Digital Information Seeking Behaviour of Sanskrit Academics

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Abstract

Information seeking behaviour of the users is the fundamental criteria for design and development of Information Services. The changing information policies and devices necessitate the uses as well as the professionals to learn and adopt new techniques and methodologies to cope up. Faculty in higher education is a potential user segment to the Library. They are expected to be aware of the Library resources and technologies. The digital devices are causing and warranting the users for new strategies and techniques to use information resources effectively. The Sanskrit Academics are expected to be a segment of the users under the pressure of new technologies in the library. This paper attempted to know the awareness of the faculty on the technologies and resources in the library to facilitate to design suitable systems.

Keywords : Information Seeking Behaviour, Digital Information, Academics

0.   Introduction

Changing technologies and aspirations of the users for improved services are forcing library profession to alternative methodologies, policies, resources and managerial practices. The fortunate action of UGC by creating INFLIBNET, which inducting life and blood to the groaning libraries, mostly in the academic environment supporting the libraries to change the devices and methods in the services. The traditional institution libraries like Sanskrit Vidyapeetha and Universities are also computerized the library services and serving its users in digital environment. "The library users are expected to keep pace with library development so that they can use the electronic devices and systems for information seeking, but the conditions seems to be different"[1].

Among the potential library users in academic institutions the faculty occupies primary position, because of their information needs and experience in using library resources efficiently. They have to keep pace in using the library technology for information processing and retrieval. But the Colleges and Universities have been very slow to react to the demand to train teachers on the acquisition of compute skills.

1.   Need of Computer Skills for Teachers

The need for teachers without computer skills is shrinking at a much more faster rate, but strategies for training the teachers on how to utilize computers in the educational process is seldom discussed. "Unless teachers are exposed to training on the acquisition of computer skills, they should not be blamed for their limited instructional ability on how to apply computer technology to education"[2]. Application of computer for information processing and retrieval in the library also part in the improvement of teaching skills.

2.   Objectives of the Study

Their study was designed to analyze the users attitude towards using of computers in general and library automation in particular:

- to determine the attitude of the teachers user towards electronic information processing in traditional or oriental institutions.
- to analyze faculty users by their level of knowledge in computerized information operations and manipulation of   digital information resources.
- to know the aptitude of the faculty users in using digital or computerized information services.

3.   Sample for Study

There were 36 faculty members hailing from different Sanskrit Colleges and Universities from all over the country came to participate in the refresher course held at Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha (Deemed University) in Tirupati - A.P. in 2003 September and October. These teacher participants to the refresher course were taken for study. Though the sample size is low, but it is unique in nature because of its composition.

4.   Methodology

The study was conducted through questionnaire based survey. A structured questionnaire with multiple choice and open ended questions, designed according to the objectives, was distributed to the participant teachers with a request to fill it. They were properly filled and returned. The data in the questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted in suitable manner.

5.   Data Analysis and Interpretation

Majority of the teachers in the sample are working as lecturers (94.5%) remaining in Reader (5.5%) cadre.
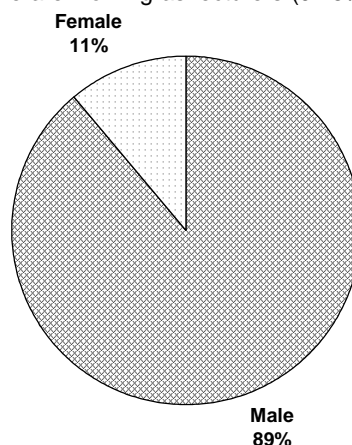

Fig 1. Sex wise Distribution

Usually, Refresher Course is an avenue to meet different lecturers hailed from many states and languages in India. The refresher course contain majority of the teachers hailed from Andhra Pradesh (27.7%) because the state being the host of the course local people trying to be more in number. Karnataka and Kerala was occupied next position with each equal number of participants (22.2%). Uttar Pradesh occupies the third position (11.1%). Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Orissa stands fourth.

Majority of the lecturers participated in the refresher course in the age group of 41 and 50 years (50%) followed by 31-40 years (33.3%), only 16.6% percent are in the age group of 51 to 60 years.

The data depicts that majority of the lecturers in the sample group belongs to specialized in Sahitya (50%) followed by non-specialized lecturers (22.3%) working in different colleges. Alankara (11.1%), Jyotisha, Nyaya and Samhita are each in same number (5.5%) ranked last.

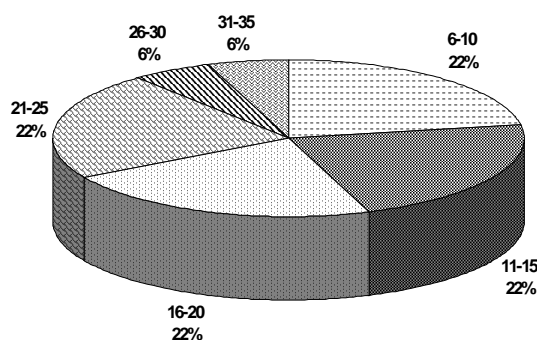Majority of the lecturers in the sample having Doctoral Degree (38.9%) as qualifications followed by

Fig. 2. Experience-wise Distribution

Master Degree. All the teachers having either other Master level degree or Bachelor professional degree apart from their higher degree.

The participants having experience in teaching ranging from 6 to 25 years. Very few teachers (5.5%) having 26-35 years of experience.

A small percent (5.5%) among the sample teachers guided 4 doctorates each under their guidance (27.7%) and awarded. Among the sample 10 teachers (27.7%) are guiding around 15 students who registered for Doctoral Degree under their guidance. The data depicted a gloomy picture about the on-going projects.

A good number of 26 teachers among the participants attended 3 to 10 Conferences each totaling 250 followed by Articles and Books.
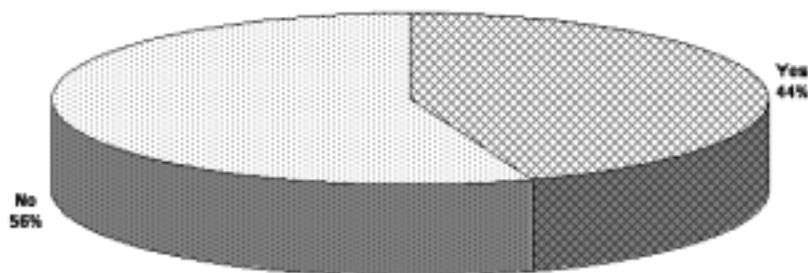
Fig. 3 : Previous Experience with Digital Information System

Majority of the teachers (55.5%) are not visited any digital/electronic library previously and no experience with such systems.

Half of the teachers was not visited any computerized Sanskrit library previously and they are not aware of such systems.

Majority of the teachers are visiting the library (83.3%) daily in their institution. Very less number of the teachers (11.2%) are visiting the library once in a week.

Majority of the participants (38.8%) having poor computer skills. A moderate (27.7%) are having average skills in computer. Very less participants have Advanced knowledge in computers. The data depicts that majority of the teachers are not having computer skills and not able to operate even for their self. It clearly shows adequate training is necessary to all the teachers in computers for effective utilization of library automation and networked information.

Table No.1 : Operational Skills

Skills to operate	Yes	No
Database searching	33.3%	66.6%
Word Processing	22.2%	61.1%
Internet browsing skills	22.2%	72.2%
E-mail	16.6%	77.7%
Programming	5.5%	72.2%

Among the teachers having computer knowledge, majority (33.2%) are able to search the database. Word processing and internet browsing is known to 22.2%, E-mail is used by 16.6 percent.

Majority of the teachers depends on Central Library of their institution for immediate information (44.4%) followed by personal library and other libraries. Internet is ranking last with 16.6% but, a good beginning.

Majority of the teachers in the sample group are not taking the assistance for computer related service in their library.
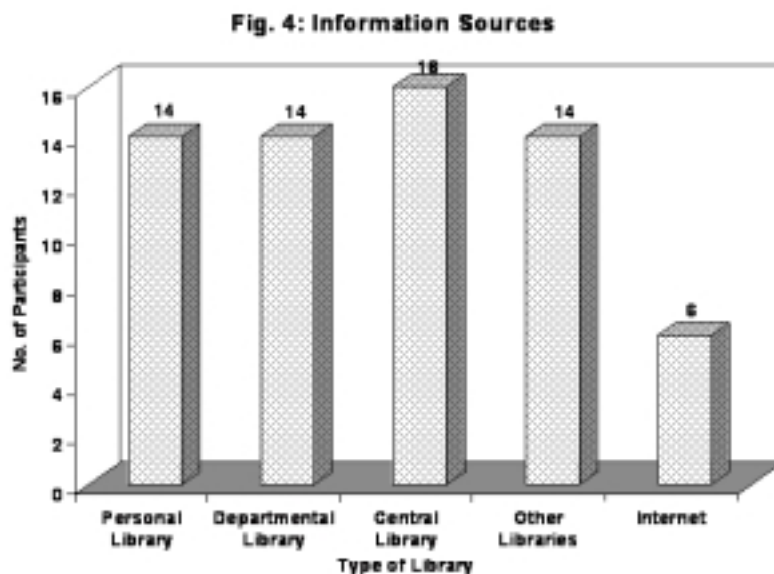

Fig. 4. Information Sources

Table 2. Choice of preference of Information Sources

Particulars	Ranking Percent (%)						
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Friends	22.2	—	5.5	11.1	5.5	5.5	16.6
Colleagues	5.5	27.7	16.6	—	5.5	11.1	5.5
Self procured information sources	11.1	5.5	5.5	11.1	5.5	16.6	—
Libraries	38.8	27.7	5.5	5.5	—	5.5	—
Internet	22.2	—	—	11.1	11.1	5.5	5.5
Senior person in the profession	5.5	—	22.2	5.5	5.5	11.1	11.1
Meetings/Seminars	—	5.5	5.5	11.1	16.6	-	11.1

On the basis of seven points scale as first choice majority teachers in the sample (38.8%) felt that the library is a primary information source. Considerable percent (22.2%) are felt that the friends and Internet is primary information source. In second choice colleagues stands in the first place (27.7%) of their choice. In third choice seniors (22.2%) are the source.

Table No. 3 Delegate others for seeking Information

Frequency of Delegation	Percent (%)
No Delegation	50.0
Delegation Occasionally	16.6
Delegation Moderately	11.1
Delegation Frequently	5.5

Majority of the teachers in the sample group (50.0%) are not delegate anybody on their behalf to seek information in the library. A moderate number of participants (16.6%) are delegating occasionally, Very less number of participants (5.5%) in the sample are delegating by others frequently for information seeking in the library.

Table No. 4 Reasons for delegating others

| Reasons	Percent (%)
Lack of Time	11.1
The task is tedious & monotonous	—
Unfamiliarity with the sources	22.2
Making team of group of members involved	5.5
Other reasons	—

Among the teachers delegating others to the library for information due to unfamiliarity (22.2%) with the sources and system. Lack of time also the reason (11.1%) for delegation.

On-line public access catalogues are the popular computer based services to the majority of teachers in the sample group.

Majority of the teachers (66.6%) are not aware of the network information and INFLIBNET programme and resource sharing.

The on-line public access system is appreciating by majority (38.8%) of the participants as speed and very speed information retrieval tool.

Majority of the teachers (55.5%) in the sample group are not aware the concept of digital libraries.

Fig. 8: Purpose for using digital information sources
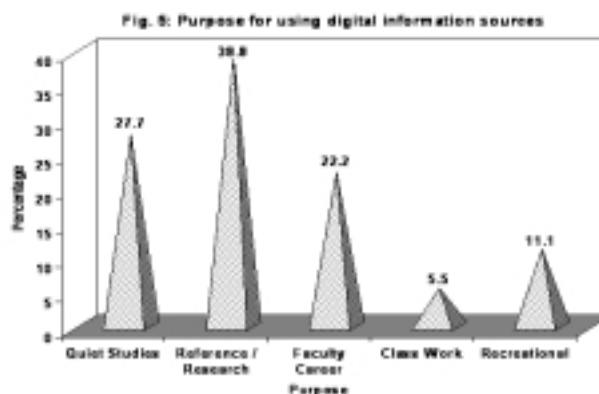
Majority teachers participated in the sample are not using electronic devices for teaching and learning.

Among those using digital/electronic information sources (44.4%) majority teachers (38.8%) using for research purposes followed by study. Very less percent of teachers in the sample using for class work.

Majority teachers in the sample (61.1%) are not using Internet for information.

Majority teachers are not having access to Internet.

Majority teachers stated (88.8%) as their institution libraries are not providing access to Internet.

Table No. 5 Suitable time for browsing Internet for Information

Suitable Time	Percent (%)
Morning	22.2
Noon	5.5
Evening	—
Night	22.2
Whenever necessary	5.5

Among the teachers having access to Internet majority 22.2% are felt that morning is suitable for Internet browsing, same number of teachers felt the night time is suitable.

Majority teachers in the sample (88.8%) are not aware of CD-ROM databases.

Majority teachers are not aware of (72.2%) e-Journals and not having access to it.

Majority in the sample (83.3%) are express their institutional libraries are not possessing any audio-visual information sources in their library.

Table No. 6 User Orientation Programme related to Digital Resources in Libraries

Expressions	Percent (%)
Essential	27.7
Very Important	27.7
Important	—
Whenever required	5.5
Not necessary	5.5

Majority of the teachers felt that they need training in computer libraries and digital information systems.

6. References

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