

# Information Seeking Behaviour of Library Science Students in Rani Channamma University Belagavi: A Study

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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 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.

## 1. Introduction

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". All the human activities are directed towards information-producing and information-consuming practices. 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.

"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.

### Definitions of Information needs

According to Dervin and Nilan 'information need' has been defined as a state of needing anything the researcher called information. Almost without exception 'information needs' have not been defined as what users think they need, but rather in terms that designate what it is in the information system that is needed. The definitions have not focused on what is missing for users but rather on what the system possesses.

According to Guha "information need is referred to a composite concept of different types of requirements and approaches to information. Information need is defined as "a function to extrinsic uncertainty produced by a perceived discrepancy between the individual's current levels of certainty about important environmental objects and criterion state he seeks to achieve"

According to Deer (1983) "Information need is a condition in which certain information contributes to the achievement of genuine or legitimate information purpose whereas Marquis and Allen suggest that information use is a behavior and date are collected on any behavior by asking people about it by observing its occurrence, or examining its artifacts (e.g., documents). Brooks (1979) considers information needs as Anomalous state of Knowledge (ASK), and it is often difficult to articulate ASK of users. Shineborne (1980) affirms that what even an individual needs or asks for, it is impossible to know in advance which text or set of text will in fact (fulfill the requirement of the person) suit states that it is 'psychological statement which seeks to be relinquished through commodities which can be object or being'. In fact, Need; Demand; Wants; and Requirements are psychological concepts. Therefore, for better conceptual clarity these need to be properly comprehended. Crawford (1978) states that it involves cognitive process, which may operate on different levels of conscious and hence may not be clear to the inquirer; In the present context, information is a commodity, which is used to satisfy the need; therefore, the concept of needs should be

properly conceptualized and understood before further discussion on the subject.

### **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 attaining goals and objectives in education, economy, politics, social activities etc. for eg. Students and teachers in the field of education need information for gaining more knowledge by using different tools and media. Wilson T.D (1999) has defined information seeking behavior as "the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information including both active and passive information seeking and information use", further; it is the "micro-level" with behavior used by the searching interacting with information systems of all kinds. In this regard, the "behavioral characteristics" of information seeking which describes the activities of the information seekers engaged in the 'active search' mode of information seeking.

The nature of information access to the needs, seeking behavior pattern 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 behavior as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating and development would be determined by some of the factors the kinds of information like the personal attitudes, the kind of information being sought and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought. Similarly there are other factors which determine the information seeking behavior of an individual or a group of individuals such as the purpose for which information is being required, the environment in which the users, operates, users skill in identifying the information and sources preferred for acquiring the needed information.

### **2. Need of the study**

The nature of information is not easy to describe. Perhaps the most explicit definition in the literature defines information as recorded experience that is used in decision-making. Today, information technology has developed rapidly and has had a huge impact on access to information and on information seeking behavior. The librarian and library-staff have to know and examine the criteria of information seeking and information utility by users for providing information services, designing new information systems, intervening in the operation of existing systems, or planning service programs.

The present human society is living in an information age and as a consequence, man has become more and more information conscious. More and more people deliberately and consciously seek information and it has become an integral part of human activity especially in the area of education, research and development, production and marketing of goods, all of which have contributed to the improvement of the quality of life. World War I and II accelerated research and development activities resulting in information explosion. The information so produced is recorded and reported in a variety of documents-printed and non- printed documents. The information explosion

coupled with multiplicity of documents has created problems to the generators, users, and the organizers of information.

The users of information are finding difficulty in identifying and physically locating the relevant information at the time when it is required. In this context, the libraries, being the reservoirs of knowledge and the centers of learning, have a greater responsibility in providing the right information to the right user at the right time, in the right form so that the information will be put to maximum use, thereby promoting the use of information. To achieve this, the Libraries/Information Centers need to be planned and designed based on the needs and requirements of the users of libraries.

### **School of Applied Science, Rani Channamma University: A Profile**

Rani Channamma University (RCU) was established in 2010 has 6 Schools comprising 18 departments, 382 affiliated colleges. School of Applied Sciences comprised two departments namely Department of Library Science and Department of Geography. Department of Library and Information Science was created in 2011.

### **3. Objectives of the study**

1. To identify the information need of surveyed respondents.
2. To find out the frequency of library visit by the surveyed respondents.
3. To identify the use behavior pattern of surveyed respondents.
4. To identify the purpose of library visits by the respondents.
5. To find out the mode of accessing the information services provided by the library

### **4. Methods of Data Collection**

The questionnaires were distributed to the users personally and were collected from them. Some of the questionnaires were filled up by the researcher when the respondents were providing answers to the questions. The doubts raised by the respondents were clarified by the researcher. Every effort was made by the researcher to get reliable data from respondents.

### **5. Limitations of the study**

The study is limited to the Information needs and information seeking behavior of post graduate students of Library and Information Science students.

### **6. Data Analysis**

An attempt has been made to analyze the research data collected from students from Library and Information Science and interpret the results revealing their information seeking behavior that provides valuable source of information to the library managers and planners in designing and developing a suitable strategy in promoting the better use of valuable information sources including electronic format and thus justifying the cost effectiveness of library efforts.

### **7. Results and Discussion**

The results of the user observations, questionnaire schedule, interviews and participatory design sessions provide a rich description of how information seekers use various information sources, searching methods employed in obtaining desired information and problems of not using information resources, if any.

The research study is confined to Post Graduate students of Library and Information Science. The departments of the university have been broadly classified under major disciplines representing School of Applied Sciences. Semester-wise distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Semester-wise Distribution of Respondents**

Semester	Students	%
First	15	53.57
Third	13	46.43
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

The above Table No.1 shows that 53.57% of students from First semester and 46.43% of students from Third semester.

#### **Frequency of use of library:**

Library and Information Centre is a knowledge bank considered to be the heart of the university enriched with variety of information sources and services in print and electronic format to support learning, teaching and research. Attempts were made to understand the habit of using the library by the Post Graduate students in Library and Information Science in Rani Channamma university.

Table 2 showing the frequency of visits to the library.

**Table 2: Frequency of Using Library by Respondents**

Frequency of Visit	No. of Respondents	Percent
Every day	18	64.28
Alternate day	07	25
Once in a week	02	7.15
Occasionally	01	3.57
Do not use library	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

It is clear from the Table 2 that, all the respondents of the study i.e. Post Graduate students of Library science in the habit of using the library. Among them, about 64.28% of respondents visit the library everyday, 25% of respondents visit the library every alternate day, 7.5% of respondents visit once in a week, 3.57% of respondents visit the library occasionally.

#### **Purpose of using library**

Library should be viewed as an integral part and parcel of every academician to encourage, motivate and support not only learning and research but also to develop ideal citizens of the country. Thus, the purpose of visiting the library is equally important for optimization of respondents' knowledge to support their educational endeavor. Table 3 shows the

purpose of seeking information by the respondents of the study.

**Table 3: Purpose of Using Library**

Purpose	No. of Respondents	%
Preparing for examination	9	32.14
Preparing for project work	5	17.86
For competitive examination	2	7.14
Preparing for Dissertation work	3	10.71
Preparing Notes	8	28.57
General Reading	1	3.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

It is noted from the Table 3 that, about 32.14% of respondents' purpose of visiting the library is preparing for examinations. This is followed by respondents using the library to prepare for preparing for notes (28.57%). About 17.86% of respondents use the library to prepare project work and preparing Dissertation work (10.71%). Least of the respondents are preparing for competitive exam (7.14%) and general reading (3.58%). Thus general tendency for visiting the library by the students is to prepare

**Table 4: Need for Instruction/Guidance for Using Various Information Sources**

Instructions	No. of Respondents	%
Agree	16	57.15
Strongly Agree	06	21.43
Neutral	03	10.71
Disagree	01	3.57
Strongly Disagree	02	7.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

It is clear from the Table 4 that, 57.15% and 21.43% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they need instruction on how to use information sources in their subject areas for more effective use of the library. While 10.71% of respondents are neutral in their attitude towards need for instruction on using information sources in their subject areas and very less number of respondents disagree for undertaking instructions in using the library resources. Thus, most of the respondents of the study opined the need for instruction on using information sources in their subject areas.

## **8. Conclusion**

The central role of the library profession remains the same, but methods and tools for information storage and retrieval continue to grow and change dramatically. Libraries must understand information-seeking behavior of users to re-engineer their services and provide information efficiently. The results of this study reveal users who are more or less satisfied with library collections and services, but who want training in the use of online information. Although document delivery service is being provided on demand, the researchers pointed

out that it would be worthwhile if the library could provide them with indexing, abstracting, and interlibrary loan service as well.

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