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REVIEW ARTICLE

INFORMATIN SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF UG STUDENTS IN ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE, IRINJALAKUDA: AN EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper conducted a study on the information needs and information seeking behaviour of students in St. Joseph's College Irinjalakuda. Relevant literature of the information resources and its use in various categories of users has been reviewed. The study examined to know the information seeking behaviour of students and use, availability and effectiveness of library resources to satisfy their information needs. Updates, easy accessibility, reference and latest books collection on various subjects are to be increased and to encourage and motivate the use of information sources.

INTRODUCTION

Human being seeks information from different sources and in different formats when undertaken various responsibilities and tasks. They also seek information for achieving goals and objective in education, economy, politics, social activities etc. We are living in the 'information society' or 'information age' where information is one of the most important factors of life. Today, every person needs a variety of information in his day-to-day life, to make the simplest of decisions. Modern society generates huge amounts of information by using different tools and media and this in turn gets consumed by society. In the field of education, student's need of information is for gaining more knowledge in their respective fields. Moreover, preparing course assignments and project papers requires a variety of information sources and services. The impact of information revolution has been extended to each individual in the society. An information need arises when an individual senses an information gap or problematic situation, in which internal knowledge, beliefs and data and model of the environment fail to suggest a way towards the satisfaction of the goals. Ford defines Information as, "the structure of any text which is capable of changing the image structure of a recipient." Information seeking process allows people to understand their own needs for information, to search and to use or transfer that information.

Institution library is an important part of the information seeking process because the information seeking process pushes the user to discover and use the library information services more. Information seeking behaviour is about the users need and how users process their needs. Information seeking behaviour refers to individual characteristics, methods and actions in the information seeking process. Information seeking is an essential human activity. It differs among user groups. Educational institutions must understand the information needs of faculty and students in order to address their needs. In the present era electronic environment has influenced users in information seeking, especially the interaction between the computers and users. Users scan their electronic resources rapidly and continually until the information need is satisfied. This process of information seeking in a digital environment is leading to new information seeking strategies and behaviours.

Defenitions of information and information seeking behaviour: In information science the concept of information is defined in many different ways. According to Webster's dictionary the word information is derived from Latin word 'information' which is derived from the verb 'informare', which means 'to give from to mind', 'instruct' and 'teach'. In the cognitive view point of information science Belkindefines, "the information associated with a text is the generators modified (by purpose, intent, knowledge of recipients state of knowledge) conceptual structure which underlines the surface structure (e.g. language) of the text".

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According to Dr. T.D. Willison, "Information Seeking Behaviour is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of the need to satisfy some goal. In this course of seeking the individual may interact with manual (such as a newspaper or a library) or with computer based information system (such as World Wide Web)."

Importance of information: Information is an important resource of a nation. The overall growth of a country depends up on its availability of new and updated information. The dissemination of information and seeking of information plays active role for the technological development and innovations. Today the countries are ranked on the basis of information and new technologies not on the basis of wealth. In fact a vital ingredient for social economic and cultural development of any nation, especially third world countries like India. It is well accepted generalization that a country which is rich in information is rich in the field of socio economic sphere.

Sources of information

- Primary sources - such as periodical, research reports, conference proceedings, patents, standards, trade literature, theses etc.
- Secondary sources - such as indexing and abstracting periodical, reviews, of progress, reference books, treatises, monographs, textbooks etc.
- Tertiary sources - such as yearbooks and directories, bibliographies, guides to the literature, lists of research in progress, guides, to libraries and sources of information, guides to organisations etc.

There are also audio-visual sources such as filmstrips, slides, video and audio- tapes etc. Most of the printed sources are available online now.

Relevance of the study: Libraries exist in all the educational institutions for the students to gain information on different subjects. In fact, they are considered as the heart and soul of the knowledge. Libraries in educational institutions have important role in the information dissemination process. An academic library helps the students as well as the faculty members for attaining their information needs. Study of information seeking behaviour of users helps in developing the library resources, services and facilities in meeting their information needs effectively. This study examines the kinds of academic information needed by the students, which resources they prefer, whether they are satisfied with the library collections and developing the library resources, services and facilities to meet their information needs effectively.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to understand Information Seeking Behaviour of Students in St. Joseph's College, Irinjalakuda. The specific objectives are:

- To know the information seeking behaviour of students.
- To find out the use and effectiveness of library to satisfy their information need.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the study is survey method. The techniques used are:

- Questionnaire
- Observation

Scope and limitations: Libraries are impacted by the ways in which individuals engage with technology, how they seek, access, contribute and use information. The current information environment is rich, characterized by large number of information sources and providers, a variety of method for accessing information, and a redundancy of content from multiple sources. Information seeking behaviour paid a sufficient attention to sources of information sources used. The scope of this study is confined to identify the Information seeking Behaviour of students in St. Joseph's College, Irinjalakuda.

Literature Review: Review of literature is a significant part of every research work. Before conducting a systematic study, it is necessary to make through survey of the related studies previously conducted. Knowledge of the previous studies gives the researcher proper direction to his work. Literature review helps to avoid the duplication of work as well. A research without the base of past studies will be an isolated entity. Yadav, AkhileshK.S., and Pradeep Kumar Singh undertook a study that describes the information needs and information seeking behaviour of post-graduate students and research scholars of Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. The main objective of this research study is to analyse the information seeking pattern of students in the social sciences stream. A quantitative research study and survey method was used to collect data from respondents and a semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The survey was conducted to look more closely at specific areas of the study for in-depth examination of trends and patterns in seeking information. It is found that almost all students used to get information. Mini Devi, B., and Chitra. V. R. analysed the information seeking behaviour of researchers of the National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram. The objectives of the study were to identify the information requirements and characteristics of researchers, to examine the types of information sources required by researchers, to know the effect of information technology on users information seeking behaviour, to study the level of library collection and service offered by library and to identify the preference of journals and databases given by researchers. The population is made up of 160 researchers under various applied branches of science. Census method of sampling is used to present the entire population. Questionnaire method is used to collect the data. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed and 122 respondents had filled and returned. The data were analysed using SPSS software. It was found that researchers sought information for research work. Majority of the researchers obtain information by reading electronic journals. About forty researchers gave first preference to scientific- technical journals. In the case of informal resources 54 researchers gave first preference to consult a knowledgeable person in the field/supervisor for obtaining current information preference were given to conference/seminars, and through journals and periodicals. Majority of researchers agreed that electronic dissemination of information affected their information gathering habits. Researchers rate abstracting and indexing services as excellent. Most of the researchers responded that library have adequate primary sources. About 34 researchers preferred the journal 'Nature', 64 researchers used 'Science Direct' database for their study, and only 7 researchers use 'Sprinkler Link'.

Table 1. Purpose of Information Seeking

Sl. No	Purposes	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Updating Knowledge	372	94.89%
2	Education/ Prepare Class notes	386	98.46%
3	Research work	112	28.57%
4	Entertainment	214	54.59%
5	To write articles	129	32.90%
6	To prepare seminars/ assignments	235	59.94%

Table 2. Preferred formats

Sl. No	Preferred Format	No. of respods	Percentage
1	Print	300	76.53%
2	Electronic	325	82.90%
3	All the above	380	96.93%

Table 3. Awareness, Use and Availability of the Information Sources

Sl. No	Information Sources	No. of Respondents					
		Awareness		Use		Availability	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Text Books	278 (70.91%)	114 (29.08%)	292 (74.48%)	100 (25.51%)	352 (89.79%)	40 (10.20%)
2	Journals / Periodicals	310 (79.08%)	82 (20.91%)	190 (48.46%)	202 (51.53%)	185 (47.19%)	207 (10.71%)
3	Reference materials	332 (84.69%)	60 (15.30%)	342 (87.24%)	50 (12.75%)	340 (86.73%)	52 (13.26%)
4	Encyclopaedias	102 (26.02%)	290 (73.97%)	50 (12.75%)	342 (87.24%)	42 (10.71%)	350 (89.28%)
5	Dissertations & Thesis	12 (3.06%)	380 (96.93%)	50 (12.75%)	342 (87.24%)	35 (8.92%)	357 (91.07%)
6	Bibliographies	35 (8.92%)	357 (91.07%)	35 (8.92%)	357 (91.07%)	30 (7.65%)	362 (92.34%)
7	Seminar reports & Conference Proceedings	82 (20.91%)	310 (79.08%)	92 (23.46%)	300 (76.53%)	88 (22.44%)	304 (77.55%)
8	Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals	18 (4.59%)	374 (95.40%)	36 (9.18%)	356 (90.81%)	28 (7.14%)	364 (92.85%)
9	E-Resources	298 (76.02%)	94 (23.97%)	218 (55.61%)	174 (44.38%)	215 (54.84%)	177 (45.15%)

Table 3. Indicates that:

Table 4. Effectiveness of Information Sources

Sl. No	Information Sources	High Effective	Less Effective	Not at All Effective
1	Text Books	258 (65.81%)	70 (17.85%)	64 (16.32%)
2	Journals / Periodicals	185 (47.19%)	120 (30.61%)	87 (22.19%)
3	Reference materials	245 (62.5%)	95 (24.23%)	52 (13.26%)
4	Encyclopaedias	87 (22.19%)	120 (30.61%)	185 (47.19%)
5	Dissertations & Thesis	125 (31.88%)	130 (33.16%)	137 (34.94%)
6	Bibliographies	95 (24.23%)	195 (49.74%)	110 (28.06%)
7	Seminar reports & Conference Proceedings	102 (26.02%)	145 (36.98%)	145 (36.98%)
8	Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals	127 (32.39%)	242 (61.73%)	25 (6.37%)
9	E-Resources	250 (63.77%)	75 (19.13%)	67 (17.09%)

Purpose of information seeking behaviour. The purpose of investigator find out the various purposes of information seeking needs of the students. It is evident from the analysis of Table 1. that multiple responses were received for this question. The major purpose for using library of the students is to Education/ prepare class notes 98.46% followed by Updating Knowledge 94.46%, To prepare seminars/ assignments 59.94%, Entertainment 54.59%, To write articles 32.90%, and Research work 28.57%.

Preferred Formats: It is very important to know the preferred format of information sources of the students for seeking their information needs. It is evident from the analysis of table 2. that multiple responses were received for this question. The majority of the students prefer 96.93% are using all the available information formats such as print and electronic formats followed by electronic 82.90% and 76.53% students depending on print material.

Information Sources: It is important to know the awareness and use of information sources by the students and its availability in their college.

In this regard students were asked to mention their awareness, use and availability of information sources.

Awareness: Majority of the users are aware of important information sources in their field such as Reference materials 84.69%, Journals and periodicals 79.08%, E-Resources 76.02%, Text books 70.91%, Encyclopaedias 26.02%, Seminar reports & Conference proceedings 20.91%, Bibliographies 8.92%, Indexing and abstracting periodicals 4.59%, Dissertations and Thesis 3.06%.

Use: The table reveals that majority of the students are using information sources such as Reference material 87.24%, followed by Text books 74.48%, E-Resources 55.61%, Journals and Periodicals 48.46%, Seminar reports and conference proceedings 23.46%, Encyclopaedias and Dissertations & Thesis 12.75%, Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals 9.18%, and Bibliographies 8.92%.

Availability: The table reveals that majority of the students are using information sources such as Text Books 89.79%, Reference materials 86.73%, E-Resources 54.84%, Journals /

Periodicals 47.19%, Seminar reports & Conference Proceedings 22.44%, Dissertations and Thesis 8.92%, Bibliographies 7.65% and Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals 7.14%.

Effectiveness of Information Sources: It is essential to know the effectiveness of various information sources available in their field. The collected data is presented on the basis of responses of the respondents are tabulated in table 4.

High effective: It is evident from the analysis that source Text books 65.81% and E-Resources 63.77% is highly effective for their information seeking purpose, whereas 62.5% reference materials, Journals and periodicals 47.19%, Indexing and abstracting periodicals 32.39%, Dissertations and Thesis 31.88%, Seminar reports and Conference proceedings 26.02%,and Bibliographies 24.23% is highly effective in their information seeking.

Less effective: The respondents 61.73% rated that Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals are less effective, followed by Bibliographies 49.74%, Seminar reports & Conference Proceedings 36.98%, Dissertations & Thesis 33.16%, Encyclopaedias and Journals / Periodicals 30.61%, Reference materials 24.23%, E-Resources 19.13%, Text books 17.85% is less effective in their information seeking purpose.

Not at all effective: The respondents 47.19% Encyclopaedias not effective for their information seeking purpose, followed by Seminar reports & Conference Proceedings 36.98%, Dissertations and Thesis 34.94%,Bibliographies 28.06%, Journals / Periodicals 22.19%, E-Resources 17.09%,Text books 16.32%, reference materials 13.26%, and Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals 6.37%.

Suggestions: The latest books and the reference books collection on various subjects to be increased. The unawareness of information sources cannot be ignored as these are major sources of information. So it is advised to provide user education programmes.

The non-use of Bibliographies, Indexing and abstracting periodicals, Dissertation and Thesis, and seminar reports and conference proceeding materials require serious attention as these are major information sources. It is because of their unawareness, so it is suggested to encourage the use of these materials.

Conclusion

Information resources have played a significant role in all fields of human life especially in education and information handling. This study reveals that the majority of the students aware of the important sources and services available in their respective fields. This study helps to know the importance of information resources in academic environment.

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