Assessing the Information Need and Information Seeking Behavior

of Research Scholars of M.B.P.G. College: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

In the present study an attempt is made to investigate the Information Need and Information Seeking Behaviour of Social Science Researchers of M.B.P.G. College, Haldwani, Uttrakhand. The survey was conducted of the research scholars to know the answer of questions such as collections of library, overall effectiveness of the library, organization of the material, services of the library, use of internet, search engines, information resources, need of information, purpose of information etc.

A questionnaire was circulated to 98 research scholars and 80 filled-in questionnaires were returned. The Library is the most preferred place for 50 % users who daily visit the library for their research related need, whereas subject expert and librarian is the most preferred informal information source, 90 % Research Scholars use internet and only 10% are not aware of the benefit of the internet. Interestingly, 60% user agreed that e-journals are the best source of information but interestingly majority of the users (70%) feel that electronic form is not convenient. There are good percentages of users (50%) who are satisfied with the services of the library but others wish for improvements. The study recommends orientation programmes for research scholar to make awareness of e-resource and better utilization of the library services; it is also recommended that library should join some consortium for more resources and services.

Key words: Information Seeking Behaviour, Library resources, Academic Libraries

INTRODUCTION

Information is a valuable resource of today's information society. And acquiring, using and implementing information is critical activities. This process is known as information seeking process. Information seeking is a board term, which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express his information needs, seek, evaluate and select information, and finally uses it to satisfy his information needs. Various factors affect the information seeking behaviors of an individual or a group of individuals, i.e. purpose for information, channels and sources of information and barriers to information. Information seeking is a basic activity of an individual (Wiberley, 1989). [1]

Information seeking behavior involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought. Information seeking behavior is expressed in various forms,

from reading printed material to research and experimentation. Scholars, students and faculty actively seek current information from the various media available in libraries, e.g. Encyclopedias, journals and more currently, electronic media. [2]

An individual user has many paths for accessing his desired information. There are many factors which decide his information seeking behaviors. These factors include the time spent in search of information, knowledge about information sources, the way of expressing his information need etc.

NEED OF THE STUDY

In user-oriented studies, users are viewed as active and self-controlling recipients of information and they are concerned with the internal cognitions and attitudes of users, which are investigated by qualitative methods. The cognitive approach of the researchers focuses their efforts to understand 'how individuals process information and then illustrate this process through models'. In the holistic approach, the researcher is not only interested in the cognitive needs of the users but also takes into account other factors which influence them to use the information sources, the methods followed in searching for information and possible reasons for not using information sources, if any. Another category is the action research. This approach views users as active participants during their research and tries to understand the language, the activities and the social inter-relationships of users. [2]

The Research Scholars of M.B.P.G. College are expected to optimally utilize the college library as their major sources of information. However, observing and conducting studies on library use in the college environment in general, establishes the fact that students do not use most of the library information resources. It is assumed that students could be experiencing technical problems in accessing information resources; they are costly in terms of their acquisition and retention.

M.B.G.P.G. COLLEGE, HALDWANI

Motiram Baburam Government Post Graduate (M.B.P.G.) College, Haldwani, is a leading institution of higher education in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. Established in 1960, the college is serving the largest catchment area of the state in Shivalik foothills. The college draws pass-outs from over 50 intermediate colleges in Nainital district. M.B.P.G. College is affiliated to Kumaon University, Nainital. The college offers Graduation, Post Graduation and Professional Courses, including Teachers' Training Programme (B Ed). For

Teacher's Training Programme, the college is recognized by the National Council for Teacher's Education (NCTE). The college is enjoying the status of 'Ideal College' since the academic year 2004-05. It has 98 research scholars of different subject field registered for the Ph. D. programme.

The Library of the college is equipped with basic facilities; it gets its budget from UGC and State Government. Library has approx. 1,50,000 documents which include reference books, out of which 1,30,000 are in Library and 20,000 are in Book Bank. Library subscribes number of research journals and also has internet facilities for students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study is dealing with information need and information seeking behaviour, so most of the literature reviews belong to information seeking behaviour of researchers; some general references are also done from other subject field of study.

MANOJ, P. & MAJID (2005) has conducted the study to determine the information needs and seeking behaviour of litigation lawyers. The purpose was to investigate the types of information sources and the preferences of lawyers in selecting different information sources. It also investigates the different types of information required at various stages of a case and tries to understand the adequacy of information to the lawyers [3]. **MAHO (2007)** has conducted electronic interview of 60 researches of 14 countries including U.S., Germany, Australia, India, Russia etc. and found that scholars conducting research face many difficulties in accessing credible information for their research. The barriers include lack of academic structure, research support based information sources and widely scattered information sources. [4] The study of **KAUSHIK & KANCHI'S (2007)** revealed that 57.69% respondents read newspaper daily and 33.33% read occasionally. A majority of users 58.33% used general magazines, 14.73% read magazines on films 16.67% has read magazines related to various competitions. More female undergraduates have been found reading religious and competitive books. The female undergraduate students have been found devoting more time for reading at home as compared to male U.G. students. The use of Internet by rural U.G. students was very low. There were only sixteen respondents out of one hundred fifty six, which used the Internet.[5] **ANNE (2007)** in her study found that teachers were using a greater number of and wide range of current and multimodal resources and perceived that this is an advantage in creating authentic and inquiry based learning

experience[6]. **MARDIS AND PERRAULT (2007)** in their study about Internet found that, overall; teachers had characterized their experiences with using the Internet as frustrating because of poor quality and overwhelming results. In particular, science teachers, though confident in their search skills, used few online resources specifically designed to support their teaching and learning activities [7].

OBJECTIVES:

This study examines the information seeking behavior of social science research scholars in M.B.P.G. College, Haldwani with the following objectives:

1. To study the information needs and information seeking behavior of Social Sc. Research Scholars of M.B.P.G. College, Haldwani.
2. To identify the different information resources used by Research Scholars.
3. To investigate the availability of information resources that affects the information seeking patterns of Research Scholars.
4. To determine whether or not different kinds of information need leads to different information seeking behavior and communication channels.
5. To identify the information searching methods adopted while searching for information in the library.
6. To analyze the possible reasons for not using information sources, if any; and to suggest measures for enhancing the use of information sources.
8. To know the awareness level of library tools and techniques used by Researchers.

DATA ANALYSIS

PURPOSE OF INFORMATION SEEKING:

Purpose	No. of users	% of users
For General study	4	5
For Preparing Competition	0	0
For Recreation	0	0
For Employment Information	8	10
For Current Awareness	0	0
Research	68	85
Total	**80**	**100%**

TABLE-1

Above analysis show that 85% respondents said they seek information for their

research work. 10% respondents seek information to get employment and only 5% respondents said that they seek information for study.

It is clear and obvious from the above data that the majority of respondents seek information for their research work.

INFORMATION SOURCES USED FOR SEEKING INFORMATION

Sources	No. of users	% of users
Text books	8	10
Discussion with colleagues	8	10
News papers	4	5
Consult a knowledgeable person in the field	12	15
Consult superior	0	0
Discussion with librarian or reference staff of the library	8	10
Research papers	8	10
Review articles	8	10
Abstracting journals	4	05
Indexing journals	4	05
Reference books	8	10
Other magazines	8	10
Total	**80**	**100%**

TABLE-2

Above analysis shows that the most popular source of information is to consult a knowledgeable person in the concerned field; there are other sources of information also used by respondents like text books, discussion with colleagues, discussion with reference librarian and review of articles etc.

FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO LIBRARY:

Frequency	No. of users	% of users
Daily	40	50
Once a week	12	15
Twice a week	20	25
Once a month	8	10
Occasionally	0	0
Total	**80**	**100%**

TABLE-3

In order to assess the frequency of visit the library, the research scholars were asked to

indicate any one out of 5 categories. It has been found that 50% of the research scholars visit the library daily, 25% visit twice a week, 15% once a month. Only 10% visit the library once a month.

TIME SPENT IN THE LIBRARY:

Time Spent	No. of users	% of users
30 minute to one hours	52	65
One hours to two hours	20	25
More than two hours	8	10
Total	**80**	**100%**

TABLE-4

According to above analysis, 65% respondent spent their time in the College Library, 30 minutes to 1 hour, 25% said 1 to 2 hours and 10% said that they spend more than 2 hours of their time in the library.

USE OF CATALOGUE FOR FINDING BOOKS:

Use of catalogue	No. of users	% of users
Yes	8	10
No	72	90

TABLE-5

It is clear from above analysis that 10% of these 80 users, use catalogue card for finding books but 90% of the users said they don't know about the catalogue card and how to use it. This is a serious setback for the library in which users are not aware of catalogue card.

USE OF INTERNET

Use of Internet	No. of users	% of users
Yes	72	90
No	8	10

TABLE-6

On the basis of above data it's clear that majority of social science research scholars use Internet in central library, only 10% respondents do not use Internet because of lack of knowledge about Internet and its importance. It's clear from above data that almost every

research scholar is aware of Internet and its importance.

PURPOSE OF USING INTERNET

Frequency	No. of users	% of users
Research	60	75
Education	8	10
Entertainment	4	5
News	4	5
Health	0	0
Sports	4	5
Any other	0	0
Total	**80**	**100%**

TABLE-7

The research scholars were asked to indicate their purpose for using the Internet; it is evident from above table that 75% of the respondent use the Internet primarily for the research purpose, followed by 10% respondents for the educational purpose, 5% for the entertainment, 5% for the news and 5% for the sports. Hence it can be inferred that a majority of the research scholars use the Internet for research purpose.

USE OF SEARCH ENGINE:

Search Engine	No. of users	% of users
Google	72	90
Yahoo	4	5
Alta Vista	4	5
MSN	0	0
Any other	0	0
Total	**80**	**100%**

TABLE-8

Above analysis shows that Google is the most preferred search engine followed by Yahoo (5%), Alta Vista (5%), other search engines are gaining popularity slowly but Google is maintaining its position in providing the information on the Internet.

USE OF E-JOURNALS

E-Journals are best sources	No. of users	% of users
Yes	48	60
No	4	5
Don't' know about e-journals	16	20
Not sure	12	15
Total	**80**	**100%**

TABLE-9

Above analysis shows that 60% social science scholar of M.B.P.G. college agreed that e-journals are best source of information, 20% social science research scholar don't know about e-journals because of lack of IT Knowledge and lack of awareness. 15% respondents are not sure about it and 5% say e-journals are not best source of information.

CONVINIENT FORMAT OF INFORMATION

Is Electronic format more convenient?	No. of users	% of users
Yes	24	30
No	56	70

TABLE-10

Above analysis shows that majority of social science research scholars (70%) of M.B.P.G. College Library say that e-formats are not convenient as compared to books. They give some reasons like they don't have computer at home, electricity problems, technical problems etc. 30% respondents said e-formats are convenient as compared to books; these respondents have good knowledge of IT.

PROBLEMS IN INFORMATION USE

Problem	No. of users	% of users
Non-availability of needed information materials	28	35
Old Collection	8	10
Lack of subject knowledge among Library staff	8	10
Lack of knowledge on IT based services	8	10
Not well trained staff	16	20
Lack of time	8	10
Lack of knowledge in using the library resources	4	5
Difficulties in understanding of English Language	4	5
Total		

TABLE-11

The respondents were asked to mention the problems they faced while seeking information. From the above data analysis it is clear that majority (35%) of research scholar faced the problem of non-availability of needed information materials in the M.B.P.G. College, Haldwani. It is also clear from the above data that research scholar faced many other problems like old collection of library, language problem, untrained staff, lack of subject

knowledge among library staff and lack of time etc.

SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH LIBRARY RESOURCES / SERVICES

Satisfaction with Library resources / services	No. of users	% of users
To Great Extent	36	45
To Some Extent	40	50
Not at all	4	5

TABLE-12

On the basis of data, the 50% social science research scholars of M.B.P.G. College Library are satisfied with library collection to some extent, 45% respondents are satisfied to great extent and 5% respondents are not satisfied with the collection.

USE OF E-MAIL FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE

Use of E-mail	No. of users	% of users
Yes	60	75
No	20	25

TABLE-13

On the basis of the data it is clear that majority (75%) of social science research scholar's use e-mail for research purpose, only 25% respondents do not use e-mail because of lack of knowledge about Internet and its importance.

FREQUENCY OF USE OF E-MAIL

Use of E-mail	No. of users	% of users
Frequently	50	62.5
Some Times	20	25
Rarely	10	12.5

TABLE-14

According to above analysis, 62.5% respondents send e-mails frequently, 25% send e-mails sometimes, and 12.5% send e-mails very rarely.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

In the present study an attempt is made to investigate the Information Need and Information Seeking Behaviors of Social Science Research Scholar of M.B.P.G. College, Haldwani. The obtained results have been mentioned in the paper.

1. It is observed from the above study that social science researchers use historical literature, diaries, memorandum, letters, sacred books, text books, and research papers, review of literature, monographs, thesis, dissertation, abstracting journals, indexing periodicals, text books, and reference sources for their research purpose.

2. By the analysis of data it is evident that in the formal sources, books are most frequently used by all groups. Internet also very common to sought information.

3. Consultation with the supervisor and expert in the concerned field is in the prime position in the informal sources of information. There are other sources of information used by respondents like: - discussion with colleagues, discussion with reference librarian etc.

4. As per the above data analysis, it is clear that majority of respondents seek information for their research activities.

5. It is evident from Table no. 3 that majority of the researchers know the importance of library and also believe that it is the most convenient medium of acquiring information.

6. Internet is very popular among the research scholar for research work. About 96% researcher scholars were using internet. They avail the facility of Internet at M.B.P.G. College library, Cyber Cafe and Home. Assessing information by using e-mail is very common and most used medium.

7. The difficulties faced by research scholars were: - lack of time in searching information and inadequate library resources. There were also problems faced by researchers in accessing information due to library rules and procedure.

8. Researchers also face difficulties as they are not aware of different information sources. It was also observed that in the libraries, information material is very old in some aspects for fulfillment of research work.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION:

University and College libraries all over the world have their own place in higher learning. Libraries are not only repositories of knowledge but also dispensers of such knowledge. It is a fact that where libraries are ignored or not given due recognition, the country, as a whole, suffers.

To reduce the difficulties faced by research scholars, there are some suggestions:-

1. The library should organize more awareness programmes and seminars to educate the concerned on seeking information to enhance the use of library resources and services.

2. Library resources should be in more desirable format according to user needs.

3. There are very few periodicals subscribed by college library on the area of Social Science, this position should be changed. Library should acquire more e-journals on different subjects of social science discipline.

4. More Computer Systems with fast internet connectivity should be provided in the College Library for research scholars.

5. For satisfying the research scholar's need, library should join with other consortium for resource sharing.

6. Stacking of books should be according to classification scheme. Catalogue filing is the immediate necessity of the library.

7. New computer based services should be introduced and steps should be taken to make social science researchers aware about the services.

8. Translation services should be introduced.

9. Number of staff should be increased, and the library staff should be provided training of ICT in general and computers based library operations in particular.

10. A reference librarian should be appointed to cater the needs of users.

11. Selective Dissemination of Information service should be started for researchers.

12. Student's participation must be increased in the collection development.

13. Library should also conduct feedback/users survey to know the need of users time to time.

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