Information Seeking Behavior of Scientists of ICAR, Meghalaya: A Study

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Abstract

Understanding about the information needs and seeking behaviour of agricultural scientists could play a vital role in gathering their information needs efficiently. Libraries can use this knowledge for re-orienting their collections and facilities to adapt them to the needs of the scientific community. The main purpose of the study is to examine different facets of information seeking behaviour, and specifically the information needs and seeking behaviour of agricultural scientists of ICAR Institutes of Meghalaya, , use pattern and also different types of constrains faced by them. A survey method along with random sampling technique was used for the study. A well designed questionnaire was used as a data collection tool along with observations and informal interviews. Some of 68 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 65 questionnaires received with response rate of (95.6%). Findings indicate that guidance in the use of library resources and services and mainly updating the Institutes libraries is necessary to help agricultural scieninformation needs and seeking behaviour of agricultural scientists of ICAR institutes in Meghalaya.

Keywords: Information, Information Seeking Behaviour, ICAR

1. Introduction

In the field of library and information science research is a significant form of work addressing information-related behaviour, including information needs, information seeking and use of information resources. Information is mankind's most valuable resource, as each and every actions of an individual is associated with information and which has played and continues to play a decisive role in building human civilization and society. It also changes our personal and professional existence. Information needed by all for creating conclusions and required as other natural resources in their day to day activity. It is needed to recognize the purpose for which information is necessary, the surroundings in which the user activate users skills in ascertaining the needed information channels and sources desired for acquiring information, and barriers to information. Information - seeking behaviour is a comprehensive term, which in a set of activities that an individual proceeds to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information, and lastly uses this information to satisfy his or her information needs. It is symbolic of any of problem solving. It also includes identifying and understanding any trouble or difficulty faced by a user, thus forming a model or procedure for search and finally evaluating the results of the search. India is predominantly an agrarian country, and the growth of agriculture is reflected in the good yields of different crops that depend on various factors like natural and man-made. Agricultural research, the backbone of agricultural growth in the country, demands timely dissemination of knowledge being generated

and updated across the globe from time to time. In the case of agricultural scientists, information is even more important because it is always noticed that agricultural scientists approached libraries and information centres followed by the department of agriculture as sources for obtaining update information for their research needs. It is also found that agriculture related information available in these centres is not sufficient. In order to know about information needs, gathering behaviour and inadequacy of libraries of agriculture field the present study is mainly focussed in the information seeking behaviour of agricultural scientists in ICAR Institutes of Meghalaya.

2. Scope of the study

The scope of the study is predominantly on Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Institutes of Meghalaya. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) inaugurated as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, an autonomous body (a registered society) in 1929 under the Societies Registration Act 1860 in enactment of report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. In Meghalaya there are mainly two appropriate institutes under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) which are as follows-

2.1 ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Umiam, Meghalaya

ICAR Research Complex for North Eastern Hill region was established in the year 1975 by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to offer an acceptable research base for supporting agricultural extension in the North Eastern Hill region of the country. It is the first institute of its benevolent set up by ICAR which includes all the disciplines of agricul-

ture, horticulture, animal sciences, agricultural engineering, agro forestry and fishery to furnish to the research requirements of the tribal areas of NEH Region including Sikkim. The headquarters of this Institute is located at Barapani (Meghalaya). Overall 63 agriculture scientists working under this institute.

2.2 ICAR, Zonal Project Directorate – Zone III, Umiam, Meghalaya

The Zonal Project Directorate (ZONE-III) for North Eastern Region is a different agricultural institute located at the ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Umiam, (Barapani) in Meghalaya state. This institute is liable for the application of Transfer of Technology Projects of ICAR in the North Eastern Region of the country. It is one of the eight zones of India under the Transfer of Technology Project of ICAR contains eight North Eastern States namely; Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Sikkim. Agriculture is the primary livelihood in the region with over 80% of the population directly and indirectly contingent on it and majority of the farmers are small and minimal. In this institute only 5 agriculture scientists were employed.

3. Review of Literature

Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz (2000) explores information needs and seeking behavior of Malaysian agricultural scientists and found that research scientists spent 16% of their office time on reading and literature searching, whereas academicians spent 9.3% of their time for this persistence. The study also shown that scientists mostly using primary sources of information, mainly journal and review articles. Informal communication with professional colleagues was also measures as an important for

substituting current research information. A large number of the participants felt that they had not been keeping in touch with scientific literature due to lacking library collections and services.

Chakraborty (2003) examines information needs and the seeking behaviour of the agricultural scientists of Delhi agricultural institute. The study reveals that agriculture scientists rely more frequently on scientific/technical journals than on teachers.

Singh and Satija (2008) conducted a survey on the information seeking behaviour of agricultural scientists working in the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) institutions of Delhi, and Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. The result indicated that agricultural scientists had stated great dependence in meeting their information necessity on their institutional library and information centre. Most of the respondents for all categories of agricultural scientists preferred their library and information centre as the supreme adequate source. For accessing information agricultural scientists highly depend on the library collection, followed by the personal collection, collection of their supervisor and of colleagues in order of decreasing importance.

Kumar (2010) examines on the analytical study of information-seeking behaviour between agricultural scientists in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture and Technology, India. The results reveal that the scientists of agricultural science in this study are constant in their preference for journals, internet resources and services as the most important sources of information in their teaching and research dedications.

Singh (2012) investigated the several issues related to the study such as information use, level of users' satisfaction, difficulties tackled by agricultural sci-

entists while seeking information, which help to the agricultural libraries and librarians in building their library collections more logic. The result showed that the primary sources of information for agricultural scientists identified in this study in order of use are: databases, journals; books, research reports, monographs, etc., conversation with colleagues and experts, and attending lectures, conferences, seminars, etc. were also find to some level beneficial sources of information by the agricultural scientists.

4. Objectives of the study

The precise objectives of this study were:

4.1   To study the information needs of agricultural scientists of ICAR Institutes of Meghalaya.

4.2   To study their library visit pattern.

4.3   To study their determination and gathering behaviour.

4.4   To correlate the adequacy of the collection and their research needs.

4.5   To identify the constrains faced by the agricultural scientists while collecting information.

5. Methodology

The main populations in the study were agricultural scientists at the ICAR Institutes of Meghalaya. Total of 68 questionnaires with open and close-ended questionnaire on the information seeking behaviour of agricultural scientists were distributed randomly to respondents. Out of 68, 65 filled in questionnaires were returned by the users with the overall response rate %. Three (3) questionnaires were not received

back.The data gained from the responses were analysed to recognise agricultural scientist's information needs, their information seeking behaviour and various information sources for updating themselves in their different fields of research.

6.   Data Analysis

6.1. Distribution of Questionnaires and Responses Received (N=65)

Table 1 show that a total of 68 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, out of which 65 questionnaires duly filled by the respondents were received back. The overall response is 95.6 %. 3 questionnaires were not received back. Therefore, only 65 questionnaires were selected for the study i.e. **N = 65.**

Table 1: Responses Received from the Respondents (N=65)

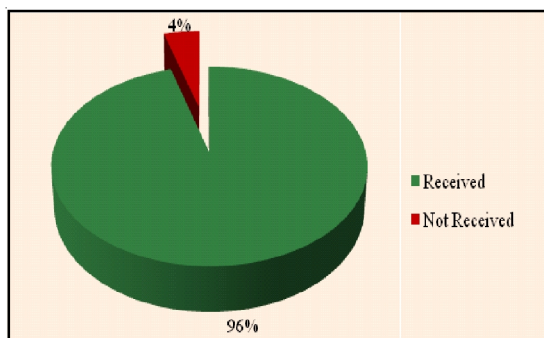| Sl. No.	Questionnaire	Nos.	Percentage (%)
1.	Received	65	95.6
2.	Not Received	3	4.4
	Total Distributed	**68**	**100**

Figure 1: Responses Received from the Respondents

6.2   Age Wise Distribution of Respondents

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (35.4%) belongs to the age group of 36-45 years, which is followed by respondents (27.7 %) belong to the age group of 46-55 years, respondents (26.1 %) belongs to below 36 years age group, whereas minimum respondents (10.8 %) belongs to above 45 years age group.

Table 2: Age Wise Distribution of Respondents (N=65)

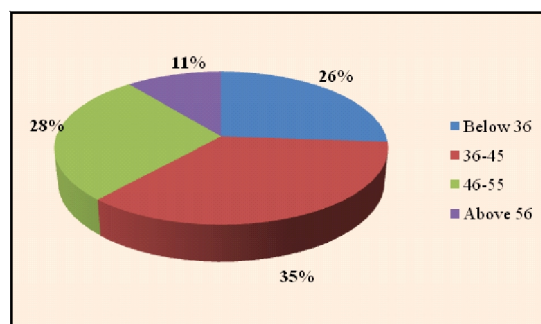| Sl. No.	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Below 36	17	26.1
2.	36-45	23	35.4
3.	46-55	18	27.7
4.	Above 56	7	10.8
	Total	**65**	**100**

Figure 2: Age Wise Distribution of Respondents

6.3   Category Wise Distribution of Respondents

Table 3 reveals that out of 65 respondents, 27 of them are Scientist/Assistant Professor (41.5 %), which is followed by 21 respondents (32.3 %) are Senior Scientist/ Associate Professor and 17 respondents (26.2 %) belongs to the category of Principle Scientist/ Professor.

Table 3: Category Wise Distribution of Respondents (N=65)

| Sl. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Principle Scientist/Professor	17	26.2
2.	Senior Scientist / Associate Professor	21	32.3
3.	Scientist/Assistant Professor	27	41.5
	Total	**65**	**100**
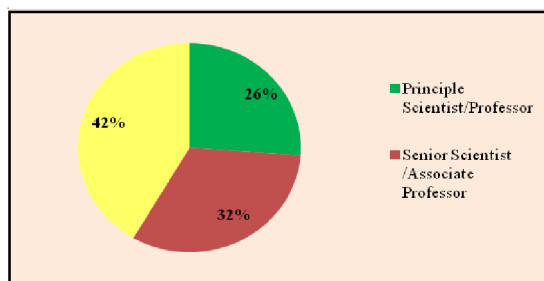
Figure 3: Category Wise Distribution of Respondents

6.4 Library Visit Pattern

Table 4 indicates that out of 65 respondents about 34 respondents (52.3 %) visits library once a month, which is followed by 13 respondents (20.0 %) never used to visit the library, 11 respondents (16.9%) who visits the library rarely, 7 respondents (10.8 %) visits library once a week, whereas 0 respondents (0 %) means nobody used to visit the library on daily basis.

Table 4: Library Visit Pattern (N=65)

Sl. No.	Visit	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Daily	0	0.0
2.	Once a week	7	10.8
3.	Once a month	34	52.3
4.	Rarely	11	16.9
5.	Never	13	20.0
	Total	**65**	**100**
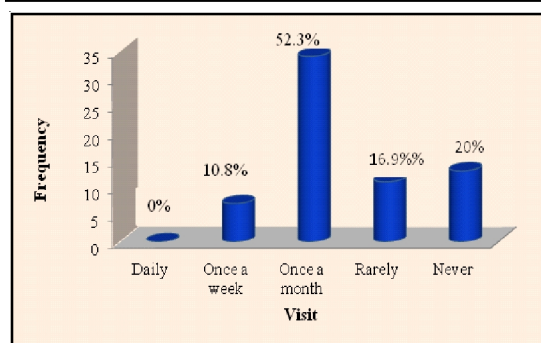
6.5 Purpose of Library Visit

Table 5 indicates that out of 65 respondents about 19 respondents (29.2 %) visit library for consulting reference books, which is followed by 18 respondents (27.17%) visit library for issuing and returning of books, 8 respondents (12.3%) visit library for updating knowledge, 7 respondents (10.8%) visit the library for reading journals, 6 respondents (9.2%) visit the library for preparing research, 4 respondents (6.2%) visit the library for other purposes and 3 respondents (4.6%) visits library for using e-resources

Table 5: Purpose of Library Visit (N=65)

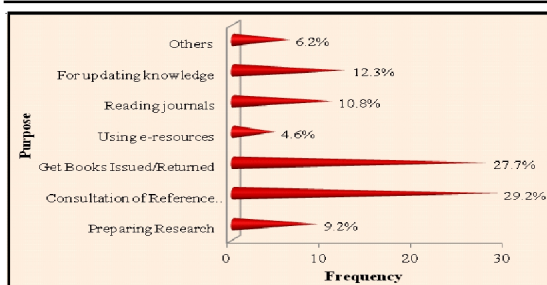| Sl. No.	Purpose of Visit	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Preparing Research	6	9.2
2.	Consultation of Reference Books	19	29.2
3.	Get Books Issued/ Returned	18	27.7
4.	Using e-resources	3	4.6
5.	Reading journals	7	10.8
6.	For updating knowledge	8	12.3
7.	Others	4	6.2
	Total	**65**	**100**

Figure 5: Purpose of Library Visit

6.6 Adequacy of Availability of Library Resources (N=150)

Table 6 shows that, a response rate as high as 59 (90.8%) is of opinion that library collections in the Central Institute library is not adequate at all, 6 respondents (9.2%) found library collections are partially adequate whereas 0 respondents (0%) found library collections are adequate.

Table 6: Adequacy of Availability of Library Resources (N=65)

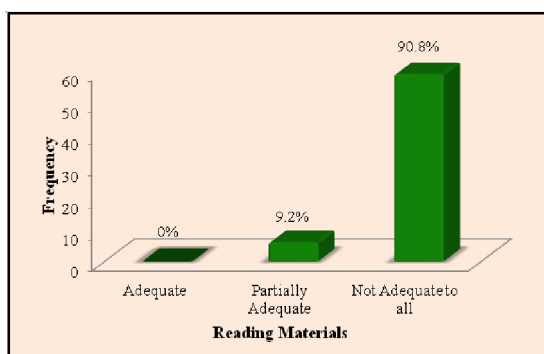| Sl. No.	Reading Materials	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Adequate	0	0.0
2.	Partially Adequate	6	9.2
3.	Not Adequate to all	59	90.8
	Total	**65**	**100**

Figure.6: Adequacy of Availability of Library Resources

6.7 Problems of Seeking Information from the Library

Table7 indicates different problems of seeking information from the library, 20 respondents (30.8%) facing problem like lack of reading materials to 'great extent' in the library, while 13 respondents (20%) are having time problem,8 respondents (12.3%) facing other problems like internet, financial limitations etc.,7 respondents (10.8%) having the problem of lack of knowledge in use of library services and lastly 6 respondents (9.2%) facing difficulty like lack of knowledge of information sources.

Table 7: Problems of Seeking Information from the Library (N=65)

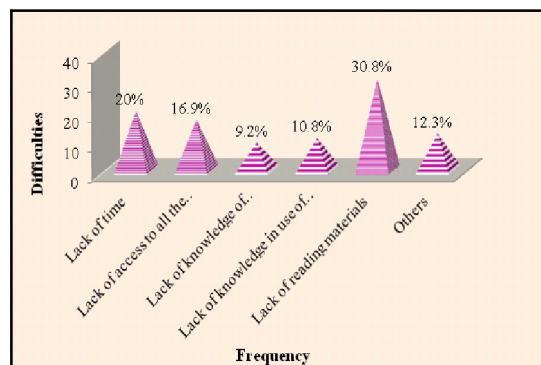| Sl. No.	Types of Difficulties	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Lack of time	13	20.0
2.	Lack of access to all the information	11	16.9
3.	Lack of knowledge of information source	6	9.2
4.	Lack of knowledge in use of library services	7	10.8
5.	Lack of reading materials	20	30.8
6.	Others	8	12.3
	Total	**68**	**100**

Figure 7: Problems of Seeking Information from the Library

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study 65 agricultural scientists were surveyed of ICAR Institutes of Meghalaya. This study indicates that majority of agricultural scientists used to visit their Central Institutes Library once a month while some of respondents never visit the library and not a single respondent visit the library on daily basis. The main purpose of their visiting the library is for consulting the reference books, getting books issued and returned; reading journals and also for updating their knowledge but very less respondents visits the library for using e-resource, preparing research etc. Library collections of their institutes found to be mostly not adequate at all but some of them found it partially adequate but nobody found the collection fully adequate. It is also found that most of the agricultural scientists facing problems like lack of reading materials in the library, lack of time, lack of accessing information, others like internet, access of journals etc.

There is a need to make a strategy for effective or better utilization of library sources and services of institute libraries. Some suggestions which have been received from the agricultural scientists are given here under with development remedial steps are as: (i) Need of development of collection of the library by keeping in view the information needs of agricultural scientists.(ii) Create awareness among the agricultural scientists regarding the types of sources, their importance and usefulness of getting the information.(iii) Introducing of User Education and Information Literacy programs to build effectively and easily handle electronic sources.(iv) Encourage the staff of the ICAR Institutes Libraries to provide systematic Orientation programme to the agricultural scientists in order to overcome the dif-

ficulties faced by them in the use of information available in their respective libraries (v) Digitized the library and its resources and servies so that the users can able to stand in the competitive world or the world of information explosion.(vi) Tie-up with open source journals and publications with full access services.(vii) Working hours of the library staff to be increased (vii) Increasing speed of internet.

Although, the agricultural scientists agree that library is the main base of any Institute. For more utilisation and understanding the proper values of library in today's information world the Institutes libraries must firstly digitized and collect the most adequate materials that were needed by the users of that libraries. Information seeking behaviour differs from one discipline to another. After implementing some recommendations library system of ICAR Institutes of Meghalaya might be capable of handling the complex of information need and demands of their agricultural scientists.

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