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## **Information Seeking Behavior of Undergraduate Students of Senior Colleges: A Study**

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#### **1. Introduction:**

Library is recognized as an important social institution where every user can seek different kinds of information to strengthen their academic assignments. "Information is data that has been processed into a form that is meaningful to the recipient and is of real perceived value in current or prospective decisions."<sup>1</sup> In a college scenario information services should be designed in such a way that right information reached to the right person at the right time at a reasonable cost and hence there is need to know information seeking behavior patterns, capability of assimilation of information and application of information required by different categories of undergraduate readers.

Information seeking behavior refers to the way people search for and utilize the information. The term was first coined by Thomas D. Wilson. It is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control over the afferent and efferent actions of the information seekers. Information seeking behavior resulted from the recognition of some needs,

perceived by the user, who as a consequence which makes demand upon on formal system such as libraries and information centers, or some other person in order to satisfy the perceived information needs from the bundle of information sources.

Information is an essential need of the reader. Information is required by individuals for basic leadership and for financial advancement. The task of information seeking conducted in information science can extensively be characterized as that which is worried about deciding client's information needs, ensuring utilization of information. Information necessities in information framework plan to get right book to right reader at right time.

## **2. Literature Review:**

A literature review is a critical and in depth evaluation of previous research. It is a summary and synopsis of particular area of research published on a particular subject area within a certain time period. It also indicates suitable methods and techniques employed for data collection in the selected area of research that helps in identifying and recording the significance of the study. The review of literature for the present study is discussed below.

Bakewell, K.G.B<sup>2</sup> (1987) published an article to know the perceived needs of different kinds of users like faculty, Librarians, information workers and students. Chaudhry, Muhammad Ratig<sup>3</sup> (1994) taken a project named "User services at the KFUPM Library, Dhabran Saudi Arabia." which describes the development of collections and services to users, at the king Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals Library, other neighboring libraries and institutions. It all reflects the use of information technology in the libraries for collection development and control activities to the users. Lapp, Erdmute<sup>4</sup> (1996) focuses an approach to a reference, information and training services concept designed to meet

the needs of users of electronic libraries. The approach includes the aspects such as introduction to the library, online training for OPAC searching, searching bibliographic and subject databases finding relevant information on the internet and evaluating of activities etc. Nims, Julia.k<sup>5</sup> (1999) published a research under the title "Marketing library instruction services." which explores designing of products based on user needs and the role of marketing, promotional activities, and public relations in library instructional services, and discussion on some reactions to using these techniques for instruction programs. In the year 2005 Lal, C and Kumar, K<sup>6</sup> published a book entitled "Understanding basics of Library and Information Science" focused on the information services, CAS, SDI, Indexing and Abstracting services, Bibliographical services and literature searching are described. In the year 2006 Li, Lili<sup>7</sup> published a paper titled "Leveraging quality web-based library user services in the digital age". The purpose of this paper is to explore key issues involved with opportunities, challenges, and future developing trends of delivering dynamic and distributed web-based academic library information resources, services and instructions for library users in the digital age. Oluwaseye, A. J<sup>8</sup> (2014) investigated information needs and information seeking behavior of undergraduates in Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo Nigeria. The aim was to determine undergraduate students' academic information needs and seeking behavior to establish the problems encountered in the process of information seeking and suggest strategies for developing healthy information seeking behavior. Igbinovia, M.O., & Ikenwe, I.I. C<sup>9</sup> (2014) suggests that academic librarians can play a major role in achieving the objectives of tertiary institutions, centered on learning, teaching and research areas. The study examined the information seeking behavior of academic librarians in John Harris Library, Uniben (Federal), Ambrose Alli University

library(state) and Auchu Polytechnic library, Edo state, Nigeria. Wu, D., Dang, W., He, D., & Bi, R (2017)<sup>10</sup> in their study investigates whether information-seeking behavior models and theories obtained in previous research are applicable to more complex tasks or not? It also aims to gather students' opinions on the importance and helpfulness of various traditional and online information sources in their thesis-writing process. This study would help to develop a better understanding of the roles and impacts of these information sources in the current networked academic infrastructure.

### **3. Objectives:**

The main objectives for the present study are-

1. To know the purpose of information seeking by the undergraduate students.
2. To study the use of different information resources and searching criteria for getting a particular document from the library by the students.
3. To examine the information needs of undergraduate students in line with library routines.
4. To examine the satisfaction level of undergraduate students for different aspects of library viz. Services, facilities, rules/regulations etc. against their information need.
5. To know the role of library staff in dissemination of information to the students.
6. To study the problems facing by the students while accessing the journal information and to provide a suggestive means to overcome the problems.

### **4. Research Methodology:**

"The word research is derived from the French word 'rachercher' which means to seek again 'Research Methodology' is a way to systematically solve the research problem."<sup>11</sup> For the present study Descriptive Method of research was used and Questionnaire as a tool for data

collection.

#### 4.1 Scope of the Present Study:

The scope of the present study is confined to study the information seeking behavior of undergraduate students enrolled at the different Senior Colleges situated in Kagal Taluka of District Kolhapur, Maharashtra. There are such 4 senior colleges (Viz. Devchand College Arjunnagar Nipani; D. R. Mane College Kagal; Doodhasakhar Mahavidyalaya Bidri and Sadashivrao Mandlik Mahavidyalaya Murgud) offering undergraduate courses in the discipline of arts, commerce and Science are considered as target colleges and 141 undergraduate students (B.A, B.Com, B.Sc. and B.C.A) from these colleges are taken as targeted population for this study as mentioned in Table 1 below. The colleges are given alphabetic codes for their identification.

**Table 1: Population Information**

Sr. No.	Name of the College	College Code Symbols	Responded Students
1	Devchand College Arjunnagar, Nipani	A	45
2	D. R. Mane College, Kagal	B	38
3	Sadashivrao Mandlik Mahavidyalaya, Murgud	C	30
4	Doodhsakhar Mahavidyalaya, Bidri	D	28
Total			141

#### 5. Discussion and Results:

##### • Purpose of Information Seeking and Time Period:

The purposes for which students are visiting the Library vary according to their needs. It is observed from Table 2 below that maximum number of students 76 (53.90%) visits the library to issue text books followed by 35(24.82%) students to collect references for their lectures/ conference, seminar, project, reading purpose etc., 16(11.34%) students for reading and 8 (5.67%) students visit to the library for other

purpose. Further 5 (3.54%) students visit to the library to search for specific information. Very meager students (0.70%) visit to library for borrow current periodicals.

**Table 2: Purpose of Information Seeking**

Sr. No.	Purpose of Information Seeking	Respondents from different colleges				Total	Percentage
		A	B	C	D		
1	To issue text books	31	18	11	16	76	53.90%
2	To borrow current periodicals	-	-	-	1	1	0.70%
3	To collect references	7	16	7	5	35	24.82%
4	To search for specific information	2	2	-	1	5	3.54%
5	To read in the reading room	-	-	12	4	16	11.34%
6	Any other purpose	5	2	-	1	8	5.67%
<b>Total</b>						141	100%

Further majority of the students (52.48%) visits the library in the morning session followed by afternoon (46.09%) and rest of them (1.41%) visits the library in the evening session. It appears that the morning time is more convenient to most of the students. The time gap of students visiting to library is observed that 4 (2.83%) students visit the library in a month, 74 (52.48%) students visit the library in a week and 63 (44.68%) students visit the library in a day. No any student visits the library in a fortnight time.

- **Information Resources and Searching Criteria:**

Table 3 highlights on types of information resources used by students to meet their academic and learning objects. It shows that the maximum number of students 72.34% uses the major information resource - 'book' that means they give first preference to books followed by other information resources like newspapers (18.43%). Only (2.83%) students use journals and periodicals for their academic work. Remaining 6.38% students refer other information sources apart from the listed resources. No any students make use of Theses/dissertations and technical reports for their academic

work.

**Table 3: Information Resources**

Sr. No.	Information Resources	Respondents from different colleges				Total	Percentage
		A	B	C	D		
1	Books	23	32	21	26	102	72.34%
2	Journals / Periodicals	1	-	2	1	4	2.83%
3	Technical Reports	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	News papers	17	4	3	2	26	18.43%
5	Thesis/Dissertations	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Any other sources	5	-	4	-	9	6.38%
<b>Total</b>						141	100%

It is observed from the below Table 4 that maximum number of students 58 (41.13%) find out their required information by asking to the library staff as a search tool. 30 (21.27%) students consult subject catalogue (Manual/OPAC) to seek the desired information. 28(19.85%) students find out their domain information after discussing with the Librarian and 14 (9.92%) students find out by searching on the shelves directly, 7(4.96%) students from display of new arrivals and remaining 2.83% students get information by other means.

**Table 4: Searching Criteria**

Sr. No	Searching Criteria	Respondents from different colleges				Total	Percentage
		A	B	C	D		
1	Searching the shelves directly	-	3	7	4	14	9.92%
2	Subject catalogue consultation (Manual/OPAC)	20	4	3	3	30	21.27%
3	Asking the library staff	17	22	8	11	58	41.13%
4	Discussion with librarian	3	5	11	9	28	19.85%
5	Through new arrivals	5	2	-	-	7	4.96%
6	Any other method	-	2	1	1	4	2.83%
<b>Total</b>						141	100%

- **Information Needs:**

- Majority of the students (87.94%) are noticed that the collection in their library that includes text books, periodicals, reference books, non-book material etc. are strong enough to meet their information needs and demands.
- 57.44% students replied that the Open Access system facility is available at their libraries to all the readers.
- Bulk of the students 129 (91.48%) are replied that they issue only one book at a time and they are satisfied with the number of library books issued to them at a time.
- Apart from their library, 67.37% of the students visit to other libraries/sources/centers etc. for consultation of required information.
- Most of the students (64.53%) are replied that library loan facility is available to them.
- Majority of students (84.39%) are noticed that there is saving of time in offering of library services by the library after implementing automated transaction system for use of readers.
- 74.46% students opined that the library journal collection is adequate for them to study.
- **Satisfaction Level against Library Services, Facilities, Rules/Regulations etc.:**
- Most of the students (84.39%) seems to be satisfied with the library catalogue system (OPAC/Manual) in their library
- Majority of the students (87.23%) are satisfied with the present arrangement of books on the shelves in the stack section of their library.
- 85.81% of the students are satisfied with the present system of borrowing of books of their library and rest of them (14.18%) are unhappy with the borrowing system.
- Majority of students (88.65%) are satisfied with the library rules pertaining to overdue charges and book lost, rest of



them 11.34% are unhappy with the rules pertaining to overdue charges and book lost.

- 88.65% of the students are satisfied with the reference service rendered by their libraries and 11.34% students are disappointed with the reference services. Further 87.94% are satisfied with the reference collection at their libraries and rests of them (12.05%) are discontented with their library reference collection.

- **Library Staff:**

- Majority of the students (94.32%) are replied that the library staff helps them in making effective use of the library.
- Further bulk of students (95.74%) have expressed that the library staff is co-operative and helpful in locating information sources for the benefit of all categories of the students.
- Further majority of students are replied that have they have been seeking the assistance of the library staff for searching of books (38.29%) followed by to locate the books (29.07%), to know reference collection available in library (28.36%) and very few students (4.25%) are replied for assistance regarding location of current periodicals.

- **Problems and Corrective Measures:**

- The problems faced by students while referring the information sources is represented in table 5 below. From the table it is noticed that popular journals in their domain of interest are not received in time in the library is the major pitfall (32.62%) along with other journal information problems such as current journals are not displayed (21.27%) and incomplete volumes (6.38%) are the other problems in rendering of current journal information. 39.71 % students had given their consent towards other problems which are not listed in the list of problems.

**Table 5: Problem facing referring journals**

Sr. No	Problem while referring journals	Respondents from different colleges				Total	Percentage
		A	B	C	D		
1.	Current journals are not displayed	11	14	4	1	30	21.27%
2.	Incomplete volume	-	2	4	3	9	6.38%
3.	Popular journals are not received in time.	13	19	3	11	46	32.62%
4.	Any other problems	21	3	19	13	56	39.71%
<b>Total</b>						141	100%

- Majority of students (87.23%) replied that the suggestion box is available in their library to overcome their problems against their complaints/suggestions for better improvement of library services and facilities. Further majority of students (86.52%) are replied that the authority responses within 10 days after submitting the suggestions/complains that will reflect a good sign towards improving the library services.
- Apart from that, following suggestions will work as a catalyst for promoting fruitful information seeking behaviors amongst the undergraduate students.
  - i. Library user orientation should be organized regularly.
  - ii. Theses/dissertations and technical reports as a means of scholarly communication needs to browse by undergraduate students to tackle the futuristic information need for their higher education.
  - iii. Addition of state/national level newspapers in the library
  - iv. Number of books allowed/ borrowed to them should be increased with their course/syllabus contents.
  - v. Periodically arrangement of numerous extension activities for all the disciplines.
  - vi. Photo copying services

vii. Separate library building should be provided by each college library as recommended by different examining authorities like UGC, NAAC, etc.

### 6. Conclusion:

The present study establishes the major factors that influence the undergraduate student's information seeking behavior against use of their information sources. The researchers have pointed out that the students mostly use printed textual material rather than use of electronic resources for getting desired information. If the house keeping activities are computerized, then there will no need of further personal assistance towards information seeking activity as it is self-explanatory and user friendly in nature. It is the foremost duty of library to organize proper orientation/user based programs/demo/training etc. for the benefit of students and faculty regarding e-resource access, library services, rules and facilities etc. So they can get maximum output from the library that will push them to produce qualitative research tasks beneficial to all along with the library marketing. Further Open access system to all members is important to meet the motto 'to read one more book'.

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