

## ASSESSMENT OF INTERNET LITERACY AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS IN BIJAPUR DISTRICT

### Deepthi

UGC-Post Doctoral Scholar  
Department of Library and Information Science  
Karnataka State Women's University  
Jnana Shakti, Torvi, Bijapur-586108, Karnataka  
E-mail- deepthi.k67@gmail.com

### Shobha Patil

UGC-Post Doctoral Scholar  
Department of Library and Information Science  
Karnataka State Women's University  
Jnana Shakti, Torvi, Bijapur-586108, Karnataka  
E-mail- shobhapatils@gmail.com

and

### Tahmeena Kolar

Guest Faculty  
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication  
Karnataka State Women's University  
Jnana Shakti, Torvi, Bijapur-586108, Karnataka  
E-mail- tahmeena.kolar@gmail.com

### Abstract

This paper assesses the internet literacy level among the medical college students of Bijapur city. A structured questionnaire is used for data collection. Random sampling method has been used to select the target population. Hundred questionnaires were distributed among the engineering students of Al-Ameen Medical College and BLDE Medical College, Bijapur and among them ninety three students had returned the filled in questionnaire. It is found that a vast majority of the students learnt to use Internet by themselves or with the assistance of their friends and preferred to use it in their home on their mobile phones.

**Keywords:** Internet literacy, medical college students

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Internet is now one of the most important sources of information for students in institutions of higher learning throughout the world. It has also become a popular medium for delivering

educational materials. In this information age, the current function of literacy is to gather as much relevant information on specific topic from a variety of sources in a timely manner. The Internet has made information more accessible than ever before. It is a boundless sea of knowledge that dispenses information at a click of a button. It is currently the most efficient and cost effective means for disseminating and retrieving information. It has made interaction between individuals and institutions possible, regardless of their geographical location. The Internet presents new challenges for literate people to locate reliable sources. The Internet is a vast, unorganized collection of sites, many that are not based on research or sound theory. Literate people must be able to search for relevant information, navigate through different Web sites, evaluate the credibility of the information on Web sites, and communicate with people from many different countries with different cultures (Barr, 1997). Literacy skills for the twenty-first century are skills that enable participation in the new communities emerging within a networked society. They enable students to exploit new simulation tools, information appliances and social networks; they facilitate the exchange of information between diverse communities and the ability to move easily across different media platforms and social networks (Jenkins, 2006).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

An elaborate study was done on the literature available on internet literacy and it was seen that many studies are being conducted on the topic. Many authors have taken the concept of internet literacy as digital literacy and also as information literacy. Glister (1997) defines Internet information literacy as, a set of skills to access the Internet; find, manage and edit internet information. In simple terms, (Berivik and Senn, 1994) Internet literacy is the ability to properly use and evaluate internet resources, tools and services and apply it to their lifelong learning process. The most essential aspect of internet literacy is the ability to make informed judgments about what is found online, for unlike conventional media, much internet information is unfiltered by editors and open to the contribution of all (Bawden, 2001). Ani (2010) investigated the extent and level of Internet access as well as the use of electronic resources by undergraduate students in three Nigerian Universities. Luambano and Nawe (2004) investigated the Internet use by students of the University of Dares Salaam. Hong, Ridzuan and Kuek (2003) studied student's attitudes toward the use of the Internet for learning at the University of Malaysia Sarawak. The study revealed that in general, students there had positive attitudes towards learning through the Internet. Ruzgar (2005) studied the purpose of the Internet use and learning via Internet. Badu and Markwei (2005) studied the use of the Internet and its resources by academic staff and postgraduate students at the University of Ghana. Chou and Hsiao (2000) explored the Internet addiction among Taiwan's college students. Kumar and Kaur (2006) suggested that the Internet service should be provided round the clock for its maximum use. Ozad (2010) explored the use of the Internet in tertiary media education.

### 3. METHODOLOGY:

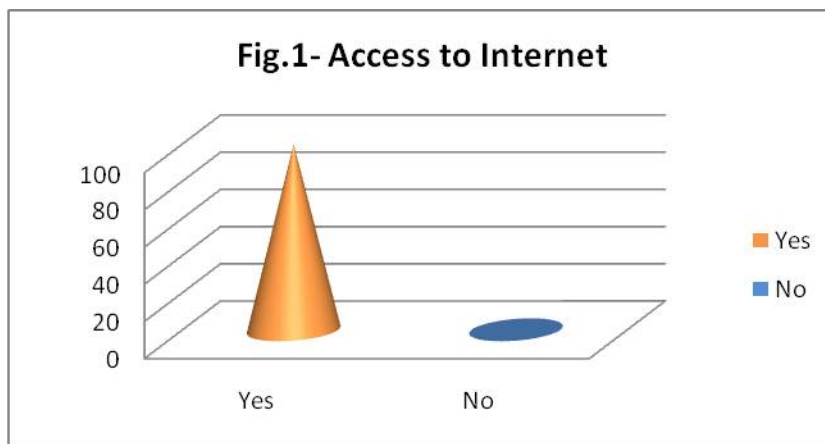
The scope of the present study is to assess the level of internet literacy among the medical college students in Bijapur district. The present study is restricted to the Al-Ameen Medical College and BLDE Medical College of Bijapur district. Questionnaire was used as a tool to elicit data for this survey method. Random sampling method has been used to select the target population. The study population constituted the medical students from the two different colleges. Hundred questionnaires were distributed among them Ninety Three students had returned the filled in questionnaire with a response rate of 93%. The data collected through questionnaires were fed into SPSS sheet and simple frequency calculation has been used to analyze the data.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The data collected was analyzed with descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

**Table 1: Access to internet**

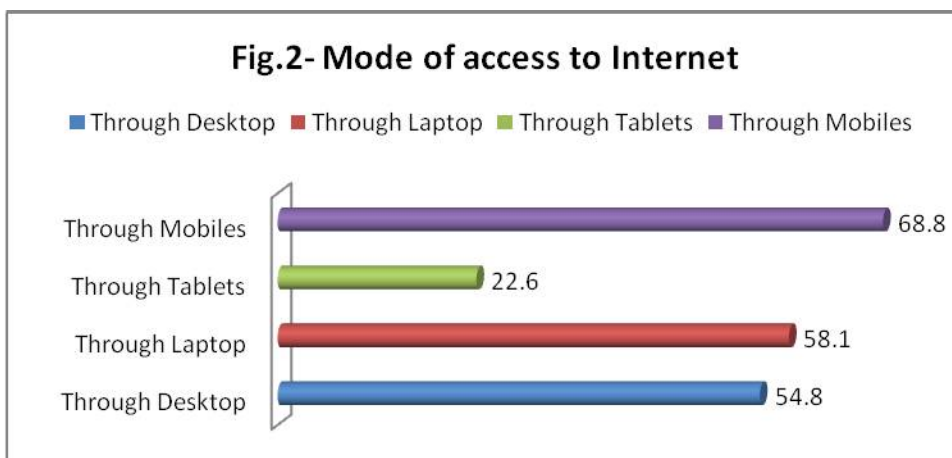
Access to internet	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	93	100.0
No	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0</b>



It is found from the table 1 (fig 1) that all the respondents (N=93, 100%) have access to internet, they make use of internet for some or the other reason. And hence, we can say that all respondents are internet savy.

**Table 2: Mode of access to Internet**

Mode of access to Internet	Frequency	Percentage
Through Desktop	51	54.8
Through Laptop	54	58.1
Through Tablets	21	22.6
Through Mobiles	64	68.8



When analyzed the mode of access to internet by the respondents it is found from table 2 (Fig 2) that, 68.8% percent (N=64) of the respondents access internet using their mobile phones, 58.1% (N=54) of the respondents access it through laptop, 54.8% (N=51) of them using desktop and only 22.6% (N=21) of them using tablets. With the easy access of internet through mobiles the number of users using mobile phone for access has increased dramastically.

**Table 3: Service provider to access internet**

Service provider	Frequency	Percentage
BSNL	54	58.1
Tata Photon	9	9.7
Reliance	12	12.9
Airtel	25	26.9
Vodafone	14	15.1
Docomo	12	12.9
MTS	6	6.5
Idea	8	8.6

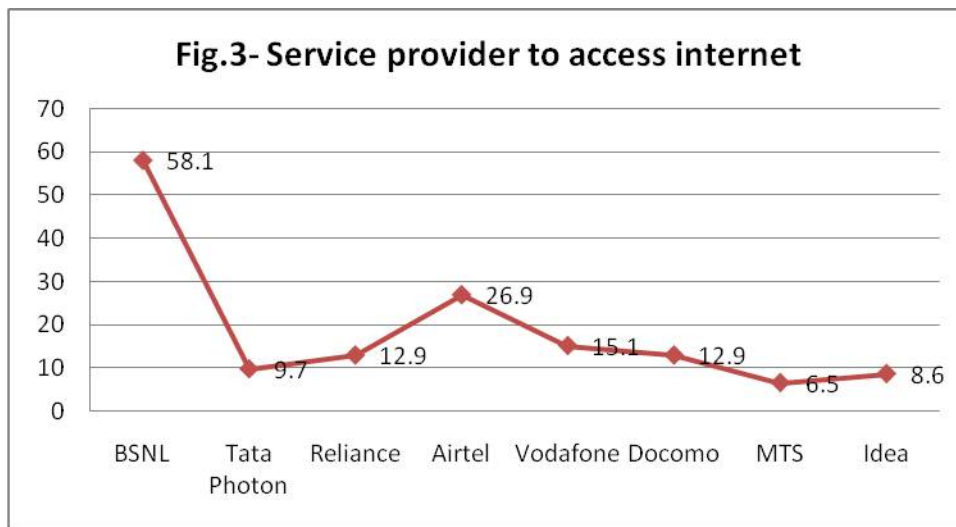
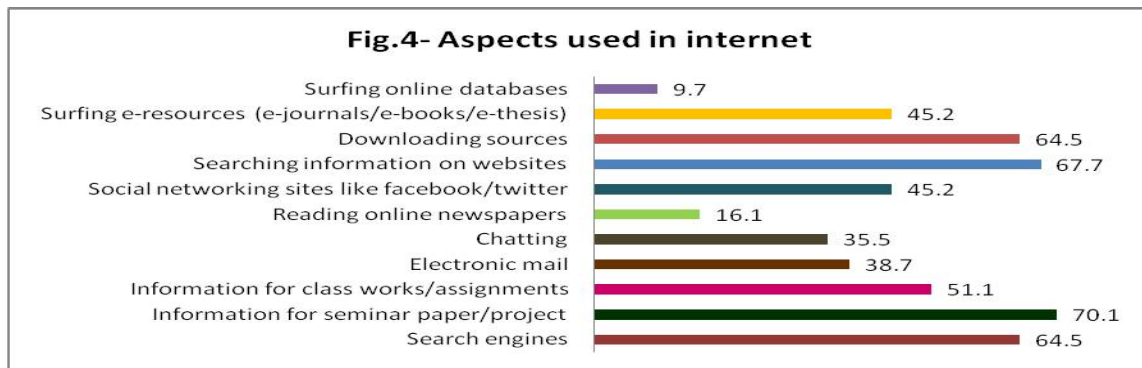


Table 3 (Fig. 3) reveals that to access internet majority of the respondents (N=54, 58.1%) used BSNL internet service, 26.9% (N=25) used Airtel, 15.1% (N=14) of them used Vodafone, 12.9% (N=12) of them used Reliance and Docomo services, 9.7% (N=9) used Tata Photon service, 8.6% (N=8) used Idea and 6.5% (N=6) of them used MTS service provider. This data reveals that BSNL is the most used service provider among the respondents.

**Table 4: Aspects used in internet**

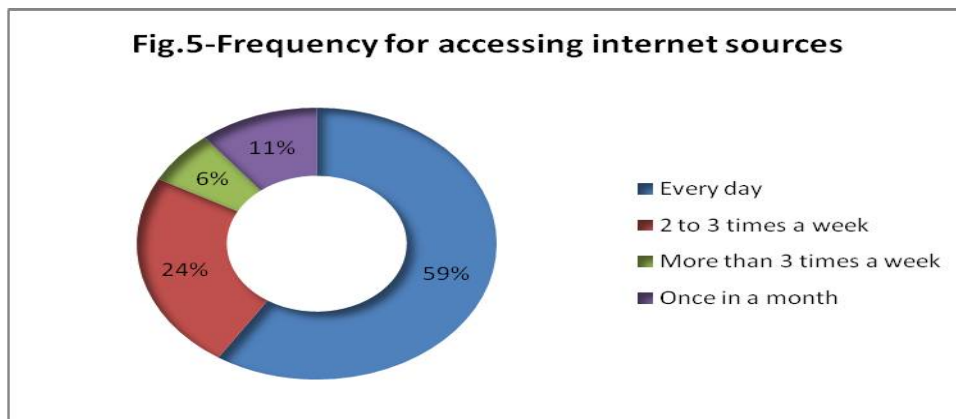
Aspects	Frequency	Percentage
Search engines	60	64.5
Information for seminar paper/project	66	70.1
Information for class works/assignments	48	51.1
Electronic mail	36	38.7
Chatting	33	35.5
Reading online newspapers	15	16.1
Social networking sites like facebook/twitter	42	45.2
Searching information on websites	63	67.7
Downloading sources	60	64.5
Surfing e-resources (e-journals/e-books/e-thesis)	42	45.2
Surfing online databases	9	9.7



When analyzed the reason for accessing internet it is found from table 4 (Fig. 4) that 70.1% (N=66) of the respondents access internet for getting information for seminar paper/project, 67.7% (N=63) access internet for searching information on websites, 64.5% (N=60) of them access it for downloading sources and using search engines, 51.1% (N=48) of them access it for getting information for class works and assignments, 45.2% (N=42) of the respondents access social networking sites like facebook and twitter; and surfing e-resources like e-journals, e-books, e-thesis, etc, 38.7% (N=36) of them use it for electronic mailing, 16.1% (N=15) for reading online newspapers and 9.7% of them for surfing online databases. This analysis shows that internet is much required by the respondents for collecting information for preparation of seminar papers or project work.

**Table 5: Frequency for accessing internet sources**

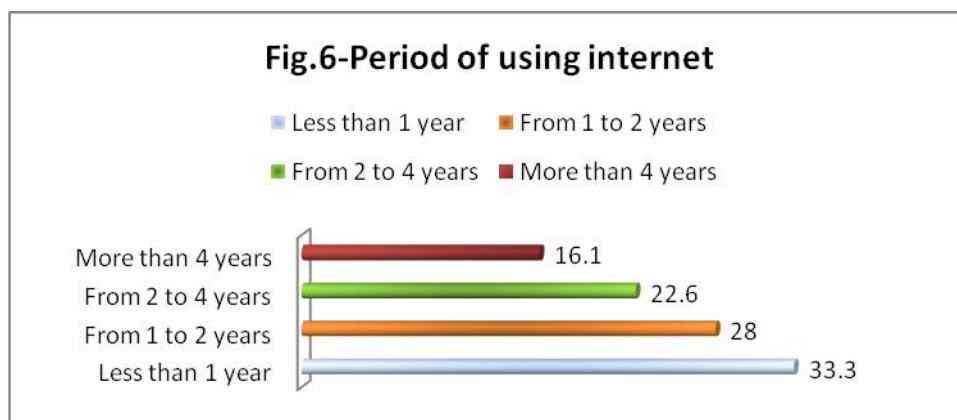
Access internet sources	Frequency	Percentage
Every day	55	59.2
2 to 3 times a week	22	23.7
More than 3 times a week	6	6.4
Once in a month	10	10.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0</b>



When the frequency for accessing internet sources was analyzed, it is found from table 5 (Fig 5) that 59.2% (N=55) of the respondents accessed internet everyday, 23.7% (N=22) of them accessed it 2 to 3 times a week, 10.7% (N=10) of them accessed it once in a month and only 6.4% (N=6) of them accessed internet for more than three times in a week. So this analysis shows that accessing internet is a part of day to day life of majority of the respondents.

**Table 6: Period of using internet**

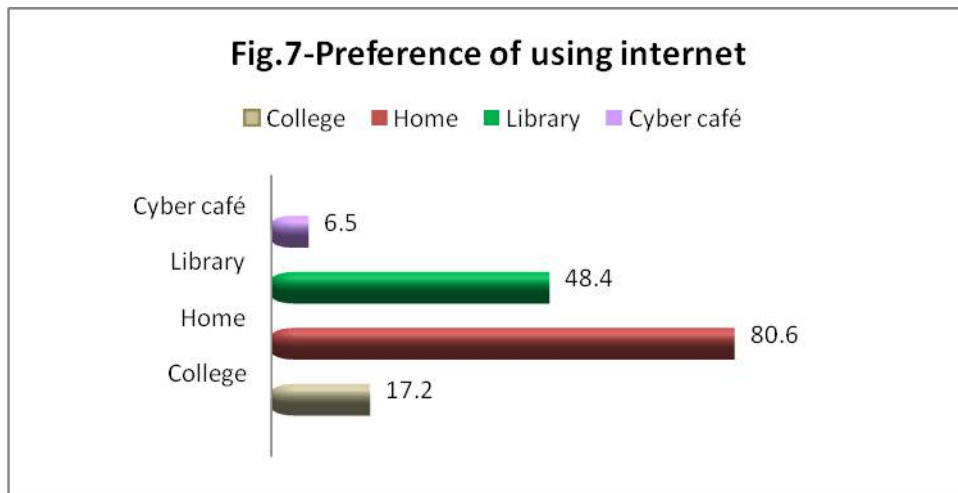
Period	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	31	33.3
From 1 to 2 years	26	28.0
From 2 to 4 years	21	22.6
More than 4 years	15	16.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0</b>



It was found from the table 6 (Fig 6) that 33.3% (N=31) of the respondents used internet within a period of 1 year, 28% (N=26) of them used it from 1 to 2 years, 22.6% (N=21) of them are using internet from 2 to 4 years and 16.1% (N=15) of them are using internet for more than four years. It can be said that more number of respondents are using internet from a period of one year, since this period internet has got more popularity.

**Table 7: Preference of using internet**

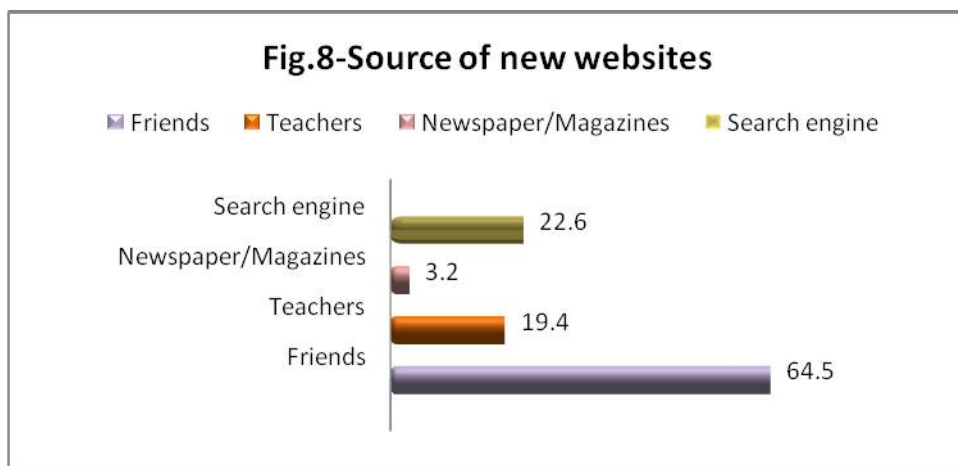
Preference	Frequency	Percentage
College	16	17.2
Home	75	80.6
Library	45	48.4
Cyber café	6	6.5



As asked regarding their preference of using internet (Table 7, Fig 7), it was found that majority (N=75, 80.6%) of the respondents preferred to use internet in their home, 48.4% (N=45) of them preferred to use it at library, 17.2% (N=16) of them at their college and only 6.5% (N=6) of them at the cyber cafe. Due to the availability of internet at mobile phones and laptops the respondents prefer to use internet in their home itself.

**Table 8: Source of new websites**

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Friends	60	64.5
Teachers	18	19.4
Newspaper/Magazines	3	3.2
Search engine	21	22.6

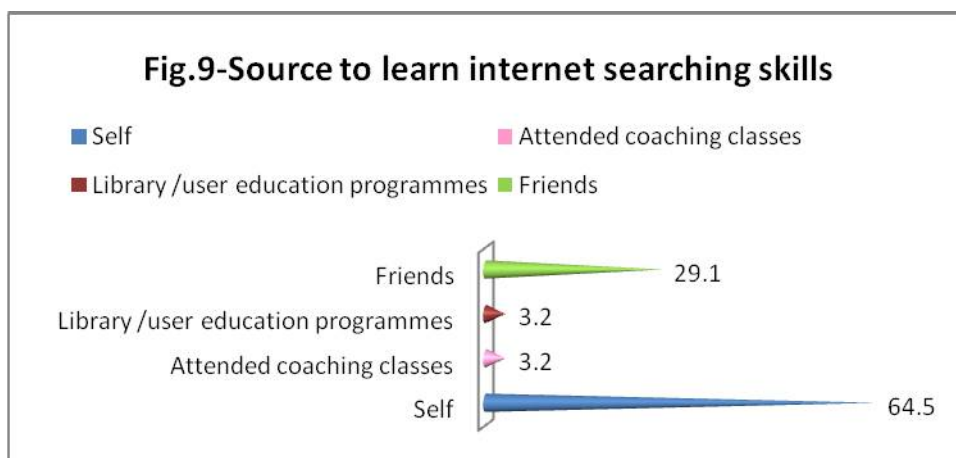




When the respondents were analyzed to know the source of new websites it is found that (Table 8, Fig 8) 84.3% (N=70) of the respondents depend on their friends, 21 (25.3%) of them depend on search engines, 17 (20.5%) of them on newspaper or magazines and 12 (14.5%) of them on their teachers.

**Table 9: Source to learn internet searching skills**

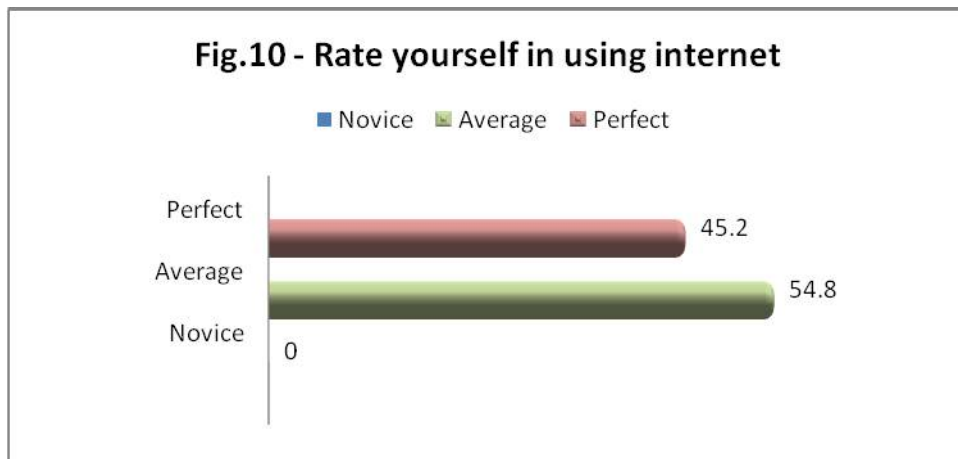
Learn internet searching skills	Frequency	Percentage
Self	60	64.5
Attended coaching classes	3	3.2
Library /user education programmes	3	3.2
Friends	27	29.1



It is found from the table 9 (Fig. 9) that the majority (N=60, 64.5%) of the respondents learn internet searching skills by themselves, 29.1% (N=27) of them depend on their friends, 3.2% (N=3) of them attend coaching classes for learning such skills and also depend on library or user education programmes.

**Table 10: Rate yourself in using internet**

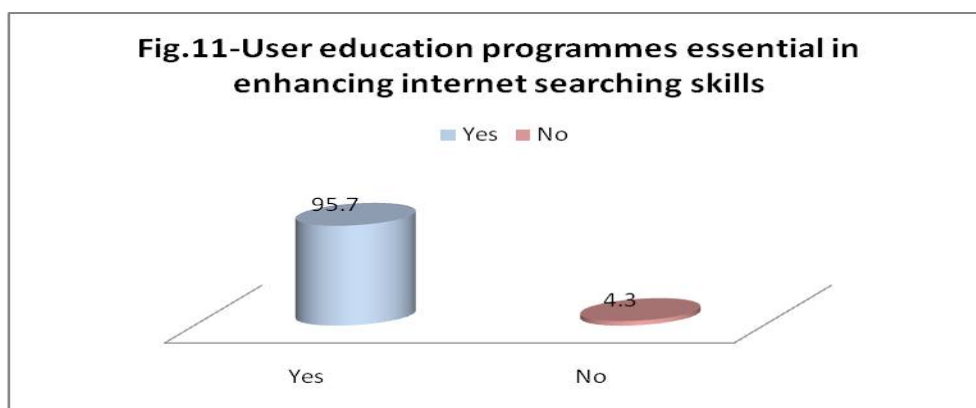
Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Novice	0	0
Average	51	54.8
Perfect	42	45.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0</b>



When the respondents were analyzed to know their frequency of rating themselves in using internet, from table 10 (Fig 10), it is found that 54.8% (N=51) of the respondents rate themselves as average users, 45.2% (N=42) of them as perfect and there are no such respondents who feel themselves as not vice in using internet.

**Table 11: User education programmes essential in enhancing internet searching skills**

User education programmes	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	95.7
No	4	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0</b>



It is found from the table 11 (Fig 11) that 95.7% (N=89) of the respondents feel that user education programmes are essential in enhancing internet searching skills and only 4.3% (N=4) of them do not feel it as essential.

## 5. CONCLUSION:

From the study it is found that majority of the respondents call themselves as internet literate and agree to access internet by themselves. The majority of the respondents indicated that they did not get any proper training for Internet use and they learnt it by themselves or with the help from their friends. The users preferred to use internet at their home and majority of them access internet through their mobiles. They use internet for downloading information and using social networking sites like facebook and twitter. It is important for students to search, identify, evaluate, and use these information sources for their educational purposes. It is recommended, that students identify these information resources and use them appropriately whenever needed. As this is only a preliminary study on academic use of the Internet, more research is suggested to find out the academic information searching behaviours of students across the board from elementary to tertiary education. As students, they should take the advantage of the ability to use information from the Internet for their learning activities. Although students use the Internet extensively, they need to balance the nature of the use between social and academic uses. By learning to use the academic-related resources from the Internet, students will be able to complement the information found with the resources from their school learning. This also will enable them to be self-directed, self-paced, and lifelong learners (Muniandy, 2010).

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