

# Smart Phone Devices as Search Tool: A Comparative Study of Information Seeking Behavior among Rural and Urban Readers

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**Abstract** - The speedy development of Smart Phone Devices (SPDs) and its usage among information seekers have significantly increased over the past 5 years. In order to assess the effectiveness of SPDs in accessing the information has been studied among the two different information-seeker categories from rural and urban areas. 232 respondents from both the regions are selected randomly which is consisting 120 respondents from respective categories. It's found that urban readers spend more time on SPDs than the rural. Rural information-seekers more interested in entertainment oriented information rather than intellectual based information. Urban readers seek more information on academic and intellectual based information than entertainment. The study reveals that rural readers have less awareness over the important websites and apps which may increase their effectiveness over accessing valid information in solving the information-need purpose.

**Keywords:** Smart Phone, Search tool, Information seeking Behaviour

## I. INTRODUCTION

The speedy development of Smart Phone Devices (SPDs) and its usage among information seekers have significantly increased over the past 5 years. In order to assess the effectiveness of SPDs in accessing the information has been studied among the two different information-seeker categories from rural and urban areas. The area selected for the study is the urban and rural areas of Erode District in Tamilnadu (India).

The study is consisted the attributes such as the usage and awareness on important web sources and applications in accessing the information they are in need. Former studies conducted by Huwae (2013) and Song and Lee (2012) mobile devices are the major tools of information searching and becoming dominant instrument in every walk of fulfilling information need.

The aim of this research study is to arrive some valid conclusion where the rural readers could not gain competitive advantage in fulfilling information need. Since both rural and urban readers have different profile and information seeking behavior, it is important to assess that effectiveness SPDs usage and suggesting suitable strategies

to access the required information using mobile gadgets especially to rural information seekers.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of usage of smart phone devices (SPDs) among the rural and urban readers.
2. To analyze the awareness of important and relevant web resources and apps among the two groups of respondents.
3. To assess the effectiveness of using SPDs in accessing and fulfilling information need
4. To know the types of information are accessed among the rural and urban information seekers.

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ryan cautiously examined the sources available easy and optimal access of information in the web resources of library. Power recommended several mobile apps that would help users in managing their everyday tasks, including cloud storage, online bibliography management, and multimedia file management. Besara suggested mobile apps in particular useful for library review and appraisal in fulfilling reader's information need, and the author discussed various mobile apps that could help conduct both qualitative and quantitative research.

The growing body of the literature on mobile technology and its implications for libraries demonstrate the critical needs for library administrators and practitioners to understand the information-seeking behavior and needs of mobile users. This comparative study will contribute to the academic library community's efforts to identify the needs and expectations of readers who are increasingly using their mobile devices as search and research tools.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted using primary data which are collected through a well-administered questionnaire. Two taluks have been selected for data collection viz. Sathyamangalam and Gobichettipalayam.

TABLE 1 SAMPLING DISTRIBUTION

Category	Region-wise Sampling			
	Sathyamangalam		Gobichettipalayam	
	Sample (Actual Sample with correct information)	Percentage of Data considered for the study	Sample (Actual Sample with correct information)	Percentage of Data considered for the study
Rural	60 (57)	95%	60 (58)	96%
Urban	60 (58)	96%	60 (59)	98%
Total Respondents : 57 + 58 + 58 + 59 = 232				

Simple random sampling was adopted to draw the respondents and each taluk (region) was distributed to collect data from 60 rural and 60 urban respondents and the sample size was 240 and only 232 respondents are considered for the study as remaining 8 respondents are eliminated as they have not provided required information in the distributed questionnaire.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The selected regions viz., Sathyamangalam and Gobichettipalayam and their demographic factors and selected comparative variables are presented hereunder.

TABLE 2 REGION-WISE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Sl. No.	Attributes	Factors	Sathyamangalam				Gobichettipalayam			
			Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
			NoR	%	NoR	%	NoR	%	NoR	%
1	Gender	Male	32	56	34	59	31	53	34	58
		Female	25	44	24	41	27	47	25	42
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100
2	Marital Status	Married	34	60	32	55	31	53	30	51
		Unmarried	23	40	26	45	27	47	29	49
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100
3	Age Group	Below 20 Years	4	7	7	12	6	10	6	10
		20 – 30 Years	14	25	17	29	12	21	17	29
		30 – 40 Years	23	40	22	38	23	40	24	41
		40 Years & above	16	28	12	21	17	29	12	20
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100
4	Occupation	Student	12	21	14	24	14	24	14	24
		Private Employed	27	47	24	41	25	43	24	41
		Govt. Employed	11	19	12	21	10	17	10	17
		Self Employed	7	12	8	14	9	16	11	19
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100

\*Note: NoR: No. of Respondents

It is inferred from the table 2 that male respondents have more access than female respondents with more than 55% usage of SPDs. Most of the respondents are married who are considered for the study. More than 60% are married. The

majority age group who responded in this survey is 30 – 40 years which constitute 40%. About 50% of the respondents are private Employed.

TABLE 3 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS - COMPARISON

Sl. No.	Attributes	Factors	Region			
			Rural		Urban	
			NoR	%	NoR	%
1	Gender	Male	63	55	68	58
		Female	52	45	49	42
		Total	115	100	117	100
2	Marital Status	Married	65	57	62	53
		Unmarried	50	43	55	47
		Total	115	100	117	100
3	Age Group	Below 20 Years	10	9	13	11
		20 – 30 Years	26	23	34	29
		30 – 40 Years	46	40	46	39
		40 Years & above	33	29	24	21
		Total	115	100	117	100
4	Occupation	Student	26	23	28	24
		Private Employed	52	45	48	41
		Govt. Employed	21	18	22	19
		Self Employed	16	14	19	16
		Total	115	100	117	100

\*Note: NoR: No. of Respondents

TABLE 4 DESCRIPTIVE VARIABLES

Sl. No.	Attributes	Variables	Sathyamangalam				Gobichettipalayam			
			Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
			NoR	%	NoR	%	NoR	%	NoR	%
1.	Type of Device	Android Mobile Device	41	72	38	66	40	69	38	64
		Tablets	10	18	13	22	10	17	13	22
		Laptop & PC	6	11	7	12	8	14	8	14
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100
2.	Search of Primary Information	Academic & Career Development	22	39	18	31	24	41	18	31
		Employment & GK	18	32	21	36	17	29	21	36
		Entertainment	10	18	13	22	12	21	11	19
		Just for Communication	7	12	6	10	5	9	9	15
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100
3.	Frequency Information Search	Daily	45	79	49	84	43	74	49	83
		Weekly Twice	8	14	7	12	10	17	6	10
		Weekly	4	7	2	3	5	9	4	7
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100
4.	Level of Attaining required information	100%	22	39	28	48	21	36	29	49
		90%	24	42	20	34	23	40	21	36
		Below 80%	11	19	10	17	14	24	9	15
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100
5.	Awareness of Apps and Specific Websites	Fully Aware	13	23	21	36	22	38	23	39
		Partially Aware	32	56	30	52	23	40	29	49
		Unaware	12	21	7	12	13	22	7	12
		Total	57	100	58	100	58	100	59	100

TABLE 5 DESCRIPTIVE VARIABLES - COMPARISON

Sl. No.	Attributes	Variables	Region			
			Rural		Urban	
			NoR	%	NoR	%
1.	Type of Device	Android Mobile Device	81	70	76	65
		Tablets	20	17	26	22
		Laptop & PC	14	12	15	13
		Total	115	100	117	100
2.	Search of Primary Information	Academic & Career Development	46	40	36	31
		Employment & GK	35	30	42	36
		Entertainment	22	19	24	21
		Just for Communication	12	10	15	13
		Total	115	100	117	100
3.	Frequency Information Search	Daily	88	77	98	84
		Weekly Twice	18	16	13	11
		Weekly	9	8	6	5
		Total	115	100	117	100
4.	Level of Attaining required information	100%	43	37	57	49
		90%	47	41	41	35
		Below 80%	25	22	19	16
		Total	115	100	117	100
5.	Awareness of Apps and Specific Websites	Fully Aware	35	30	44	38
		Partially Aware	55	48	59	50
		Unaware	25	22	14	12
		Total	115	100	117	100

\*Note: NoR: No. of Respondents

From the table 5, it is understood that both urban and rural respondents significantly use android mobile phones for their information search. Compared to rural respondents, urban respondents have more emphasis on academic and career development followed by employment and GK based search. More than 80% of the respondents use SPDs daily for information search. 47% of the respondents opined that they could get information in a given period is 90% attainable. About 50% of the respondents aware the necessary web resources which may help the respondents or information seekers.

## VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Rural respondents are less efficient in accessing the information with reference to the device what they use for information search. Urban respondents have more use of tablets next to android mobile phones where as the rural respondents have less use of tablets. In terms of searching and accessing information, urban responders are better than

rural respondents. Over all compared to urban readers, rural readers have less awareness over the necessary accessing input for effective use of SPDs so as they may use the web resources efficiently. Information seeking has found to be dynamic as the android smartphone device made searching information much easier. But the awareness over the necessary components such as the gadgets, and important web resources may increase the efficiency as well as time management.

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