Information Seeking Behaviour of Students in Digital Era: A Study on the Postgraduate Students of Life Science of Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

Information seeking behavior refers to the way people search and utilize information. This study was undertaken to determine the information-seeking behavior and use of information resources by students of Life Science Dept. of Rajiv Gandhi University. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems or with computer-based systems. The study made an effort to determine the sources used for accessing e-resources in particular. Libraries are regarded as beating heart of a university setup. It can play important role in student's information-seeking behavior, which is considered as a multifarious, dynamic, social human behavior that needs a picture as rich as possible to truly understand the phenomenon.

Keywords: Information Seeking Behaviour, E-Resources, Rajiv Gandhi University

1. Introduction

Due to information explosion, advancement of education system and technological changes the choice, requirements and demands of users are changing and increasing in rapid way in this age. Information is vital for the development of human society. Uwem (1990) defines information as data that have been subjected to some processing functions and is capable of answering a user's query. Libraries and information centers are not only equipped with materials in traditional formats but also in electronic formats offering users a vast selection. Information seeking is a basic activity indulged by all people and manifested through a particular behavior. It is also an aspect of scholarly work that is of more interest to academic librarians who strive to develop collections, services, and organizational structures that facilitate information seeking.

2. Information Seeking Behavior

Information seeking is a term used to describe the ways individuals seek, evaluate, select and use information. Information seeking behavior is a broad term, which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information and finally uses this information to satisfy his/her information needs. Various factors may determine the information seeking behavior of an individual or a group of individuals. It is, therefore, desirable to understand the purpose for which information is required, the environment in which the user operates users' skills in identifying the required needed information, channels and sources preferred for acquiring information, and barriers to information access.

Thomas Wilson proposed that information behavior covers all aspects of human information behavior, whether active or passive. Information seeking behavior is the act of actively seeking information in order to answer a specific query.

Information seeking behavior is the behavior which stems from the searcher interacting with the system in question. This system could be a technological one, such as the searcher interacting with a search engine, or a manual one, such as the searcher selecting which book is most pertinent to their query.

In university libraries, postgraduate students are the major users of library resources and they use a variety of information sources to meet their diverse information needs. It is also necessary for them to consult a host of specialized information sources for different purposes such as writing assignments, term papers and project reports, preparing for class discussions, making presentations, and preparing for examinations and other learning activities.

3. Objectives of the study

The main aims and objectives of this study are as follows-

1. To find out the awareness and use of library resources by the students.

2. To find out the type of information sources used by the students.

3. To gauge the level of satisfaction on library collection.

4. To know the purpose of seeking information

5. To study about the level of awareness on the concept of information technology and access to e-resources.

6. To know the sources for accessing e-resources

7. To know the purpose of information seeking

8. To know the constraints in seeking information from e-resources.

4. Methodology

The study was conducted through questionnaire based survey method. The questionnaire was personally distributed to the students, from the Department of Life Science at Rajiv Gandhi University library. The questionnaires were distributed to **65** students out of which **52** filled in questionnaires were returned by the students with the response rate of **80%.**

5. Rajiv Gandhi University

Rajiv Gandhi University was previously called as Arunachal University. It was established in the year 1984. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone for the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located. The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per the notification of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The study has been limited to the students from Life Science Department of Rajiv Gandhi University. The Department of Life science comprises of three categories of students i.e. students from Zoology, Botany and Biodiversity.

6. Data Analysis

The data collected from the students through the questionnaires were analyzed, classified and tabulated by employing statistical methods.

Table: 6.1   Frequency of Library Visit

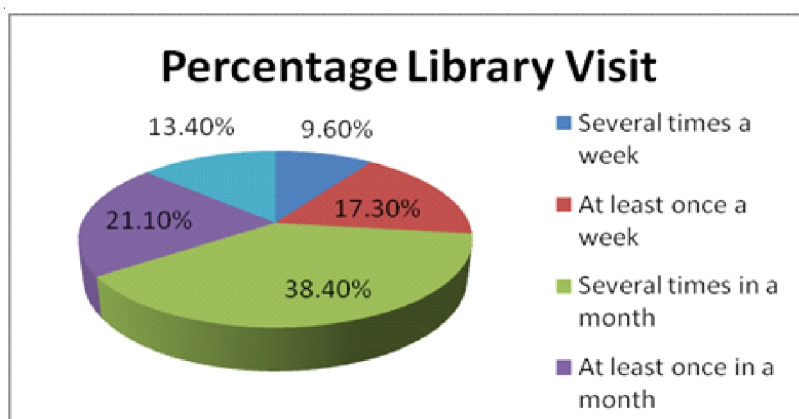| Frequency of library visit	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Several times a week	5	9.6%
At least once a week	9	17.3%
Several times in a month	20	38.4%
At least once in a month	11	21.1%
Irregular	7	13.4%

Figure 1: Percentage of Library Visit of the Users

Table: 6.1 shows that majority of users i.e. 20 users (38.4%) were visiting the library several times in a month, 21.1% visit the library at least once in a month and others are not regular users as shown in the table.

Table: 6.2   Satisfaction levels of the students on the Library Collection

Library Collection	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Text Books	3(5.7%)	39(75%)	7(13.4%)	1(1.9%)	3(5.7%)
Periodicals	0	44(84.6%)	6(11.5%)	1(1.9%)	1(1.9%)
Reference Books	0	10(19.2%)	39(75%)	3(5.7%)	0
Newspaper	42(80.7%)	8(15.3%)	2(3.8%)	0	0
Thesis	0	0	43(82.6%)	9(17.3%)	0
Dissertation	0	0	0	0	0
Back volume	0	0	50(96.1%)	2(3.8%)	0
E-resource collection	0	46(88.5%)	4(7.6%)	2(3.8%)	0

Table 6.2 shows that 42(80.7%) users are highly satisfied with the newspaper collection whereas 3(5.7%) are highly satisfied with the text books. 46(88.5%) students are satisfied with the e-resource collection followed by Periodical (84.6%). It is displayed that 50(96.1%) users are fairly satisfied with the back volume followed by thesis (82.6%) & others are shown in the table.

Table:6.3 Preferred format regarding documents

Format	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Print	23	44.2%
Electronic	10	19.2%
Both	19	36.5%

Table 6.3 displayed that 44.2% students preferred printed document while 36.5% students preferred both print and electronic format. 19.2% students use only electronic document.

6.4 Information relating to e-resource Collection

Table:6.4.1 Knowledge of Information Technology

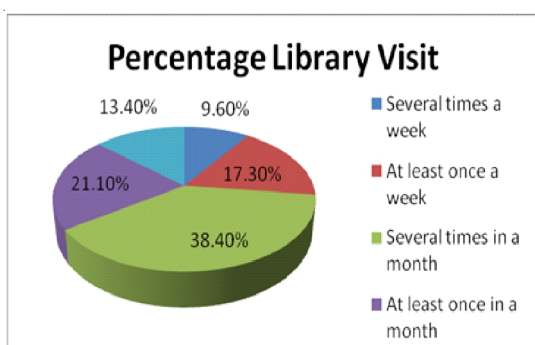| Status	Response Received	Percentage
Good	12	23%
Very Good	5	9.6%
Average	38	73%

Figure-2: Knowledge of Information Technology

A question was asked to inquire about their knowledge on information technology. In response to this question, 38 (73%) students indicated that their status on the knowledge of information technology being "Average" while 12(23%) mentioned as "Good". Only 5 (9.6%) students had "Very Good" knowledge of information technology, as shown in Table 6.4.1.

Table: 6.4.2 Knowledge of E-Resources

Category	Response Received
Yes	52(100%)
No	0
Don't know	0

From the table 6.4.2 it is seen that 52 i.e. 100% students have knowledge of e-resource.

Table:6.4.3. Types of E-Resources Accessed

Type	Response Received	Percentage
E-book	5	9.6%
E-journal	25	48%
Online database	18	34.6%
CD ROM database	0	

Table 6.4.3 shows that maximum number of users i.e. 25(48%) accessed E-journal. Online databases were accessed by 18(34.6%) students followed by e-book which was preferred by only 5 (9.6%) students. CD-ROM databases are not accessed by anyone.

Table:6.4.4 Sources of E-Resources

Source	Response Received	Percentage
OPAC	0	0
Search Engine	44	84.6%
Websites of Universities	39	75%

It is clear from the above table that 44(84.6%) students use search engines as source to access e-resources, while 39(75%) students accessed through websites of universities.

Table:6.4.5 Frequency of Using E-resources

E-resource	Frequently	Sometimes
E-book	2	(3.8%)
E-journal	38	(73%)
Online database	12	(23%)
CD ROM database	0	

It is displayed in table 6.4.5 that student's accessed e-resources sometimes. Majority of users accessed e-journal i.e. 38(73%).

Table:6.4.6 Purpose of using E-Resources

Purpose	Response Received	Percentage
For preparing class note	11	21.1%
Prepare for Competitive Exam	10	19.2%
General Awareness	48	92.3%
Prepare for seminar	50	96.1%
For career development and growth	0	0
Other Purpose	0	0

Table 6.4.6 shows that 50(96.1%) respondent seeking information through e-resources for preparing their seminar paper, followed by general awareness 48 (92.3%) and others are shown in the table.

Table:6.4.7: Constrain for meeting the information need

Constraints	Yes	Percentage
Poor Internet Facility	0	
Inadequacy of computers in the library to surf internet	33	63.4%
Lack of knowledge in using library materials	0	
Lack of IT knowledge and skills to effective utilize services	50	96.1%
Lack of relevant textbook and monograph	0	
Inadequacy of current journal article	44	84.6%

The students were asked to indicate the constraints they encountered while accessing information. Majority of the students, 50 (96.1%) agreed that lack of their IT knowledge and skills hampered them to effective utilize services as the major problem followed by inadequacy of current journal article 44(84.6%) and inadequacy of computers in the library to surf internet 33(63.4%).

7. Findings

The significant findings of the study are given below:

i.   All the respondents were in the habit of using the library and more than half of them visit the library several times in a month and 21% of the users visit the library at least once in a month.

ii.   Most of the users were highly satisfied with newspaper collection and E-resource collection.

iii. Most of the students preferred printed documents to read. (44.2%)

iv.   Almost all the respondents used E-resources for their academic and research activity.

v.   E-books, e-journals and online database were frequently browsed on the internet by the respondents.

vi.   The main purpose in using E-resources is for general awareness, secondly to prepare for seminar and prepare for competitive examinations.

vii. The majority of the students, (96.1%) agreed that lack of their IT knowledge and skills to effective utilize of E-resources.

8. Conclusion:

Information seeking behavior is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. It differs from one discipline to another and from one institution or library to another. With information deluge, everyone needs information of increasing variety and diversity of level, frequency, volume and ease. This complex situation has given rise to the growth concept of information searching and the manner of determining the pattern of searching is said to be information seeking behavior. The university library should play a pivotal role in facilitating the users in the use of Internet and e-resources and other library and information services. The usages of Rajiv Gandhi University library and its resources need to be increased and improved. The library should organize awareness programmes and seminars to educate the students on seeking information from e-resources and to maximize the use of library resources and services.

9. Suggestions

To fulfill the information need of students and provide them better service, the following recommendation are suggested-

i)   The Library should frame a well defined collection development policy so that it may possibly satisfy their user community.

ii)   The support of administration is a necessary part for development of a library. Administration should provide sufficient budget.

iii)   There is need for aggressive information awareness to all academic departments and student to create awareness on available services and resources in the library. Orientation programme/ seminar for both teacher and students should be organized.

iv)   Internet is a great source of information in the world. To utilize internet, it is necessary to make users well versed in the surfing and browsing on the net. Training and workshop are needed in this regard for users to know different searching technique for accessing information, accessing e-resource collection.

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