

Information Needs and Information seeking behavior of Farmers through modern technologies and usage of social networking

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ABSTRACT

Information has been a very important element in the development of human society. It has shaped the way in which people think and act. All human beings to take decisions in their routine lives and to get the positive result out of it use information. Therefore the Need for right information at the right time is of utmost importance. All the human activities are directed towards information-producing and information-consuming practices

1. Introduction

Information seeking and use is a major topic in Library and information Science Research. Research on information seeking and use by Agricultural Farmers has been applied to a variety of disciplines such as law, education, medical science and engineering. We are living in the so-called 'information society' or 'information age' where information is one of the most important factors of life. Today, every person needs a variety of information in his day-to-day life, to make the simplest of decisions. Modern society generates huge amounts of information by using different tools and media and this in turn gets consumed by the society.

Information has become the central focus in the new dimensions and spheres of Telecommunication, Television, Telemetric, Computers, Publishing firms, Radio, Satellite Communication etc. Those people who are engaged in Agriculture, Industry, Research and Development, Bureaucracy, Journalism and Entertainment are running after information. They collect, process, store, disseminate and use information in several forms for different purposes. If human society is marching towards development and progress, it is only due to information. Information has tremendous impact on society in all the walks of life.

Information has become an ingredient of man's life cycle to such an extent that there can be no life in the modern society without information. Information is the input of knowledge and is always received through the senses. "Information is the product of the human brain in action. It may be abstract or concrete. When an individual begins to think a variety of images and sensations flash across his mind. This makes some information to accumulate in his mind and his memory retains some pieces of knowledge".

"The crucial role that information plays can be gauged from the vast areas of human activities in which it finds applications that include: growth of knowledge and wisdom, decision making and management. Human progress has become possible because of the existence and awareness of knowledge created by the past generations, cultures and

societies. The base of knowledge is information. Information, which is the result of a meaningful response to a stimulus, when correlated, synthesized and stratified during the course of time, becomes knowledge. Knowledge applied and tested over a long period of time by a continuous stream of minds resulting in its acceptance, as truth becomes wisdom. Thus wisdom is a part of human heritage".

Information is a concept of great richness. Accurate, useful and timely information on new products, new process, new patents and standards and research in progress are essential for today's competitions. Information enables man to perform his day-to-day duties. There is no life in the modern society without information.

2. Information Literacy

The Study understands the background thinking about the origin, evolution and implications of information of, information literacy over the society. Today's society is modern society called as the information society in which literacy skills are quite essential characteristics of every member of such society.

The National Forum on Information Literacy, defines information Literacy as "the ability of know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use that Information for the issue or problem at hand"¹. The term "Information Literacy" refers the set of skills required to identify information sources, access to information, evaluating it and using it effectively, efficiently and ethically. According to Karisiddappa "Information may be a single fact or it may be a whole cluster of facts; but still it is a unit; it is a unit of thought. It can have any dimensions, it is that intellectual entity which we receive the block of knowledge."² Further, we receive information is the peoples' messages, ideas and practices about different needs care implies knowledge about the basic common issues.

Today every person needs a variety of information in his day-to-day life, to make the simple decision. Modern society generates huge amount of information by using different tools and media and this in turn gets consumed by the society.

Information is one of the several basic resources that is needed and utilized by human beings for their development and prosperity. It is a dynamic, vast and exhaustive resource that affects all disciplines and all peoples.

Information is scattered in the every corner of our society. Different types of information are scattered in different social institutions like educational institutions, commercial institutions, libraries, museums and everywhere. Besides this, enormous information is now available on online, through World Wide Web (www) and information on web is doubling in every second. Perhaps some information also comes to individuals in unfiltered forms. These information exploration situations are seriously a new challenge for individuals. Information literacy among the man is essential to obtain right information for the use is right purpose.

Basic Principles of Information Literacy:

The following are the basic principles of information literacy,

- a. An individual have such skills to know when he / she needs information and where to locate it effectively and efficiently.
- b. Through information literacy an individual is well equipped by the technological skill which is needed to use the modern libraries as a gateway to information.
- c. Ability to individual to analyze and evaluate the information he / she obtain.
- d. Having confidence in using information to make a decision or create a product.

Thus, it is the first base of thinking about information literacy skills and its objectives of the background source for this entitled study.

3. Library as the means of storing knowledge and dissemination

Libraries are a common heritage as then are the repositories of knowledge about human history, its development and diversity. These are the treasures and treated as a gift from one generation to another. From the past and ancient times, the building and setting up of libraries have been a measure of civilizational progress. Across the world, libraries have contributed to providing people with opportunities for gaining knowledge and for promoting intellectual advancement.

Modern society is considered as information consciousness is wide spread now is referred is the modern society. In this regard, information society is going to be treated libraries as modal points of local information dissemination.

Literacy is one of the main places on which cultural, said and economic development of the country depends. In a country like India, public libraries have responsibilities to increase the humble of literate and educated people through appropriate programmes. Libraries can also provide a solid based to the national literacy mission. There are enough cases of people shipping back to illiteracy for want of reading

material; therefore, over libraries has act as tools for sustaining literacy in the country.

As the familiarity of understanding the role of libraries is considered as a source of preservation of knowledge, the development of any information study is depending upon the historical development of libraries. Therefore, the functioning of the libraries in communicating the source of knowledge is the second important component of this present study.

4. Information seeking behavior

Different human beings seek information from different sources and in different formats for undertaking various responsibilities and tasks. It requires them to seek information for altering goals and objectives in education, economy, politics, social activities etc. For eg, student and teachers in the field of education, need information for gaining more knowledge by using different tools and media. Wilson T.D. (1999)³ has defined information behavior as "the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and challenges of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use". Further, it is the "micro-level" of behaviour used by the searcher in interacting with information systems of all kinds. Behave In this regard, the "behavioural characteristics of information seeking which describes the activities of the information seeker engaged in the 'active search' mode of information seeking.

The nature of information access to the needs, seeking behaviour patterns would be determined by the individuals' work activities. As the result the information access varies from person to person according to their needs. The information and information seeking behaviour an individuals' way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating and development would be determined by some of the factors like the personal attitudes, the kinds of information being sought and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought⁴. Similarly there are other factors which determine the information seeking behaviour of an individual or a group of individuals such as the purpose for which information is being required, the environment in which the user operates, users skills in identifying the information and sources preferred for acquiring the needed information.

As there is a nexus between the information gathered about the particular item and the theoretical models developed by the information seeking behaviour and is this "Information need upon the need of understanding these theoretical perspectives used by behavioural seeking studies in the use of present information study.

5. ICT as the Quick Means of Disseminating Information

CT comprises a diverse set of technological tools and resources to create, disseminate, store and manage data and information⁵. Traditional ICT tools eg, T.V., Radio and telephone have already established their credibility and effectiveness in promoting the developmental schemes in rural and marginalized areas. The modern ICT tools are computers, internet, and wireless technologies along with powerful software which can process and integrate sound, text and video into electronic media.

The world wide electronic network of computers, popularly referred as internet and wireless telephony have generated an unprecedented global flow of information, people, products, capital and ideas with the emergence of digital communication technologies, internet carries pictures, drawings, moving images, sound and text altogether.

With regard to the impact of ICT on Rural Empowerment that it has opened the door for outsourcing without changing the geography. These new outsourcing opportunities create employment, generate income and enable poorer country to participate in the global market in a similar way, ICT provides a dynamic way to connect people with their government and access information easily, efficiently and cost effectively.

As it has been aptly quoted is one of the verses of Francis Bacon. That,

"Where is knowledge?
It is lost in wisdom
Where is wisdom?
It is lost in information."

This quote implies the answer to the question that who is the richest person in this modern age? It is not the wise, talented and intellectual but it is the informant one considered as the richest person in this modern age. In this age of Information Communication Technology (ICT), now the poverty is assessed in information terms rather than in economic terms. It is believed that a well informed citizenry can exercise its rights to carry out its responsibilities in a better way and that is turn can enhance their income level too⁶. In our country the economic and social structure is so rigidly interlinked that no single formula for poverty for poverty reduction can be evolved.

It has to be an integrated approach enabled to address the social, economic, religious and political factors responsible to cause and perpetrate poverty. In brief, timely access of information and knowledge resources, can change the face of our poor living in rural, isolated and under privileged regions⁷.

Thus, to some extent the efficacy of poverty reduction work depends on poor people's ability to empower themselves, to access information and knowledge resources through which they would be able to analyze the situation, learn necessary skills and participate in equal economic opportunities without changing their geographical boundaries.

6. ICT Evolution and Its significances

Due to rapid evolution of micro processor technology, the computer power is being doubled in 18 to 24 months while advances in fibre – optical network technologies, doubling the communication power within 6 months (NUDP – 2001a). The technological advances have also drastically reduced the cost of transmitted digital information anywhere in the world and enabling the villagers to gain the benefits of modern ICT.

Since, early 1980's government and non- government agencies are making efforts to generate the awareness about of computers and its potential in rural development. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) was set up and through Computerized Rural Information System Project (CRISP), the

NIC and Rural Development Ministry Collaborated to deploy ICTS in each District Rural Development Agencies: DRDA, (Bhatnagar 2000). The emphasis was given for the implementation of ICT, particularly in social sectors, e.g. Education, health and rural development. ICT has established its utility and significant role in poverty alleviation as experimented worldwide by various development agencies:

- The poverty alleviation strategies have been concerned with improvement in the provision of in credit to enhance small and medicals scale business, effective livelihood and product.
- Modern ICT has to offer in meeting the information communication needs of rural communities in respect to marketing, training programmes, empowerment of women and disadvantaged growth, building self-help network and strong gram root participation⁸.
- ICT can improve the access to health services, micro credit and government services, providing training and education, create direct employment opportunities and provide support to rural poor in production, storage and marketing of farm and non-farm products by providing demand demand-drivers information and services⁹.
- Access to information is the key for building human capabilities. The flow of information and data be available to the people of all clams, carts and regions irrespective of the language they speak for over all property of country and thus, in brief, modern digital ICT has opened up new vistas in the life of poor, rural and disadvantaged and in minimizing rural-urban divide to a minimum.
- In this way, in conclusion, we can say, that technology has dominated all spheres of life. The education and knowledge are the field where, we can see the most influential impact of information technology. Knowledge, education and library are known to be sisters. Over several years, the education process has seen drastic changes in imparting knowledge. Libraries are the effective tools in disseminating knowledge.

7. Social Networking Sites (SNS)

In this modern era social media enable users to generate interpersonal connections based on common grounds. Social networking sites (SNS) Friendster, LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, My Life, You Tube, Wikipedia have been set up personal communities, allow users to make comments on the profiles of their friends and send private messages¹⁰. So Social networking sites SNS are being used regularly by millions of people because of this, the impact of SNS is increased. It is a modern communication channel through which people are connected to share with others experiences, ideas, messages, pictures and information of interest¹¹. In the modern age social networking sites are boon for the internet users. Many marketing companies, organizations, etc. are using social networking sites to promote their products and services. Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within bounded systems¹².

The social networking is a platform to build social relations or social network among people who like to share activities, backgrounds, interests of real life. According to the computing Dictionary; "Social networking site on any website is designed

to allow multiple users to publish contents of them. The information may be on any subject and may be for consumption by friends, mates, employers, employees just to mention a few.

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