Full Length Research Paper

Literature searching pattern of the Faculty of Sri Sarada College for Women

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Information use pattern is one of the important areas in user studies. The motives of users give rise to information needs and requirements. To quench the thirst for information, users adopt numerous ways and means to access the various channels of information. Research on the study of information needs and information gathering habits of a particular community will assist an information center more effectively in developing programmes and making optimum use of resources. The studies on the information needs of a particular institution user groups are aimed at improving the performance of an institution information system, so as to provide the better information services. Information seeking behaviour studies are potentially useful in bridging the gap between the kind of information services needed, the kind of information which exists, and how information services should be used. Studies reported in the review of literature reveal that different types of user populations used different study techniques depending on the subject. This study is an attempt to understand the user needs and information seeking behaviour of the faculty of Sri Sarada College for Women in Salem.

Key words: Information needs, information seeking behaviour, library resources.

INTRODUCTION

Information has always been about connecting individuals to others who share an interest. Over the past decade, not so much information has changed dramatically as is the case with delivery technology, user population and users‟ expectations. The user is the key in any library. Understanding the user is half the battle in providing information services. The user is not only the most important aspect, but is also a dynamic component of the library. It is necessary to know the information needs, the motives and purposes of seeking information, ways and means of gathering information and the entire user-attitudes and practices in relation to information. The users many seek information in a number of ways like reading books, browsing periodicals, consulting abstracting and indexing journals, contacting colleagues and friends, seeking information from guides or workers, gathering information from library and information centers, seminars, conferences, etc. User studies are to be recognized as an important part of the information packages. This study explains the terms „information‟, „information needs‟, „Information seeking behaviour‟ and the „the user‟, and then goes on to find out user needs with regard to type of information and the purpose of the use.

INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Information needs

The concept of „information needs‟ has proved to be an exclusive one and difficulty to define. What initiates the information seeking-need is that, it has received more attention from researchers than definition of information itself. The topic, unfortunately, is also approached from such a variety of prospective that no single definition (or conceptual construct) exists. In general, the literature falls into two broad categories: some studies attempt to

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determine the nature of the need, while others attempt to distinguish between levels of perception.

The term has been used in a variety of ways. Needs, demands and wants have been used interchangeable, although, they may not be identical. Need is further complicated by the necessity to disguise among expressed, unexpressed or unfelt needs.

Definition and meaning

Dervin and Nilan (1986) described information need as a gap in individual"s knowledge in sense-making situation. Kuhlthau (1993) described the information need, which is often understood in information science "as evolving from a vague awareness of something missing and as culminating in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning". From the aforementioned definitions the following inferences could be derived:

1. Information need" is often a vague concept.
2. It is subjective, a relative concept existing in the experienced individuals.
3. It changes over a period of time and varies from person to person, profession to profession, and from institution to institution.

Information seeking behaviour

Information seeking behaviour is the human behaviour with respect to searching various sources, channels including the use of that information. The terms information seeking behaviour and information searching behaviour are synonymous terms:

1. Information seeking behaviour is mainly concerned with who needs what kind of information.
2. It is an activity of an individual in pursuit of information.
3. It is closely related to the personal characteristics and traits of the users.

Taylor (1991) defines information seeking behaviour as the product of certain elements of the information user environment. The elements are:

1. The assumption formally learned or not, made by a defined set of people concerning the nature of their work.
2. The kinds and structure of the problems deemed important and typical by this set of people.

Proposed research

Information use pattern is one of the important areas in user studies. The motives of users give rise to information needs and requirements. To quench the thirst

for information, users adopt numerous ways and means to access the various channels of information. To satisfy an information need, users adopt numerous ways and means to access the various channels of information. The studies on information needs of a particular institution user group are aimed at improving the performance of an institution information system, so as to provide the better information services.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Manorama and Prasad (2001) analyzed the information seeking behaviour of scientists in physical sciences and social sciences; Ashu and Kaushik (2002) investigated social scientists working in the universities located in Haryana. Both found that the qualifications, teaching experience and status do not have any effect on the visits to the library.

The theory of information seeking behaviour has been explained by Mahapatra and Panda (2001) which provided an insight into the myriad miens of information seeking behaviour such as the concept itself, associated psychological attributes, behavioural options and ecological influence, impact of dissonance theory, and other different methods and categories of information seeking.

Objectives

The study has been conducted with the following objectives:

1. To identify the information gathering pattern of the Faculty of Sri Sarada College for Women.
2. To analyse the most frequently sought sources of information by the Faculty of this college.
3. To identify the various channels of information used by the Faculty in information seeking behaviour.
4. To analyse the extent of use and dependence on various sources of information for study.

Hypothesis

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses were framed:

1. The Faculty of this college depends mostly on the College Library.
2. The Faculty is satisfied with the resources and services of the library.
3. The Faculty avails themselves of, and depends upon, more than one channel of information sources.
4. There exists heterogeneity in the motives for information collection by the faculty.

Table 1. Qualification of respondents.

Qualifications	Name of the department													Total	%
	Commerce	History	Economics	English	Tamil	Mathematics	Statistics	Physics	Chemistry	Botany	Zoology	Homescience	Computerscience		
PG with M.Phil	5	8	3	14	7	5	3	8	9	3	4	3	3	75	73.53
PG with Ph.D	4	1	4	1	3	6	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	27	26.47
Total	9	9	7	15	10	11	4	9	10	5	5	4	4	102	100

Table 2. Frequencies of library visit.

Frequency of library Visit	Name of the Department													Total	%
	Commerce	History	Economics	English	Tamil	Mathematics	Statistics	Physics	Chemistry	Botany	Zoology	Home science	Computerscience		
Everyday Once	4	6	4	9	5	7	3	4	6	3	3	2	3	58	56.86
in a week	3	2	2	4	3	2	-	2	4	1	2	-	1	26	25.49
More than once in a week	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	-	1	-	2	-	16	15.69
Once in a	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.96
month Total	9	9	7	15	10	11	4	9	10	5	5	4	4	102100	

5. Differences exist in the degree of relevance and dependence in the nature and type of information sought by the faculty.

METHODOLOGY

„Methodology is known as the means, techniques, and frames of reference by which researchers approach and carry out inquiry". The methodology is viewed as the essence of scientific investigation.

To identify the information seeking behaviour, the questionnaire method is adopted. The questionnaire has been carefully designed with great deal of thought went into its general structure, the order of questions and the wording of individual questions. Every question has been designed to obtain pin-point information on a specific point considered to be relevant to this study. The questionnaires were distributed and collected personally from the staff.

Before initiating the study, a pilot study was conducted with a same questionnaire for a population of about ten. Based on their response the questionnaire was revised and finalized.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the number of faculty members who responded to the questionnaire. Out of 102, 75 members, or 73.53%, have a post graduate degree (M.Phil). Out of 102, 27 members, or 26.47%, have a post graduate degree (Ph.D) in their subject area. The results show that 100% of the participating faculties have research experience their subject area.

The findings of the study are given thus. Table 2 shows that out of 102 faculty respondents, 56.86% visit their college library every day. 25.49% visit library more once in a week. 15.69% of the respondents visit library more than once in a week. 1.96% visit library once in a month. No one visit occasionally. It is resulted that all were having the tendency to visit and collect the information from their library for use.

In Table 3 it is found that, out of 102, the entire faculty preferred their 1st choice of services as loan of books, current awareness services, selective dissemination of

Table 3. Use of library services**.**

S/no.	Library services	Most frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Not used
1.	Loan of books	102/100	--	--	--
2.	Reference service	13/(12.75)	89/(87.25)	--	--
3.	Bibliographical service	10/(9.8)	17/(16.60)	65/(63.73)	10/(9.8)
4.	Current awareness service	102/(100)	--	--	--
5.	Selective dissemination of information	102/(100)	--	--	--
6.	Inter library loan	2/(1.96)	15/(14.71)	85/(83.3)	--
7.	Reprographic service	102/(100)	--	--	--
8.	Periodical circulation	27/(26.47)	15/(14.71)	60/(58.82)	--
9.	Abstracting and indexing services	2/(1.96)	7/(6.8)	10/(9.8)	83/(81.37)
10.	Internet services	88/(86.27)	12/(11.76)	2/(1.96)	--

Table 4. Dependence on information resources by type.

S/no.	Formal sources of information	High dependence	Frequent dependence	Occasional dependence	No dependence
1.	Books	102/(100)	--	--	--
2.	Hand books/reference books	10/(9.80)	88/(86.27)	4/(3.92)	--
3.	Conference proceedings	8/(7.84)	25/(24.51)	69/(67.65)	--
4.	Theses and dissertations	2/(1.96)	15/(14.71)	25/(24.51)	60/(58.82)
5.	Periodicals	80/(78.43)	6/(5.88)	12/(11.76)	4/(3.92)
6.	Research and development reports	100/(98.04)	2/(1.96)	--	--
7.	Official publication of CSIR/ICAR/DST	10/(9.80)	20/(19.61)	4/(3.92)	68/(66.66)
8.	Abstracting and indexing periodicals	35/(34.31)	29/(28.43)	19/(18.63)	19/(18.63)
9.	Standards and preprints	21/(20.58)	18/(17.65)	26/(25.49)	37/(36.27)

information, and reprographic services and they also preferred most frequently used these services. 86.27% of the staff members used internet services most frequently; 11.76% used them frequently; and 1.96% used them occasionally. From the aforementioned, Table 4 shows

Out of 102 faculty members, all responded that they prefer to use yearbooks as showed in Table 5. 98.04% of the faculty responding required information about current developments. 0.98% of the staff required information about current developments frequently, and the same percentage required it occasionally.

To seek information on motivation, a four point scale was used to collect information. The Table 6 shows that out of 102 faculty members, all were strongly motivated by the pleasure of doing good work, self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction. 96.08% of the faculty cited preparation for class teaching as their strongest motivation; 1.96% cited class preparation as a fair motivator, and the same percentage cited it as an average motivator.

To get the relevant bibliographical references the staff members are ranked and used in a four points scale for their order of preferences. Table 7 shows that all participating faculty preferred to use the latest addition list of the library, browsing on the Internet, and consulting

that 102 members depend on the source of books as the major dependents. 98.04% respondents highly preferred research and developments reports and 1.96% of the staff were dependent on the theses and dissertations.

library staff as their first choices. Regarding citations from books, reports, and articles, 88.24% of the respondents used these most frequently and 1.96% of the respondents preferred not to use.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The study noticed that all respondents had a tendency to visit the library. The library should have sufficient space with the latest additions and required documents to encourage the users to visit regularly.
2. Since it was found that the respondents have direct a influence on the motivational factors for information seeking behaviour, it is recommended that the college create a conducive environment that promotes more refined information research processes. Management should provide necessary incentives for the research output produced by the Faculty Members.

Table 5. Information resources required by the faculty members.

S/no.	Type of Information	Highly required	Frequently required	Occasionally required	Not required
1	India year book	102/100%	--	--	--
2	Basic scientific and technical information	85/(83.3)	10/(9.8)	7/(6.8)	--
3	Methods, process and procedures	90/(88.23)	7/(6.8)	5/(4.9)	--
4	Experimental design	60/(58.82)	10/(9.8)	20/(19.61)	12/(11.76)
5	Product material: equipment and apparatus know-how	92/(90.19)	4/(3.92)	2/(1.96)	4/(3.92)
6	Information about current development	100/(98.04)	1/(0.98)	1/(0.98)	--
7	Computer program and model building	60/(58.82)	20/(19.61)	15/(14.71)	7/(6.8)
8	Statistical data	83/(81.37)	16/(15.69)	1/(0.98)	2/(1.96)
9	Health and safety information	98/(96.08)	2/(1.96)	1/(0.98)	1/(0.98)
10	Information about govt. decision on S and T policy of funding	80/(78.43)	17/(16.66)	1/(0.98)	4/(3.92)
		850/1020	87/1020	53/1020	30/1020

Table 6. Motivation to seek and collect information.

S/no.	Motivation to seek and collect Information	Strongest motivator	Fair motivator	Average motivator	No motivator
1.	To prepare for class teaching	98/(96.08)	2/(1.96)	2/(1.96)	--
2.	To guide students projects	80/(78.43)	12/(11.76)	8/(7.84)	2/(1.96)
3.	General awareness for new knowledge	88/(86.27)	11/(10.78)	3/(2.94)	--
4.	For participation in seminars/ conference etc.	62/(60.78)	20/(19.61)	2/(1.96)	18/(17.65)
5.	To increase promotional opportunities	74/(72.55)	18/(17.65)	8/(7.84)	2/(1.96)
6.	To write and publish papers	27/(26.47)	23/(22.55)	4/(3.92)	--
7.	To setup question papers	76/(74.51)	20/(19.61)	6/(5.88)	--
8.	To check and evaluate results	23/(22.55)	15/(14.71)	2/(1.96)	--
9.	To know the information about Govt. decision	45/(44.12)	12/(11.76)	6/(5.88)	--
10.	For pleasure of doing good work self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction	102/(100)	--	--	--
		675/1020	133/1020	41/1020	22/1020

Table 7. Method used to get relevant bibliographic references.

S/no.	Sources of Information	Most frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Not used
1.	Library catalogues/OPACS	20/(19.61)	18/(17.65)	60/(58.82)	--
2.	Abstracting and indexing periodicals	23/(22.55)	20/(19.61)	50/(49.02)	--
3.	Reference from bibliographies and review of literature	15/(14.71)	10/(9.8)	35/(34.31)	10/(9.8)
4.	Latest addition list of a library	102/(100)	--	--	--
5.	Citations from books, reports, articles	90/(88.24)	12/(11.76)	--	--
6.	Browsing in library shelves	88/(86.27)	8/(7.84)	4/(3.92)	2/(1.96)
7.	Browsing in book shops	60/(58.82)	20/(19.61)	13/(12.75)	9/(6.82)
8.	Browsing on the Internet	102/(100)	--	--	--
9.	Consulting specialists in the field	68/(66.66)	12/(11.76)	14/(13.73)	6/(5.88)
10.	Consulting library staff	102/(100)	--	--	--
11.	Consulting colleagues and fellow professionals	25/(24.51)	35/(34.31)	15/(14.71)	27/(26.47)

3. The majority of the respondents expressed the desire that their department library be networked with the college library.

4. Reprographic service should be improved, and delay in getting copies should be avoided. It is suggested that a separate Xerox machine be purchased for exclusive use by faculty members.

5. Finally, the library should be automated and interlinked with all departments to facilitate access and retrieval of information, and a web OPAC should be installed so faculty can connect nationally and internationally to access nascent information.

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