

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF ACADEMIC COMMUNITY OF MAHAVEER EDUCATIONAL PARK, MEERUT (UP)

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Abstract Study of data collected from 150 teachers and students by administering questionnaires on their information seeking and requirements of Mahaveer Educational Park, Meerut indicates that guidance in the use of library resources and services is necessary to help teachers and students to meet their information requirements. Found that journals, textbooks and electronic information sources are the most popular sources of information for the students' course work. Recommends that latest edition of textbooks and reference materials should add to the library collection. Suggests that the CD-ROM databases of journal archives and reference books should be added and users should be guided to use the resources of the library.

Keyword: Information Seeking behaviour, Information Retrieval, Mahaveer Educational Park, Meerut, Academic Community

INTRODUCTION

The present era is called the "Information era." Information has become the most important element for progress in society. To thrive in this modern era, one needs a variety of information, no matter how well versed one is in a field or profession. Information seeking is a process in which humans engage in order to advance and potentially alter their state of knowledge. It is also an important cognitive function related to learning and problem solving, sometimes thought of as a "higher cognitive process". (Marchionini, 1995) "Information-seeking" is a term describing the ways individuals seek, evaluate, select, and use information. In the course of seeking new information, the individual may interact with different people, analog tools, and computer-based information systems. Information seeking behaviour is an area of active interest among librarians, information scientists, communication scientists, sociologists and psychologists. Information seeking behaviour results from the recognition of some need, perceived by the user, who as a consequence makes demands upon formal systems such as libraries, information centers, on-line services or some other person in order to satisfy the perceived need. (Wilson, 1997) "Information seeking behaviour refers to any activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need". (Krikelas, 1981).

Hence, the information seeking behaviour is the way in which the user goes about seeking and obtaining information. The user's information behaviour is reflected in his relationship

to the information unit and its various products and services. The behaviour comprehends a number of components like attitude, approach, positive activity, information gathering, pattern of seeking information, psychological temperament, etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was designed and carried out to achieve the following objectives:

- To find out the awareness and use of library resources by the users.
- To find out the type of information sources used by the users.
- To ascertain users' opinion regarding usefulness and adequacy of information sources and services.
- To know the purpose of seeking information.
- To find out the barriers in using library resources and services.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used questionnaire-based survey method, as many similar studies conducted earlier, have also used this method for data collection. The questionnaires were personally distributed to the teachers and students of Mahaveer Educational Park, Meerut at their library and class rooms in the month of November 2013. The data thus collected were

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tabulated and analyzed by using statistical technique i.e. percentage for find out the **information seeking behaviour of academic community of Mahaveer Educational Park, Meerut, U.P.**

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Table 1: Size of the Sample

Status	No. of Respondents	%
Teachers	50	33.33
Students	100	66.67
Total	150	100.00

Table 2: Frequency of Visit to the Library

Frequency	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Daily	20	40	62	62	82	54.67
2-3 times in a week	10	20	26	26	36	24.00
Weekly	10	20	10	10	20	13.33
Monthly	10	20	02	02	12	8.00
Total	50	100	100	100	150	100

Abbreviations: T=Teacher, S=Student

In order to assess the frequency of teachers and students to visit the library, the time gap has classified into four categories as shown in Table-2. A good majority of users i.e. 82 (54.67%) of users are visiting the library daily, followed by 2-3 times in week i.e. 36 (24.00%). The result shows that the majority of the teachers and students are visiting the library daily.

Table 3: Purpose of Visit to the Library

Purpose	T	%	S	%	Total	%
To study	25	50	72	72	97	64.66
To borrow books	23	46	61	61	84	56.00
To collect course material	21	42	48	48	69	46.00
Browsing the shelves	23	66	37	37	60	40.00
To read journals	28	56	50	50	78	52.90
Guide to subject literature	31	62	63	63	94	62.66
To use e-resources and services	29	58	36	36	65	43.33
To read newspaper and magazines	15	30	80	80	95	63.33
Use of the reference material	29	58	20	20	49	32.66
To Know the latest arrivals	20	40	28	28	48	32.00

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table-3 shows that the maximum percentage of users both teachers and students are visit to the library for study purpose while teachers and students were go to the library for read newspapers and magazines. This table further reveals that 94(62.66%) respondent use the library for guide to subject literature, followed by 84(56%) users for borrow books in the library, further followed by 78(52.90%) for to read journals, 69(46%) to collect course material, 65(43.33%) to use e-resources and services etc. Only 48(32%) users go to the library to know the latest arrivals of information.

Table 4: Users Awareness of Library Resources and Services

Services	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Issue/Return	40	80	80	80	120	80.00
Reference service	35	70	93	93	138	92.00
Books and journals	48	96	82	82	130	86.67
Seminar/Conference proceedings	30	60	56	56	86	57.33
Indexing service	22	44	10	10	32	21.33
Abstracting service	15	30	20	20	35	23.33
Translation service	25	50	28	28	53	35.33
Bibliography service	22	44	10	10	32	21.33
Newspaper Service	15	30	10	10	25	16.66
Inter Library Loan	08	16	04	04	12	08
CAS	10	20	04	04	14	9.33
SDI	04	8	10	10	14	9.33

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table-3 shows that 120(80%) of respondent are aware of issue/return of the books i.e. 40(80%) teachers and 80(80%) students .While majority of the respondents like 138(92%) were aware of reference service. The table also indicates that 130(86.67%) were aware of books and journals in available in the library. A few numbers of users aware of indexing service, abstracting service, translation service, and CAS as in instantaneous.

Table 5: Use and Awareness of Formal Sources of Information

Information Sources	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Text books	45	90	80	80	125	83.33
Journals	48	96	92	92	140	93.33
Year books	36	72	90	90	126	84.00
Thesis /Dissertation	42	84	74	74	116	77.33
Dictionaries	34	68	82	82	116	77.33

Proceeding conference/ seminars	40	80	70	70	110	73.33
Manual/Hand book	38	76	85	85	123	82.00
Encyclopedia	41	82	87	87	128	85.33
Technical Reports	37	74	60	60	97	64.66
Patents	25	50	54	54	79	52.66
Standards	43	86	71	71	114	76.00
Indexing	47	94	82	82	129	86.00
Bibliographies	30	60	91	91	121	80.66

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table-5 shows that 140(93.33%) most respondents are used journals as a formal sources of information whereas 125(83.3%) of respondents used text books, 166(77.33%) thesis/dissertation, 126(84%) year books, 116(77.33%) dictionary, 128(85.33%) encyclopedia, 123(82%) manual/hand books, 129(86%) indexing/abstracting journals proceedings of conferences/seminars similarly. This table also depicts that 114(76%) used standards, 97(64.66%) used technical report and 121(80.66%) used bibliographies as a primary and secondary sources of information.

Table 6: Use and Awareness of Informal Sources Information

Information Sources	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Discussion with colleagues	45	90	75	75	110	73.33
Scanning of abstracting & indexing Journals	47	94	72	72	119	79.33
Attending of seminar/conference workshop etc.	43	86	78	78	121	80.66
Asking to author for reprint	36	72	65	65	101	67.33
Through Telephone	32	64	85	85	117	78.00
Through Fax	34	68	62	62	96	64.00
Personal collection colleagues	36	72	68	68	104	69.33
University library	42	84	80	80	122	81.33
Personal visit for a subject specialists	37	74	58	58	95	63.33
Writing letters	30	60	56	56	86	57.33
By visiting exhibitions	25	50	52	52	77	51.33
Through conversation/discussion	28	56	60	60	88	58.66
Through scanning literature	30	60	57	57	87	58.00

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table-6 shows that 122(81.33%) users are use and awareness of informal sources of information like central university library whereas 121(80.66%) users are use and awareness

of informal sources of information like attends the national and international seminar/conferences, workshop etc. The table also deals with the use and awareness of informal information sources such as 119(79.33%) Scanning of abstracting & indexing Journals, 117(78.00%) Telephones, 110(73.33%) discussion with colleagues and low percentage of informal sources of information like visiting exhibitions, conversation, scanning literature etc.

Table 7: Use and Awareness of Electronic Information Resources

Details	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Internet based resources	45	90	92	92	137	91.33
E-Journals	31	62	80	80	111	74.00
E-Book	22	44	59	59	81	54.00
E- Thesis	15	30	79	79	94	62.66
E-Mail	30	60	82	82	112	74.66
Online database	20	40	85	85	105	70.00
CD-ROM databases	25	50	75	75	100	66.66

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table-7 reveals 137(91.33%) of electronic information resources used by the teachers and students whereas 111(74.66%) used by the teachers and students email and e-books as a similar basis. The table also deals with 105(70.00%) online databases used by users as followed by 100(66.66%) CD-ROM databases used by the teachers and students. The least numbers of users used electronic information resources such as 94(62.66%) e-thesis as well 81(54.00%) of e-books.

Table 8: Information Seeking Through Current Contents\Developments Service

Details	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Internet search	34	72	66	66	100	66.66
E-Journals	32	64	45	45	77	51.33
E-Mail	22	44	42	42	64	42.66
Subject gateways	04	08	10	10	14	9.33
Scanning of contents of current issues of journal	20	40	70	70	40	26.66
Scanning of Abstracting & indexing Journals	22	44	35	35	57	38
Conferences/symposia/workshops etc.	22	44	32	32	54	36
Library Catalogues	30	60	85	85	115	76.66
OPACs	30	60	78	78	108	72
Bibliographies index and Abstracters	35	70	60	60	95	63.33

By personal correspondence/communications	15	30	10	10	25	16.66
Books review	18	36	68	68	86	57.33
By friend/supervisor/personal contents	17	34	28	28	45	30
By library staffs	10	20	04	04	14	9.33

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table-8 shows methods used for information seeking abreast of current contents\developments services in the library. It is found that 115(76.66%) users used information through library catalogues whereas 108(72.00%) service used for Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs). The Mahaveer Educational Park, Meerut library provided 100(66.66%) service through Internet search methods. The least numbers of users used current contents\developments services.

Table-9 shows that the majority of respondents i.e. 96(64%) who were seeking Information through journals\periodicals subscribed by the library as well as personal. The table also shows that 60(40%) respondents who are seeking Information through journals\periodicals by Xerox copy of subject related information from library. This was the best way to information seeking through open access journals as well as to present research paper in seminar/conference/symposia etc. i.e. 53(35.33%) similarly. The least number of respondents who were seeking information through personal communication, journals subscription, retrospective searching of indexing/abstracting periodicals, Inter Library Loan etc.

The above table shows 88(58.66%) Teacher and Students who was facing problems of information seeking due to lack of time for searching, while 74(49.33%) users have lack of access in reading materials to the Mahaveer Educational Park Library. In this table also deals with the 62(41.33%) users felt to lack of access the seeking of information whereas 44(29.33%) users say due to lack of knowledge for information seeking behaviour. The very low percentage of users were facing the problems of information seeking behavior such as lack of organizational information, lack of knowledge for uses of the library resource and services and lack of support from library staffs.

The above table indicates that the purpose of information seeking i.e. 131(87.33%) teachers and students who was the most preferred response to solve immediate practical problem. It followed by the reasons that include seeking information for career development, keeping up-to-date and the being to write articles and research papers.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The analysis and interpretation of data is revealed that characteristics of the information need and information seeking behaviour of the teachers and students. The findings evolved out of this study provide sufficient scope of the study of the two groups, while students are using libraries more whereas the reverse affects for teachers whose understanding of electronic information services and information technology very widely as observed.

Table 9: Information Seeking through Journals\periodicals

Details	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Library subscriptions	30	60	66	66	96	64
Personal subscriptions	30	60	66	66	96	64
Journal articles Xerox from library	25	50	35	35	60	40
E-Journal subscriptions	20	40	15	15	35	23.33
Open access journals	32	64	21	21	53	35.33
Inter Library Loan	8	16	4	4	12	08
Document Delivery Service	12	24	10	10	22	14.6
To present research paper in seminar/conference/symposia etc.	24	48	29	29	53	35.33
Citation at end of book chapters	12	24	15	15	27	18
Retrospective searching of indexing/abstracting periodicals	14	28	17	17	31	20.66
Personal communication	18	36	19	19	37	24.66
Browsing back volumes	15	30	18	18	33	22
Others	02	04	04	04	06	04

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table 10: Problems of Information Seeking Behavior

Problems	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Lack of time for searching	30	60	58	58	88	58.66
Lack of access to all information	26	52	36	36	62	41.33
Lack of reading materials	18	36	56	56	74	49.33
Lack of knowledge information	15	30	29	29	44	29.33
Lack of organization information	16	32	25	25	41	27.33
Lack of knowledge for uses of the library resource and services	10	20	15	15	25	16.67
Lack of support from library staffs	09	18	00	00	09	06.00

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table 11: Purpose of Seeking Information

Purpose	T	%	S	%	Total	%
For career development	32	64	28	28	60	40
To solve immediate practical problem	39	78	92	92	131	87.33
To keep up to date	22	44	22	22	44	29.33
To write an article and research paper	15	30	33	33	58	38.66

(Multiple answers were permitted)

The present findings revealed that the teachers and students visit the library to borrow books. However, it was observed that the majority of the teachers and students are visiting library daily. It is recorded that maximum percentage of users both teachers and students are visit to the library for study while teachers and students go to the library to read newspapers and magazines. The teachers and scholars visit the library generally for reference sources and specific information depending upon their needs. Hence, the purpose of users visit to the library largely depends on the free time available to them to know the development in their respective fields.

It has been found that majority of respondents used journals as formal sources of information while most of the respondents used text books as a second preference. It has also found that majority of users used central library after that attaining seminar, conference, symposia, workshop national as well as international that comes under the informal information sources. Most respondents prefer “internet services/resources”. Other electronic information resources mentioned were electronic mail and e-journals for use and awareness of e-information resources respectively. Library catalogues services were the most important for current contents\development services. The majority of users used information through library subscription as well as personal subscriptions of journals\periodicals and most preferred response to solve immediate practical problem. It

has been noticed that majority of the users were facing a problem for lack of time for searching of information. It is found that the satisfaction with overall functions of the library is good as well as fair as most of the users gave response in this regard.

This study is an effort to fill a gap in understanding the information needs and information-seeking behavior of Teachers and Students of Mahaveer Educational Park. Mahaveer Educational Parkt user’s information needs are diverse and they rely heavily on books and older material, so the lack of availability of required material in libraries is a major problem in information seeking. Information professionals can analyze the findings of the study and design, develop, and introduce new library and information services for information management and technology institute. Library and information science professionals, especially in India, should conduct further studies on user information needs to provide more suitable resources and services to different user groups.

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