
Information Access Pattern of Teaching Community : A Study of Manipur University Library

Chongtham Vikas

Th. Purnima Devi

Arambam Hileima Devi

Abstract

This paper emphasizes to provide a comprehensive understanding regarding the Information Access Pattern of the Teaching Community of Manipur University. It discusses the facilities, services and budget with special reference to Manipur University Library. It also aims to examine the present state of the Library awareness amongst the Teaching community. The paper also tries to highlight the suggestion and nodes for the overall improvement of the Manipur University Library.

Keywords : Information Retrieval, OPAC, INFLIBNET.

0. Introduction

Information is the very basis of human existence. Information is being recognized as a vital resource and also as an indispensable raw material for right decision making from Governmental and institutional level to the personal level. At present, due to information explosion, users must be able to identify problems, decide what information they need in order to face the problem, locate the information they need, analyze it, synthesize it and communicate their solutions to others.

The term information has been derived from two Latin words 'FORMA' and 'FORMATIO' both these terms convey more or less the same meaning of giving shape to something and forming a pattern. It is not easy to define the term information precisely. It can simply be termed as the communication of knowledge about an event of a given condition or the spread of knowledge. According to WYSOKI, information access pattern is concerned with studying information processing activities of the users.

At present the article is going to emphasize on Higher Education addressing key issues like increasing demand, relevance, quality and excellence, governance and resources. Among the five qualities, excellence in Higher Education is conceived as a key factor for achieving economic objectives i.e. creation of knowledge workers. In the process, the teaching community has a great role to play thus, an attempt has been made to study the Information Access pattern of Teaching Community of Manipur University with reference to MU Library and provide a road map to tackle those issues as given below.

1. About Manipur University

Manipur University was established on 5th June, 1980 under the Manipur University Act, 1980 (Manipur Act 8 of 1980), as a teaching cum-affiliating university at Imphal with territorial jurisdiction over the whole of the State of Manipur.

Manipur University was set up with the objective to disseminate and advance knowledge, wisdom and understanding by teaching and research and by the example and influence of its corporate life and, in particular, to promote the objects set out in the first schedule of the Manipur University Act 1980.

There are four Schools of studies with full-fledged P.G. teaching Departments under the Manipur University. They are School of Humanities, School of Science, School of Social Science and School of Medical Science.

But, for the present study we are going to confined only the first three School of Studies excluding the School of Medical Science.

2. Manipur University Library

Library is recognized as an integral part of education, society and research. Endowed with the rich resources, Libraries meet the information requirements of the users. Libraries are not mere store houses; they are springs of knowledge, which flow out to irrigate the wide fields of education and culture. Needless to say, the objectives of the Library are to acquire process, organize, retrieve and disseminate information to its potential users. The importance of Libraries was explained by Paul Buck as, "In truth and effect, the quality of research and teaching work in any institution is dependent upon the potential of the Library to respond."

Manipur University Library covers 1900 sq.m spread on ground floor and first floor with a future plan of extending to a four storied building. The reference cum general reading room of the Library can accommodate about 100 readers where as the reading room in the periodical section can accommodate another 50 readers. The Library has a total collection of 1, 18,000 books (up to 2003) further it subscribes 280 journals, which include 43 foreign journals. The Library also subscribes to 12 National and 13 Local Newspapers. The Library also has a collection of Maps, reading materials in CD-ROM and diskettes of COPSAT titles. The Library provides internet service to readers for browsing the required materials. There are 18 computers and the LAN of the Library is planning to connect to the campus Net of the University so as to enable the students and faculty to access the database from their own departments.

The UGC identified MU Library as one of the eleven nodes in the first phase of the INFLIBNET programme from the North East. Since then the creation of database for books, serial and thesis etc started in 1993. These entire databases have been amalgamated to the union database of the INFLIBNET Ahmedabad. The Library has also been identified as one of the nodes of the UGC INFONET and readers have been given facilities for direct access to the database of institute of Physics, Elsevier Science, Biosis etc.

3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the study is to analyze the information access pattern of the teaching community taking into account of the following issues.

1. Satisfaction of the faculties with regard to the collections of documents in the library;
2. Identify the strength and weakness of library resources;
3. To ascertain the Networking capabilities of the faculties;
4. To know the information requirements of the faculties, access to information of their choice and problems faced thereby;
5. Availability of financial resources and the expenditure on different items;
6. To predict future information needs and requirements; and
7. To suggest improvement measures based on the inferences drawn from the study.

4. Methodology

The study used questionnaire method to collect data. A schedule of questionnaires was developed based on some earlier studies as well as using our own intellect. A total of 100 questionnaires were then distributed to all the 23 faculties of Manipur University comprising of 136 Teaching faculties leaving the Guest faculties. Out of which 65 questionnaires was collected. The data received was then processed and

analyzed, and results obtained from the analysis were discussed in the light of known facts in certain cases to arrive at the findings and the conclusions.

4.1 User under Study : Faculty Members

4.1.1 Age Group and Sex of the Respondent

In regard to the age group of all the 65 questionnaires collected the age group between 40-50 years accounted for 36%; the age group between 50-60 years for 32%; 30-40 years for 20% and 60 above for 10%. However, one respondent was found to be below 30 years.

In respect to male and female ratio it stood as 78%-21%. This reflects that there are a poor number of female faculties in all the Departments.

TABLE NO.1.1: AGE GROUP AND SEX OF THE RESPONDENT

Sl.no.	Category	Age Group				Total	Male	Female	Total	Ratio(m/f)
		30-40	40-50	50-60	60 above					
1.	Humanities	2	7	4	-	13	9	4	13	69%-30%
2.	Social science	8	3	8	4	23	19	4	23	86%-14%
3.	Science	3	14	9	3	29	23	6	29	78%-9%
	Total	13	24	21	7	65	51	14	65	78%-21%
		(20%)	(36%)	(32%)	(10%)	65	51	14	65	78%-21%

4.1.2 Information Requirements

Requirements of information amongst the respondents were almost the same as to the choices we have given in the questionnaire. Altogether 94% said they require information for updating knowledge, for research work, for writing papers and for attending seminar/ conference/ workshop etc. A mere 5% of the respondent could not provide the data in this section.

4.1.3 Access Points

Each and every person has a various types of sources from which they get the information and it varies from person to person. In regard to the above questionnaire nearly 96% of the respondent replied as to receiving from university library and internet. Here, it may be noted that most of the department thus not have a departmental library except for Computer science and MIMS. So, the university authority needs to focus on this area and developed the Departmental Libraries in the near future.

4.1.4 Use of Catalogue

Library catalogue are must for efficient location of the materials as to its availability as well as its location in the library. For the above question as to the use of library catalogue 69% responded "Yes", 25% "No" and 6% could not give any noted information. Respondent searching under the author and title entry in the catalogue registered for 69%. And 30% could not provide the information required. Some respondent even mentioned on the questionnaires that the books in the catalogue could not be found in the rack. The staff

needs to look immediately to the problem and try to solve it as soon as possible to help the users locate their needs easily.

4.1.5 Knowledge of INFLIBNET

Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) deals with the creation of union database as a tool for resource sharing with a view to achieved optimum utilization of the existing resources. The INFLIBNET section of MU Library has completed 11 years since its inception in 1993. On the flip side of the 11 years of development 53% replied to the knowledge of the said service while 43% had no idea of the service at all and 3% did not responded. Of all the 53% who replied as to having the knowledge said that, they use it to access e- Journals and periodicals. Regarding the work of computer application it is found out that the Science faculty outnumbered the other two faculties.

TABLE NO. 1.5: KNOWLEDGE OF INFLIBNET

Sl. No.	Category	Knowledge of INFLIBNET			Total
		Yes	No	NR	
1	Humanities	7	5	1	13
2	Social science	8	14	1	23
3	Science	20	9	-	29
	Total	35(53%)	28(43%)	2(3%)	65

(* NR: Not Responded)

4.1.6 Adequacy of Computer System

The present computer system available at the MU Library is 18 of which 11 are connected to internet. 8 computers are provided for 136 teachers, 1278 PG. students and 500 research scholars. So, the balance between the users and the system available in the MU Library has a big rift between them. Hence, we got 96% of respondent saying the system provided at present are not adequate and needs to acquire more for the benefit of the user's community.

4.1.7 Accessing through OPAC

The users of MU Library are provided with Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) facility. The library has automated all house keeping operations such as books database, journals articles database, non- book materials. The OPAC allows user friendly searches under the heading such as author, corporate author, title, keyword, series, publishers and subject. All the books have been classified under the Classified Catalogue Code. Users access the OPAC and search the availability of books on computer and note the call number that indicates the location of book on shelf.

TABLE NO. 1.7: ACCESSING THROUGH OPAC

Sl. No.	Category	Access to OPAC			Total	Percentage of yes/ no
		Yes	No	NR		
1	Humanities	2	10	1	13	23%Yes-58%No
2	Social science	5	15	3	23	21% yes-65% no
3	Science	14	10	5	29	48%yes- 34%no
	Total	21	35	9	65	32%yes- 53%no

*(NR- Not Responded 13%)

At present the facilities of OPAC is being provided to the faculties of Science and MIMS only from the University Library. Hence, out of 65 respondent 32% replied in affirmative while a bulk of 53% answered negative as to the accessing through OPAC. While 13% could not give any response. The faculty of science registered 48% as to the knowledge of OPAC which is double the number of both the other two faculties.

4.1.8 Facilities and Services

The physical facilities are the most integral part of the library. Under it comes the reading halls, good lightning, centrally air- conditioned, drinking water, toilet facilities and furniture's. Above all this the pivotal area is the services of the staff which is of utmost importance for efficient and effective functioning of the library.

To the question put forward for the facilities and services and satisfaction of the MU Library most of the responded opted for the level 'to some extent'. Following were the category provided viz; reading room, reprographic services, lightning and furniture, services of the staff and lastly catalogue cards display.

4.1.9 Opinion on the present Collection of Books and Journals

The performance of the library as a service organization depends to a very large extends on the quality and quantity of the various resources available in the library. Thus, initiating a sound collection is one of the major activities of the library. At present there is, 1,18,000 books and 250 journals of foreign as well as National in the collection. Even though the collection accounts for more than 1 lakh 18 thousands 61%% of the responded replied it needed acquisition immediately on all the books and journals of their own departments. Because most of the Departments were managing with the limited resources available.

**TABLE NO1.9
OPINION ON THE PRESENT COLLECTION OF BOOKS/JOURNALS**

Sl. No.	Category	Opinions				Total	%
		Abundant	Manageable	Scarce	Needs Acquisition		
1	Humanities	-	6	-	7	13	53%
2	Social Science	-	6	4	13	23	56%
3	Science	-	6	3	20	29	67%
	Total	0(0%)	18(27%)	7 (10%)	40(61%)	65	

4.1.10 Problems and Difficulties

Each an every organization in the world even though having the best infrastructure and facilities have some problem or difficulty one way or the other. In this regard the MU Library is no exception. From the data collected the most common response among the respondent was the shortage in the collection of the library and frequent breakdown of internet line (in particular the last one month).

4.2 Users Education

Mews defines "user education" as, "instruction given to readers to help them to make best use of the library". Every library should provide user's education to its readers by helping readers to get right the information, at the right time. If we go back to all the above questions which have been received, user's education is a must for all the faculties of the university. Almost all accounting for 89% agreed to the necessity of having user's education. Except for the faculty of Sciences both the other two faculties replied 100% to the importance of having user's education. But the point to be noted down is that very few libraries impart user's education to their clients. The result is that many of the resources of the library are under utilized. As a direct consequence of under utilization, creativity takes a back seat with few inventions coming from its researchers.

TABLE NO. 2: NECESSITY OF USER EDUCATION

Sl. No.	Category	Need Of User Education			Total	Yes Percentage
		Yes	No	NR		
1	Humanities	13	-	-	13	100%
2	Social Science	23	-	-	23	100%
3	Science	22	3	4	29	78%
	Total	58	3	4	65	89%

4.2.1 Library Budget

Libraries and documentation centre are universal service agencies of educational institutions. A budget permits a librarian to see clearly what capital will be spent by whom and where, and what expense, revenue and units of physical input plans will involve. Budget of the library is spent on different resources of the library such as books, journals and non- book materials.

The table below depicts the budget of the MU Library. It shows that a bulk of the portion 69% was being spent on purchasing books, while 30% was spent on journals out of the total budget. It is clear from the above that 76% of the budget was spent on books during 2001-2002. A sharp fall was witnessed in the year 2002-2003 where it spent only 35%. Where as a balance of 53% was maintained during 1999-2001. In respect to the journals it had lesser allocation from 1999-2000 to 2000-2001 accounting for 44%. In 2001-2002 it had a drastic fall by about 21% for a meager 23%. For the financial year 2002-2003 purchase of journals shot up to 64% i.e. by 29% from the books.

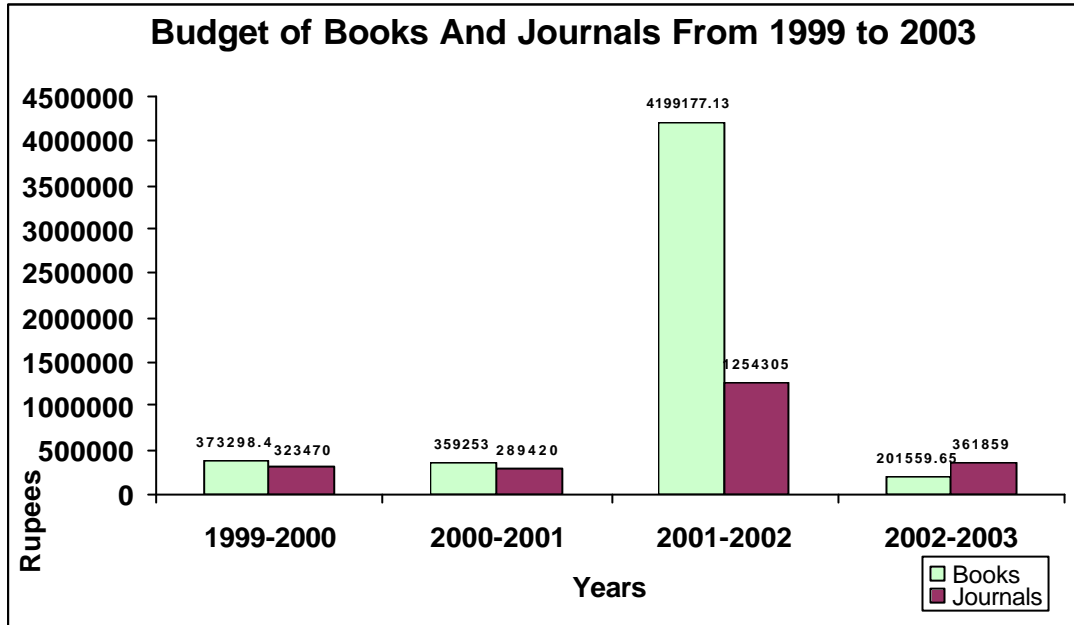


TABLE NO.2.1: PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET YEARWISE

Year	Books	Journals	Total Amount Spent
1999-2000	3, 73,298.40 (53%)	3, 23,470.00 (46%)	6, 96,768.40(100%)
2000-2001	3, 59,253.00(55%)	2, 89,420.00(44%)	6, 48,673.00(100%)
2001-2002	41, 99,177.13(76%)	12, 54,305.00(23%)	54, 53,482.13(100%)
2002-2003	2, 01,559.65(35%)	3, 61,859.00(64%)	5, 63,418.65(100%)
Total	51, 33,288.18(69%)	22, 29,054(30%)	73,62,342.18(100)

(* Figures in Rupees)

4.2.2 Suggestions

Even though the investigation is based on limited data, the findings can be assumed to be fairly well representative of the user's interest. Based on these generalizations the following suggestions are put forward;

1. A user education programmed should be initiated in order to make the faculties aware of the facilities and services provided in the MU Library.
2. The working hour of the library needs to be extended.
3. The Network bandwidth needs to be upgraded to 1Mbps- 2Mbps so as to provide speedy access to online.
4. The number of internet terminals should be increased for the faculty members.
5. The Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences needs to be provided the facilities of OPAC at the earliest possible time by increasing the number of terminals.

6. Facilities to create "Databank" for faculty as well as students needs to be provided to store the download data and to update at regular intervals.
7. Reading rooms should be air- conditioned.
8. The library needs acquisition of books and journals of latest publication for all the Departments
9. Instructional skills in the use of computer or IT and e-Journals awareness programmed needs to be initiated mainly to the Faculties of Social Science and Humanities to help them through better utilization of time lost and effectiveness.
10. Government agencies/Central Government may provide augmented financial grants for strengthening the collection of the library resources.
11. A balance should be maintained while purchasing books and journals giving equal importance for each year.
12. Library professional should themselves join hands to improve the standard of library and its services with the help of emerging Information Communication Technology (ICT).

5. Conclusion

Information and knowledge are truly classified as the very lifeblood and some as the basic fuel, driving the society to further advancement. The support of library and information service is increasingly becoming basic requirement for any work in the field of education and research. The library thus, is the heart of development of knowledge. The suggestions given above from the analysis will further improve the library services and cultivate the culture to access, use, and share, generate online resources and services.

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About Authors

Mr. Chongtham Vikas is a Librarian in R.K. Sanatombi Devi College of Education Imphal. He holds Master degree in Library & information science from Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu. Currently, he is a Research Scholar at Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University, Imphal. He can be approached on Email : tattu86@yahoo.com.



Dr. Th. Purnima Devi Assistant Professor (Sr. Grade) Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University. She has obtained her Ph.D. Degree from Manipur University, She has vast experience in teaching and guiding number of Ph.D. students and she has contributed number of papers in seminar and conference. Her areas of interest are bibliometrics, user studies etc. She is member or number of professional bodies. E- mail: puni_thoidingjam@yahoo.co.in



Ms. Arambam Hileima Devi is doing apprenticeship course in Manipur University Library, Canchipur. She did Bachelor degree in Library science from Manipur University and Master degree in Library science from North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. She also has Bachelor degree in Education and One year Diploma in Computer application. Email : hileima@yahoo.co.in.