65 (32.5)	24 (12)

Primary Source

Table 4 shows that 161(80.5%) of the respondents used reference materials frequently while 40 (20.0%) did not. Also, 161 (80.5%) agreed that they consult only online reference sources because they are easier to use while 25 (12.5%) of respondents disagreed.. In response to the statement “I only use the dictionary, not any other reference material”, 148 (74 %) respondents agreed while 48 (24%) disagreed and 4 (2%) did not respond. Moreover, 111

(55.5%) of the respondents agreed that they know how to use reference materials other than the dictionary while 65(32.5) disagreed.

### **Findings**

The researcher has concluded from this study that

- It concluded that found that majority of the users in Kanyakumari district Polytechnic College libraries use dictionaries.
- The majority of the respondents 150 (75%) had knowledge of what constitute reference materials
- Majority of the respondents 150 (75%) used reference materials frequently.

### **Conclusion**

The present study is undertaken to analyze the usage of reference sources in Polytechnic Colleges functioning in Kanaykumari district. It concluded that found that majority of the users in Kanyakumari district Polytechnic College libraries use dictionaries. The majority of the respondents 150 (75%) had knowledge of what constitute reference materials. Majority of the respondents 150 (75%) used reference materials frequently

### **Suggestions**

Based on the findings of the study the researcher has offered the following suggestions for providing the effective usage of reference sources in polytechnic college libraries in Kanyakumari district.

- ❖ To increase the usage of reference books the users may be provided with more number of library hours.

- ❖ Sufficient staffs may be appointed in the libraries.
- ❖ To increase the number of reference books in the libraries.
- ❖ To increase the collection of general knowledge books. .

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