



ANALYZING THE INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF LIBRARY USERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SELECTED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES OF ASSAM.

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Abstract

Information seeking behavior is an accumulative term that denotes a set of actions of an individual or group of people regarding their information need, the way they approach to the information, searching strategies and the utilization of information. The present paper is an attempt to study a few facets of information seeking behavior among the users of the university libraries of Assam. The user group contains the Post –Graduate students and Research scholars from various disciplines. A pre-structured questionnaire has been distributed to 50 research scholars and 70 students of four Universities. 85.71 % of the students and 80% research scholar responded to the questionnaire.

Keywords: *Information Seeking Behavior, Users of University library.*

Introduction

Today we are living in an age of Information. Information is regarded as the fuel to the run the development engine of the society as a whole. In the milieu of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) each and every individual of the society is heavily depended on information generated and disseminated through the ICT. ICT has an impact on the information seeking behavior too. Information Technology is an agent of change that has come into being in the library and information Centre to produce positive results. It is evident both in the literature and from this study that application of information technology brings wide ranging benefits for the information seeker viz, easy and faster access to information, easy and faster delivery of information, remote access, time saving etc. Such potential for Information technology need to be exploited for better benefit and satisfaction of the information seekers.

Literature Review

Singh and Satija (2007) conducted a study to examine the various information seeking strategies, to identify various sources and to find the practicality of information resources in the agriculture sciences domain and to which extent they meet the information requirement of scientists in the ICAR institutions of Delhi and Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. The result of the study reveals that agriculture scientists are greatly dependent on their institutional library information Centre for meeting their information requirements. It is the most preferred source (72.05%) among the respondents. Umesha and Chandrashekara (2013) illustrate the information seeking as well as searching behavior of dental science professional in Karnataka. The study focuses on the sources available for seeking information, areas on which information is sought and entropy faced while seeking information by dental professionals. Study reveals that doctors as well as patients extensively use Google for searching their relevant information. Besides licensing or collecting resources, libraries in dental science are confined to alike the needs like learning based on curriculum, research & point of care. Dental professional clear their doubts from colleagues, continuing education courses and mostly used resources for professional upliftment and rely on individual experience, credibility of journal and discussion with colleagues or counterpart. In this IT based world, dentist need to tackle their problems



professionally which needs thorough study about most suitable and balanced way to seek information. Randhawa & Jatana (2015) examines the information seeking behavior of social scientists at a topmost research institute of social science i.e. Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial development (CRRID). The study also includes the kind of information sought, need of seeking information, use of IT and various problems faced while seeking information. Results show that discussion with colleagues or counterpart is the most widely practiced source of seeking information and the most common purpose for seeking information is for writing research report. With the advent of IT, source and user gap has decreased drastically. Faculties of CRRID are accustomed with the use of internet, email and other web based resources for retrieving required information. Scientist reveals that non availability of information in the respective field is the major problem faced by them. Networking and collaborative partnership of libraries as well as tactfully handling of social science resources is the solution to overcome the problem. Ali and Hasan (2017) study the information seeking behavior of research scholars in the digital environment of a multidisciplinary institution. Their preference and views on the digital resources and services have been provided along with suggestions for further improvement of the services. The study was user oriented and conducted in the Digital Resources Centre (DRC) of the Aligarh Muslim University Library. The result of this study shows that research scholars have high interest in searching information in DRC of the Library for their research work at a very large scale after online databases were introduced. The study reveals that most of the visitors prefer morning time for research work and visit DRC daily. The main purpose of their visit is to write research papers and theses. 98% of the respondents are satisfied with the digital resources being offered through DRC. The users provided certain suggestions like giving emphasis on the extension in the opening time, availability of more databases and software for data analysis, however some of them have suggested scanning and printing facilities to be provided within the DRC. Baayel & Asante (2019) in their paper studies the information seeking behavior of Teaching Professionals in the Koforidua technical university (KTU), Ghana. The study shows that respondents' using e-resource primarily for preparing teaching notes and writing research papers. Due to lack of user (faculty) education, they are not completely aware of the various e-resources available in library. Banerjee (2019) in his study examines the information seeking behavior and also tries to identify the needs & awareness of information resources among the Research Scholars of Vidyasagar University, West Bengal. The study reveals that IT based library services are more preferred rather than the print sources by the research scholars. Majority of the Research Scholars visited University Central library for their research, study journals, & make them up-to-date with the recent knowledge etc.

Objective: The present study is intended to disclose the methods of Information seeking by the library users of the selected university libraries of Assam. Along with that it also tries to reveal the satisfactory level and the constraints faced by the library users in the respective libraries.

Scope and Coverage: The study confined within the central libraries of Dibrugarh University, Tezpur University, Assam Agricultural University and Kaziranga University.

Research Methodology: The present paper is based on field study made by the researcher. The study was mainly quantitative and questionnaire was designed to study the university library users' information-seeking behaviour. Likert Scale was used to scaling responses in the survey.



Discussion

Methods of seeking information

(Likert Scale range: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somehow agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

Table 1: Methods of seeking information (N=100)

SI No.	Methods	Name of the University			
		Average (%)			
		DU	AAU	TU	KU
1.	Discussion with colleagues	3.84	2.32	3.68	3.68
2.	Consult Knowledgeable person in field	3.68	3.16	4	3.16
3.	Consult supervisor	3.84	2.32	3	3.52
4.	Discussion with librarian or reference staff of the library	2	2	2.84	1.68
5.	Discussion with librarian or reference staff of other library	1.68	1.6	2.32	1.68
6.	Review articles	3.84	3.52	3.68	3.16
7.	Abstracting articles	3.52	3.16	3.32	3.52
8.	Indexing articles	3.52	3	2.68	3
9.	Library catalogue(OPAC)	2.16	2.52	4	2.52
10.	Others	2.52	1.6	3	2.16

Mostly sought parameters: It is observed from the Table 1, that mostly sought methods regarding information seeking in the surveyed libraries are: discussion with colleagues, discussion with Librarian/Reference staff, Library OPAC, Indexing articles & other measures.

Major sources for obtaining information

(Scale range 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somehow agree, 4 = agree, 5= strongly agree)

Table 2: Major Sources for Obtaining Information

Sl.no	Sources	Name of the university			
		DU	AAU	TU	KU
1	Textbooks	2	4	4.2	4
2	Print journal	2.52	2.52	2.84	1.68
3	Newspaper	2.84	3.16	3.68	2.52
4	E-resources	3.68	3.84	3.84	3.68
5	CD/ROM Database	1.68	2	2.52	2
6	Thesis/dissertation	3.68	3.16	3.83	3.16
7	Other sources	2.52	2.84	1.68	2



From Table 2 it is seen that most of the users prefer textbooks for seeking information , TU users uses it the most for seeking information. After textbooks the users prefers e-resource the most for seeking information. After e-resource preference is given to Thesis/Dissertation and then gradually newspaper and then print journal. At last, preference is given to CD/ROM Database.

Constrains Faced While Searching the Information

(Scale range 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somehow agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

Table 3: Any Constrains Faced While Searching For Information

Reasons	Name of the University			
	DU	AAU	TU	KU
Lack of computer	3	2.68	3.16	2.16
Poor internet facility	3	2	3	1.68
Lack of technical support	2.84	1.68	2.68	3
Lack of knowledge regarding search	2.68	2.52	2.84	2.52
Lack of relevant textbooks	3	2.84	1	4
Lack of access to journal article	2.84	2.16	3.16	1.68
Lack of access to newspaper	1.68	2	2	1.68
Unwillingness of library staff	2	2.16	2.84	2

Table 3 shows the constrains faced by the users of the surveyed universities while searching for information. It is seen that TU has the most satisfying collection of books, whereas KU lacks in the relevant textbook. DU too has a relevant collection. KU lacks in provision of journal articles too while TU and AAU has a good provision for it. KU faces a lack of computers; DU too lacks computers to some extent. The user of KU faces constrains in access to journal article, while TU and AAU don't face any constrains. All the mentioned universities have a good provision for newspaper.

Level of Satisfaction with the Library Resources.

(Scale range 5= highly satisfied, 4 = satisfied, 3 = fairly satisfied, 2 = slightly satisfied, 1 = not at all satisfied)



Table 4: Level of satisfaction with the library resources

Collection	Name of the University			
	DU	AAU	TU	KU
Books	3.84	4	4	2
Periodicals	2.68	3.84	3	2.68
Reference	3.68	3	3.68	2
Thesis/Dissertation	3	3	3	2.84
Newspaper	3.84	3.84	3.84	3
CD/ROM	2.68	2	3	2
Online database	2	3	2.84	1.16
Back volumes	2	3	2	2.68
E-journals	3.68	3.84	3	2
E-book	2.84	3	2.68	1.84

Table 4 shows us that users are mostly satisfied with the collection of books of their library, the users of TU and AAU are the highly satisfied, whereas KU lacks in collection of sufficient books. The users of AAU and DU are quite satisfied with the e-journals and periodicals, the students of TU are also satisfied but the KU users are not satisfied. The users of DU and TU are satisfied using the reference collection. The users of DU, AAU and TU are satisfied with their newspaper collection. The users are barely satisfied using the CD/ROM, online database. Among the universities KU users are mostly satisfied with the e-books.

Suggestions from the user: Room was provided at the end of the survey for additional comments and suggestions to encourage open ended responses. The following are the suggestions received from the users from the surveyed universities.

1. In DU, users suggest provision of relevant text books for different disciplines.
2. In AAU, users face technical problems with computer in the e-resource section so they suggests to improve it.
3. In TU, users suggested for more computers for accessing e-resource and they want the thesis/ dissertation to be more organized.
4. In KU the users suggested for provision of textbooks as they are not at all satisfied with the collection.

Conclusion

The user groups in university libraries are of heterogeneous in nature, so their information needs also vary from person to person. The student user communities in university libraries are of Post-graduates, undergraduates and research scholars whose information need and requirement are completely different from each other. One may want precisely succinct data and the other may want it in concentrated form. It is the librarians' duty to comprehend the needs of the users and take actions accordingly. In the changing paradigm of Library and Information services we have to keep pace with the disrupting changes associated with it.



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