

Information Seeking Behaviour of Research Scholars at Central University Libraries in Hyderabad: A Study

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Abstract - This study was undertaken to determine the information seeking behaviour and library use by researchers at the Central University Libraries. The overall purpose of the study was to determine the information requirements of researchers and also determine their awareness of available library services. The study collected data on the information requirements of researcher scholars. Data were gathered from 100 out of 150 researchers through open and closed questionnaires. Findings indicate that guidance in the use of library resources and services is necessary to help researchers meet some of their information requirements.

Keywords: Central University Libraries, Information gathering, Information communication technology, Information seeking behavior, Library services, Library resources, Researchers and Questionnaires.

I. INTRODUCTION

Information has now become one of the basic needs of human being in every aspect. There is no field of human activity in the world wherein information is not a component. It has an important role in decision making, planning and every developmental activity. In this highly competitive environment, those who possess right information at the right time will only succeed. Information professionals are always keen on finding out why and how users seek information, for enhancing their information provision. The technological advancements and innovations that took place over the years have transformed libraries from a mere storehouse of print materials into gateways to the universe of information. Libraries are no longer stagnant reservoirs of books/documents. Information Communication Technology (ICT) has brought about radical changes in the way in through which libraries gather, preserve and disseminate information.

Every year Central University Libraries are spending huge money to satisfy the users and hence an appraisal on the resources and services is very appropriate. Libraries can build up live and balanced collections on the basis of the feedback from users. In this study, an attempt will be made on investigation, consultation and questionnaires, personal approach and field work on information seeking behaviour (ISB) of researchers in the changing library scenario. There are nine State Universities and three Central University Libraries located in Hyderabad city. This study is carried out by taking into account three Central University Libraries.

II. CENTRAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

University Libraries are a dynamic instrument of education. It is an axis around which the teaching and research activities revolve. The basic function of a library is to satisfy the intellectual needs of the readers. Among the three important functions of the library, namely collection, storage and dissemination of reading and kindred material, the collection occupies the most vital position. The fundamental function of a library is to build up a collection which is dynamic and capable of meeting the changing needs and demands of present as well as future users. With the rapid advancement in ICT, universities are gradually shifting to electronic format by creating and acquiring e-resources, in order to improve the efficiency of library by rendering services to end users. Today, e-resources have become one of the most important aspects of university libraries for timely creation and dissemination of knowledge. The library user often prefers e-version which enables complex searches to be performed quickly.

III. INDIRA GANDHI MEMORIAL LIBRARY (IGM), HYDERABAD CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

The University of Hyderabad came into existence in 1974 to promote teaching and research. The University at present has eight schools of study – Chemistry, Life science, Physics, Mathematics and Computer/information science, Humanities, Social science, Fine arts and Communication and Management Studies. It offers postgraduate and research programmes across a wide spectrum of discipline in area of Science, Art and Technology. The IGM library was established in 1975 as a central facility to support teaching and research activities of the university. The library has been over years successfully catering to the information needs of the Schools/departments and students of all subjects. It is the first university library in India to computerise all its operations and services. With modernisation and networking of the library and information system (LIS) the university campus has been networked with fibre optic cable and 2 MB bandwidth Internet connectivity for creating local resources, cataloguing and repackaging web resources. All schools/departments are connected through network. Library holdings can now be accessed through a local Network and Internet (www.hcu.org.in).

IV. RAMESH MOHAN LIBRARY, ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY

The Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, (CIEFL), Hyderabad, (*renamed as The English and Foreign Languages University, (EFLU), by an act of Parliament 3rd, August 2007 as Central University*) located in Osmania University Campus, Hyderabad, is an internationally acclaimed institution, offering courses in English, Arabic, French, German, Korean, Italian, Japanese, Persians, Russian and Spanish.

Library was set up in 1958, with a small collection of text books in multiple copies. After that the library gradually built up the collection in the fields of respective languages, linguistics and literature. The library was shifted to its own building and was inaugurated by Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice-President and later President of India on 23rd, July 1987. The function was attended by Shri. P. Shiva Shankar, the then Minister for HRD, Government of India and many other local dignitaries. (www.efluniversity.ac.in).

V. CENTRAL LIBRARY, MAULANA AZAD NATIONAL URDU UNIVERSITY (MANNU)

The MANUU Library was established in the year 1998. The Library has shifted to its new constructed independent building in December, 2008. The New Library Building has G+1 with 3300 m² of built up area and seating capacity of 200. The Central Library is most modular, functional and uses modern technology for its operations and paging system for announcements.

It uses NewGenLib Software for day to day operations. It is an open source Software MARC 21 format, Unicode based and Web enabled, has Linux Operating System and is virus free. The Library has rich Urdu collection comprising monographs, reference works etc. The Library is subscribing around 35 current periodicals in Urdu, 135 in English, 9 in Hindi and 17 popular magazines apart from 13 newspapers in four languages namely Urdu, English, Telugu and Hindi. (www.manuu.ac.in)

VI. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature plays a vital role for scholars and faculties while writing articles and in research works. It is a distinguished source from where we can draw the ideas for the concepts and apply them to the theory. The review of literature is carried out to understand the recent developments of ISB in the library and information science environment. By reviewing literature the researcher will be able to know what methods of research have been employed by the various related studies. Summaries of some relevant studies are given below.

Ernest, et al., (2005) tried to indicate in their study on "Information – seeking behavior for recreational activities and its implications for libraries" that respondents do turn to the internet for some of their information needs. Web sites providing information on three hiking areas were also analysed to determine their accuracy and access to information. The study concludes that ISB on the internet represents investigation of sources that existed in the pre-internet era but whose access has been altered from earlier mechanism, such as paper mail, telephone, or on-site visits, to electronic investigation.

Fourie, I, (2006) explained that the value of web information-seeking studies is limited to theoretical and methodological growth if they do not affect practice. Suggestions are offered on a selection of aspects of how LIS practitioners can incorporate findings from the information seeking studies. These include improving self-knowledge and self-efficacy of practitioners and users, adopting approaches to information literacy and user empowerment programmes, improving access to the full spectrum of the information infrastructure, emphasizing strongly on the link between information seeking and information use and knowledge generation, and involving in pragmatic small-scale research.

Kabede, G. (2002) focused on the information needs of users that are changing as a result of the electronic form. In the course of the discussion, the paper first highlights the trend and nature of the physical form in which information content is currently being made available for users, accessed and used in electronic information environments. It then attempts to determine why the prevailing information needs of users are coming into being and how they are shaped in electronic information environments. Finally, it makes suggestions regarding how to go about identifying and meeting the prevailing needs in electronic information

Koganoormath, M. (1992) studied the communication seeking behavior and communication pattern of engineering faculty of Regional Engineering Colleges in India and revealed that, the engineering teachers need information to perform their respective tasks and they need variety of information which was used mainly in the classrooms and the laboratories. The engineering faculty indicated a need for current, everyday and in-depth information to perform their tasks; the faculty also indicated that their personal contacts or informal communication systems were utilized extensively to obtain information.

VII. GOALS OF THE STUDY

1. To examine ISB of researchers in Central University Libraries.
2. To determine the kind of information by researchers in Central University Libraries.
3. To study the purpose of information seeking by researchers.
4. To explore the use of information technology (IT).

5. To reveal the use of language of reading material, and
6. To study the problems faced by researchers in Central University Libraries while seeking and using information.

VIII.SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the relative importance of various information sources consulted by the users.
2. To discover the principal information needs and resources utilised for obtaining the desired information by the respondents.
3. To ascertain both the strengths and weaknesses of the library collections and services on which they depend.
4. To understand the users awareness of various services offered by the present library system to which they are associated.
5. To find out the nature and degree of constraints experienced in the process of information seeking.
6. To evaluate the existing information environment for the target users and to find out ways and means for the users academic pursuits.
7. To provide the best possible solution to any/of all of those problems so as to make the existing system of the institutions library more meaningful, effective and viable.

IX.HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant difference in the preference of channels or modes of Information, Literature and Communication among the Researchers of various disciplines.

X.METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of study, a pr-ordained structural questionnaire was prepared anticipating the information needs, seeking behaviour and use pattern of the users of Central University Libraries researchers (Ph. D.). A survey method was used for data collection. The whole study is dependent on the questionnaire method only. A total 150 questionnaires on the ISB of research scholars were distributed for each university library. Out of 150, 110 filled in questionnaires were returned by the users with over all response rates of 73%. For diagram construction, Micro soft Office Excel was used instead use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

XI.DATA ANALYSIS

Survey respondents were asked whether they visit library daily/weekly/monthly. As shown in Table 1, the majority of researchers, i.e. 52% visited the library daily, followed by 2-3 times in a week by 39% researchers, 06% visit weekly while 03% visit monthly. It indicates that library is mostly used by the researcher’.

TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY VISITS

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Daily	52	52
2-3 times in a week	39	39
Weekly	06	06
Monthly	03	03
Total	100	100

In response to the purpose of library visit Table 2 indicates that most of the researchers, 30% visit library to study and preparing research, and 20% of the users visit the

library for the purpose of borrowing material, and using e-resources.

TABLE II PURPOSE OF LIBRARY VISIT

Purpose	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Preparing research	20	20
To study	30	30
Borrowing materials	20	20
Using e – resources	30	30
Total	100	100

In response to the method of information seeking Table 3 indicates that research guides (35%), university libraries (30%) and internet (25%) are the most reliable sources for

seeking information, while friends/colleagues constitute 10% information seeking methods.

TABLE III METHODS OF INFORMATION SEEKING

Sources	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Research guide	35	35
University libraries	30	30
Internet	25	25
Friends/colleague	10	10
Total	100	100

For the use of the library sources and services Table 4 indicates that borrowing facility (35%), reference service (30%), and thesis/dissertations (20%) are being utilised

mostly while inter library loan is less utilised by the researchers. Researchers are showing interest in borrowing facility from others.

TABLE IV USE OF THE LIBRARY SOURCES AND SERVICES

Sources	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Borrowing facility	35	35
Reference services	30	30
Thesis/dissertations	20	20
Inter library Loan	15	15
Total	100	100

Table V indicates that to keep up-to-date and preparing researches are the two main purpose of seeking information by the researchers. Writing article and general awareness

are the other purposes of seeking information by the researchers.

TABLE V PURPOSE OF SEEKING INFORMATION

Sources	Respondents	Percentage (%)
To keep up-to-date	72	72
Preparing research	63	63
To write an article	36	36
General awareness	27	27

In regard to document searched for information seeking Table 6 show that OPAC is an important facility and document searching method employed by researchers with a support of 72% respondents while there is no use of print

catalogue cards in the libraries. OPAC a fast, efficient and prompt searching system with combination searching (AND, OR, NOT) is the main reason for being used mostly.

TABLE VI DOCUMENT SEARCHING

Services	Yes	No
OPAC	72	28
Print card catalogue	05	95

Table VII indicates the problems faced during library visit. A total of 25% researchers found that libraries has

lack of information materials according to their need, 36% researchers do not know how to access e-resources, 20%

researchers do not know how to search a document or any other material in library, 10% researchers face the problem that library opening hours are not sufficient, 10% researchers are not familiar with OPAC and 5% researchers comment that library staff are not helping them. On the

basis of above finding a collection development policy, recruitment of the library staff and user awareness programmes are necessary for the maximum utilisation of libraries.

TABLE VII PROBLEMS FACED IN USING LIBRARY

Problem	Respondents	In Percentage (%)
Lack of latest information materials	25	25
Do not know how to use e – resources	36	36
Lack of knowledge of how to use library	20	20
Lack of time	10	10
Do not know how to use OPAC	10	10
Library staff not supporting	05	05

In the way of rate the libraries Table 8 shows that researchers are mostly satisfied with library facilities like OPAC, reference section, reading room facility, borrowing

facility, etc. Researchers are very happy of all the following services and behaviour of the library staff.

TABLE VIII RATE YOUR LIBRARIES

Services	Very adequately	Adequately	Inadequately	No response
OPAC	54	30	06	10
Reference section	30	40	20	10
Print journals	25	25	35	15
Collection books	50	40	05	05
E-resources/database	40	30	20	10
Computer for e-resources	30	30	30	10
Reading room	35	35	35	05
Behaviour of the library staff	70	20	05	05
Shelving of the books	72	25	01	02
Reprography services	63	27	09	01
Borrowing facility	85	10	03	02

Table IX indicates that the main reason of less utilization of e-resources is that the researchers found these less useful according to their need. There is no satisfactory use of digitised e-books and documentary delivery services

especially by the researchers and less use of CD ROM. There is a necessity to create awareness among the researchers to use e-resources at maximum.

TABLE IX USE OF E – RESOURCES

E-Resources	Most	Some	Never	No response
E-Journals (UGC INFONET)	25	55	15	05
E-journals (University Subscription)	20	50	20	10
E-books	15	35	40	10
Document delivery services (though JCCC post)	10	25	50	25
CD ROM	10	20	60	10

XII.CONCLUSION

The ICT is emerging in libraries services day to day and the professionals need to improve their skills to serve the users. There is a need for library automation, and a shift towards electronic information seeking is visible, which implies that ICT has an impact on the ISB of the academics. It is high time for libraries to reach to their users. Technology oriented user orientation system should be implemented by libraries so that the users at their own convenience will get a chance to inform about each and every service and resources of the library. In this study 100 researchers were surveyed as Central University Libraries Users.

This study investigates that IT based library services are being more utilised by the researchers compared with print sources. Researchers use a Variety of information sources for their research. Books and e-journals are considered mostly. Although researchers accept that libraries provide them with effective and useful services. ISB differs from one discipline to another. After implementing some recommendations, the library system of Central University Libraries might be capable of handling the collection of information according to the need and demands of the researchers.

XIII.SUGGESTIONS

The suggestions that have been recommended by the researchers are as follows: (i). need of advance training for researchers, (ii).use of library sources should be included in research curriculum, (iii).need of orientation programmes or periodically training programmes by the library staff, (iv). in library handling of technology, computers, network should be developed, (v).access of e-resources should be available at hostels through local network, (vi).need to concentrate on proper book shelving and preservation, (vii).ILL through document delivery services should be increased, and (viii).need to examine the possible future development of libraries.

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