

COMPETENCY OF FOREIGN BUDDHIST SCHOLARS IN USE OF ELECTRONIC-RESOURCES WHILE STUDYING IN SRI LANKA

M. K. Geethani Attanayake¹

Introduction

One of the important skills a scholar should possess is the competency in obtaining and handling electronic-resources efficiently. As an electronic-resource, internet can be identified as the largest information hub at the global level. As observed by Luambano and Nawe (2004), "Internet makes possible to access a wide range of information, such as journal articles, papers etc., from anywhere in the world. It also enables scholars and academic institutions to disseminate information to a wider audience around the globe through having web sites and a way to search them and organize the output."

The term 'electronic-resource' (e-resources) is used to denote any information organized in an electronic format. Types of such resources can be found as: Research Guides by Subject, Indices, Electronic Books and Texts, Electronic Journals, Library Catalogs, Reference Sources (dictionaries, almanacs, and encyclopedias), Statistical Sources, Sound Recordings, and Image Databases. These resources provide many advantages over print-based resources. It is because they contain up-to-date information as they are updated regularly. What is more, they offer advanced search capabilities, flexibility in the storage of the results, and enable the users to access the information without restrictions regarding time and location.

Previous Studies

The aim of this paper is to review the use of electronic-resources by foreign Buddhist monks while they are studying in Sri Lanka. There are number of previous studies on the use of e-resources by students and researchers of various academic institutes. Consequently a significant number of literature have focused on different user groups. Mahajan (2006) conducted a related study at Punjab University. Salaam (2010) carried out a survey to determine the usage of e-resources by undergraduate students in four private universities in Nigeria. Davi (2009)

¹ Senior Assistant Librarian, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies (University of Kelaniya), geethani@kln.ac.lk



conducted a study on using of Manipur University library. Her study found that the majority of library users were satisfied with the availability of information on the internet but they were unsatisfied with the speed level of downloading the information. As mentioned earlier, this study was focused to determine the awareness of the internet and e-resources among foreign Buddhist monks studied in Sri Lanka and to identify how they used the Internet and e-resources for their research studies.

Methodology

Survey research method was mainly used in this study. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data. The respondents were foreign research monks, who studied in the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies. A convenience sampling method was applied from those who visit the institute library more frequently. The questionnaires were distributed among 60 of the respondents, of which 53 were selected. Two questionnaires were rejected due to non-use of internet and five questionnaires were not returned.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows the respondents by nationality;

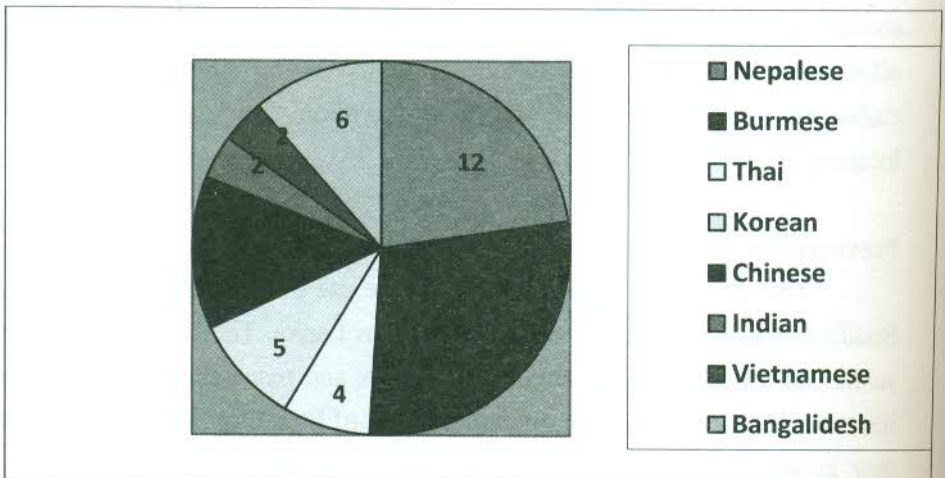


Figure 3: Nationality of the respondents (n = 53)

The results of the survey indicate:

1. The majority of respondents (64%) used the Internet daily while (36%) respondents 2-3 time a week.
2. All respondents used the internet for their research and study purposes, followed by communication (92%). A meager (03%) opted for entertainment.
3. The majority of respondents preferred 'Google' search engine for locating information. 'Yahoo' was placed with 94%. 'Other' search engines, except the listed ones, were not used.
4. Figure 4 point out the preference of use of e-resources by respondents. It is clear that e-journals and e- encyclopedias were used by large majority of respondents, while 05 of them used databases.

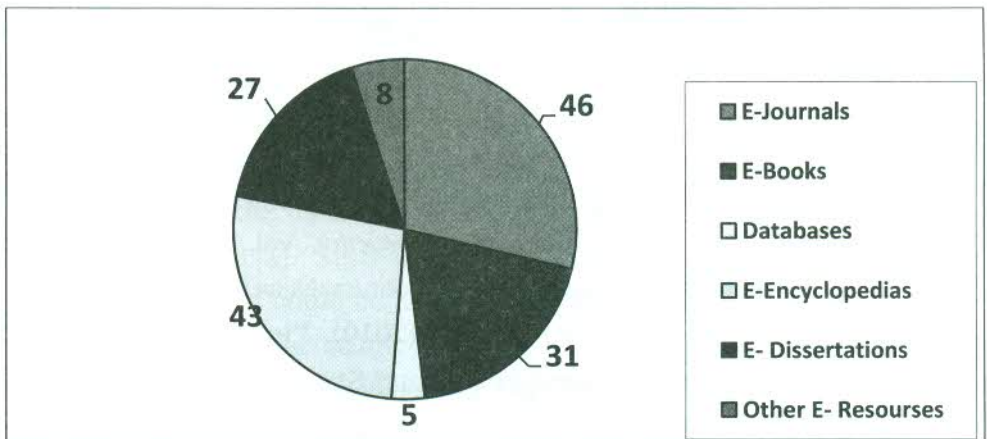


Figure 5: Preference of use of e-resources

5. More than half of respondents mentioned that they were in difficulty of finding relevant Uniform Resource Locators (URL). Only six percent experienced difficulty with Infrastructure Facilities. Fifty eight percent said that they were in lack of proper training. Abundance of irrelevant information was highlighted as a major problem.

Conclusion

According to the findings, e-resources have a great impact on the information requirements of foreign scholar monks who are engaged in Buddhist Studies in the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies. The competency

level of using e-resources among them is satisfied. Most of them use their own computers with Internet connection. They should give heavier preference to databases rather than searching for web sites. Therefore, faculty should encourage the research students to meet their information requirements through e-resources and the librarian should provide proper training to them in the use of e- resources.

Keywords: e- resources, Internet, Buddhist Scholars, foreign students, Sri Lanka

References

- Devi, Th. Purnima and Singh, Y. Herojit (2009). Internet Users: A Study of Manipur University Library; proceeding of ICE -2009
[Available http://crl.du.ac.in/ical09/papers/index_files/ical-94_160_346_1_RV.pdf]
- Eynon, R. (2005). The use of the Internet in higher education: Academics' experiences of using ICTs for teaching and learning. *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives* 57 (2): 168-180.
- Luambano I and J, Nawe (2004). "Internet use by students of the University of Dar es Salaam" *Library Hi Tech News* 21: 36-42.
- Mahajan, Preeti (2006) "Internet Use by Researchers: a Study of Panjab University, Chandigarh" *Library philosophy and practice* vol. 08, No. 2. [Available: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/%7Embolin/mahajan2.htm>]
- Salaam, M.O. and Adegbore A.M. (2010). "Internet Access and Use by Students of Private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria" *Library philosophy and practice*. [Available <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/salaam-adegbore.htm>]