



Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of College Students: A Survey

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Abstract:

Information seeking behavior refers to the way people search and utilize information. Information seeking behavior is a broad term which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information, and finally uses this information to satisfy his/her information needs. This study was undertaken to determine the information seeking behavior and use of information resources by students of Arts, Commerce and Science College, Maka. Total 120 undergraduate students of different disciplines such as arts, commerce and science were selected as a sample applying random sampling technique. A detailed questionnaire has been circulated to the students of Arts, Commerce and Science College in order to assess their information seeking behavior. The present era is the era of information and knowledge revolution. Many electronic resources are available in the library. The increase in information available on the web has affected information seeking behavior. Innumerable types of information, in a large variety of containers and in many different locations, are all available in one place.

Keywords: Information, Need, Information Seeking Behaviour, Research Scholars.

Introduction:

1.1 Information:

According to Oxford English dictionary, "Information is facts or knowledge provided or learned" Information is an important and key resource and an essential input for all types of organizations. Libraries have limited resources with which they have to satisfy the information needs of the users. Therefore, libraries have to build their collections and facilities to meet the requirements of the users. The present era is an era of information. Good learning is based upon adequate information. Libraries provide information through their resources and services. Hence, academic libraries are playing vital role in shaping a future generation of students and research scholars by providing required information to them. Information is the primary agent of action and change. It reduces entropy by increasing certainly and decreases the number of choices before us for better judgement. A person seeks information to make sense of the world, getting across a barrier, solve a problem and to fill the gap in the knowledge. Information has to be integrated with knowledge to be used and applied appropriately. It means that information needs knowledge and experience to solve problems.

1.2 Information need:

Information is crucial for nation's development. The development of any nation is not possible until and unless the information is made

available at the door steps of those who need, preferably free of cost. People like policy makers, planners, economists, farmers, teachers and research scholars, doctors, engineers, librarians etc. require information for their occupational and day to day activities. No matter whether they are in office, or at home, in college, in the rural areas, they all need information either directly or indirectly. Students as the largest chunk of library users need information in their daily life. Students need information and course materials for their all-round development which is obtained from the resources of the library.

1.3 Information seeking behaviour:

Information seeking behaviour is the human behaviour with respect to searching various sources, channels including use of that information. The terms, information seeking behaviour, information searching behaviour and information using behaviour are synonymous terms. Information seeking behaviour is an area of active interest among the information scientists, academicians, scientists, sociologists, researchers and psychologists. Information seeking habits result from the recognition of some need, perceived by the user, whom as a consequence makes demand upon formal systems such as libraries, information centres, online services or persons to meet their information needs. Information systems exist to

enhance the flow and utilization of information and augment the information processing function of man in reaching rational decisions in day-to-day life. The students may seek the required information by referring books, browsing periodicals, consulting abstracting and indexing periodicals, consulting colleagues and friends. They also seek information from teachers. They also seek information through seminars, conferences, workshops, symposiums, etc. The majority of the information is sought by the students from the sources and services of the college library.

Definition of Information Seeking Behaviour:

Wilson (1999) defines the “information behaviour” as “those activities a person may engage in which identifying his or her own needs for information, searching for such information in any way, and using or transferring that information”.

1. Objectives of the Study:

The following are specific objectives of the study:

1. To identify the information needs of students.
2. To know the purpose of seeking information.
3. To explore the type of information resources used by the students.

4. To know the problems faced by the research scholars in using the library sources and services.
5. To know the problems faced by the students in using the library sources and services.

2. Scope of the Study:

The study is undertaken to explore the information needs and information seeking behaviour of students and their perception on information needs and seeking behaviour in the surveyed students in Arts, Commerce and Science College, Maka to find the ways and means to promote the existing system

3. Methodology

The survey method was used in this study. Question tool was used to collect data from the research scholars. 120 questionnaires were distributed to the students by random sampling method. The researcher received 109 questionnaires out of 120. After collecting data required for the study, the data was analysed and interpreted in the form of tables.

4. Analysis of the Data

5.1 Library visit

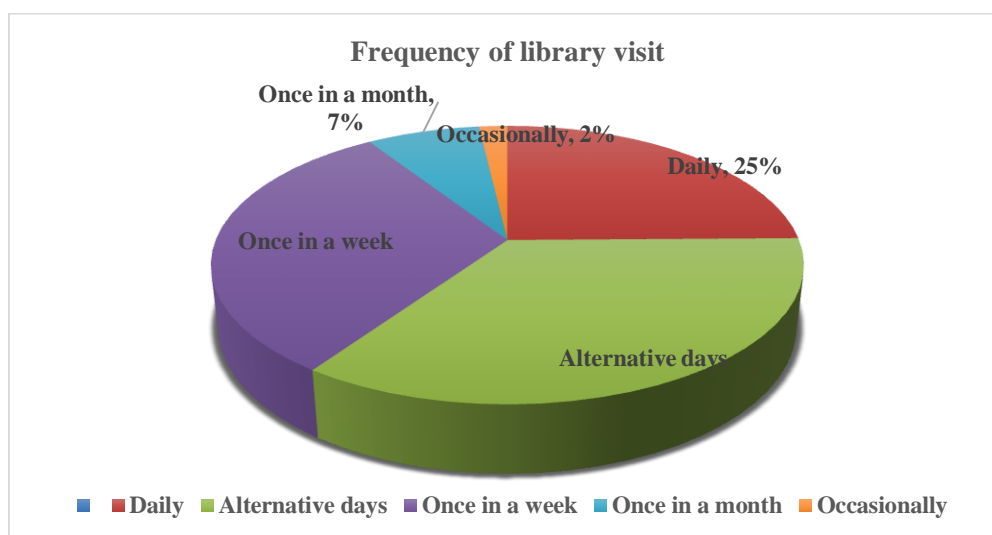
A question has been asked to the students to know their frequency of library visit. The replies given by them are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Frequency of library visit

Frequency	Number of Respondent	Percentage(%)
Daily	27	24.77
Alternative days	38	34.86
Once in a week	34	31.19
Once in a month	8	7.34
Occasionally	2	1.83
Total	109	100

From the Table 5.1 that majority of the respondents (34.86%) visit library on alternative days followed by once in a week (31.19%), daily

(24.77%), once in a month (7.34%) and remaining of them (1.83%) are visited library occasionally.



5.2 Time spent

A question has been asked to the respondents to know the amount of time they spent in the library per day. The replies given by them are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Time spent in the library

Time Spent (in hours)	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
0 – 1	25	22.94
1 – 2	39	35.78
2 – 3	21	19.27
3 – 4	19	17.43
Above 4	5	4.59
Total	109	100

From the table 5.2 majority of the respondents (35.78%) are spend one to two hours in the library followed by zero to one hours (22.94%), two to three hours (19.27%), three to four hours (17.43%) and remaining of them (4.59%) students spend more than four hours in the library.

Table 5.3 Information Needs of Students

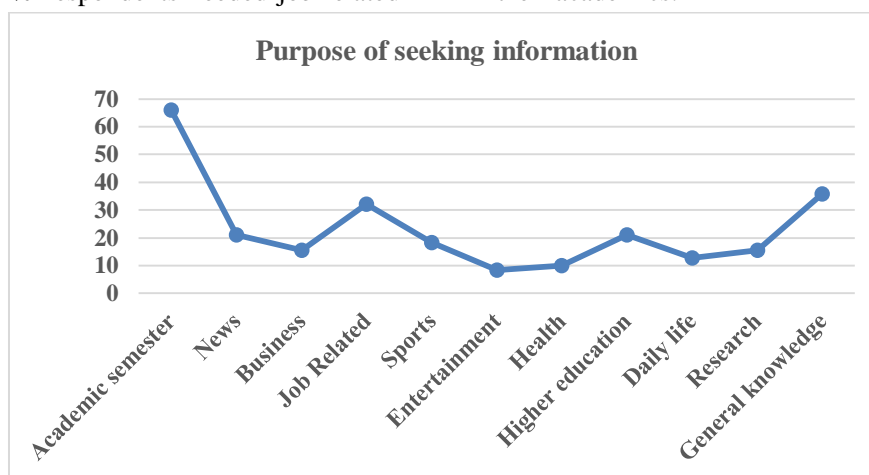
Information Needs	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Academic semester	72	66.06
News	23	21.10
Business	17	15.60
Job Related	35	32.11
Sports	20	18.35
Entertainment	9	8.26
Health	11	10.09
Higher education	23	21.10
Daily life	14	12.84
Research	17	15.60
General knowledge	39	35.78

From table 5.3 it was quite obvious that most of the respondents needed academic semester information 66.06% for their semester work. Here academic semester refers to all information related to academic activities, i.e. semester schedule, assignments, midterms, exams, report writing, internship and class activities as well as research work. The second highest number of respondents 35.78% needed information to increase their general knowledge. 32.11% respondents needed job related

5.3 Information Needs of Students

A question has been put to the students to know their information needs. The replies given by them are shown in Table 5.3.

information. After graduation one of the biggest tasks is to get a job. Therefore mostly respondents need information related to their field in the market. 21.10% students need information to get news and 21.10% for higher education. 18.35% students need information for sport. Then students need information 15.60% for business, 15.60% Research, 12.84% Daily life, 10.09% Health, 8.26% Entertainment. Mostly students need information for their academics.



5.4 Purpose of Seeking Information:

The purpose of seeking information of students in library as given in following table number 5.4.

Table 5.4 Purpose of Seeking Information

Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Preparing for the examination	61	55.96
Enrich knowledge	19	17.43
Preparing for competitive exam	24	22.02
Entertainment	5	4.59
Total	109	100

Table 5.4 describes the purpose of seeking information. In this study, 55.96% respondents are using the library for preparing the examination, 17.43% are using the library for enrich knowledge, 22.02% respondents are using the library for

Table 5.5 Preferred Information Sources

Preferred Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Printed Sources	16	14.68
Electronic Sources	14	12.84
Both of the Sources	79	72.48

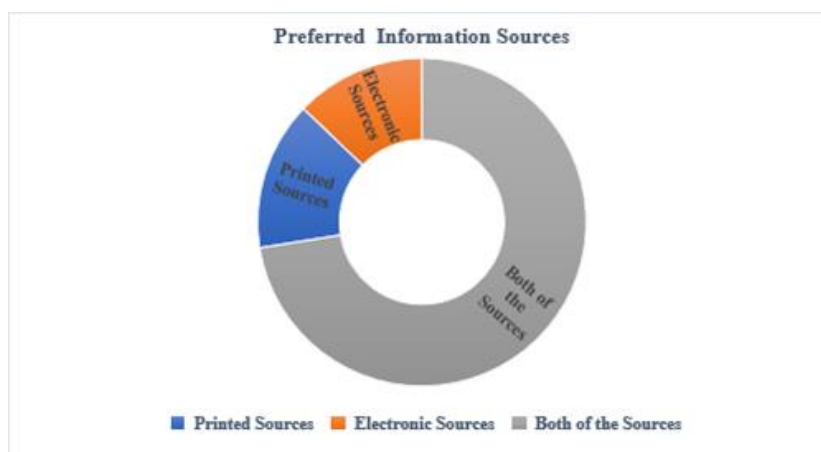
The table 5.5 shows that the frequency of the use of printed sources is greater than the electronic sources. But the largest number of

preparing for competitive exam and 4.59 respondents are using the library for Entertainment.

5.5 Preferred Information Sources:

Students preferred information sources in the library as follow

respondents 72.48% students preferred both printed and electronic sources.



5.6 Uses of Information Sources

A question has been posed to the respondents to know their information sources

Table 5.6 Uses of Information Sources

Information Sources	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Books	97	88.99
Periodicals	27	24.77
News Papers	45	41.28
Reference Books	12	11.01
Social media	67	61.47
Encyclopedia	6	5.50

From the table 5.6 maximum number of students (88.99%) uses books as information source followed by Social media (61.47%), Newspaper

available in their library. The replies given by them are shown in table 5.6.

(41.28%), Periodicals (24%), Reference book (11.01%) and Encyclopedia (5.50%).

5.7 Use of Search Engines:

A question has been put to the respondents to know their frequently used search engines in the

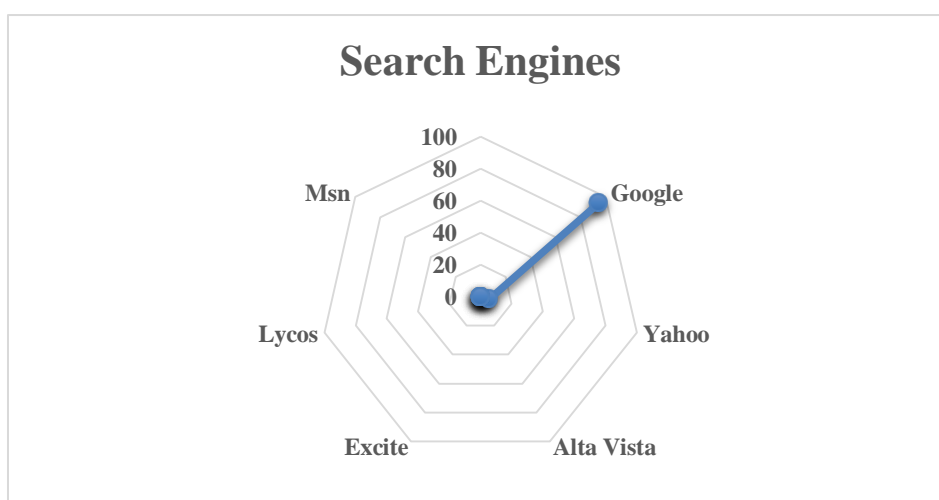
Table 5.7 Use of Search Engines

Seaech Engine	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Google	103	94.50
Yahoo	6	5.50
Alta Vista	0	0.00
Excite	0	0.00
Lycos	0	0.00
Msn	0	0.00
Total	109	100

The Table 5.7 clears that the majority of the students (94.5%) frequently used google search engine followed by them yahoo search engine

library. The replies given by them are shown in table 5.7.

(5.5%). There is no user of Alta Vista, MSN, Lycos, Excite search engine.

**5.8 Problems while seeking information:**

A question has been put to the respondents to know whether they have problems while seeking

Table 5.8 Problems while seeking information

Problems while seeking information	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Non availability of study material	6	5.50
Library staff is unwilling for service	2	1.83
Time factor	29	26.61
Poor knowledge regarding use of catalogue	17	15.60
Information scattered in too many sources	34	31.19
Old information	46	42.20
Language barrier	3	2.75
Clarity about information need and purpose	9	8.26
Inconvenient location of library	4	3.67

The Table 5.8 represents that majority of the respondents (42.2%) replied that some of information materials are old in using the library problem faced by them followed by information scattered in too many sources (31.19%), lack of time (26.61%), Poor knowledge regarding use of catalogue(15.60%), Clarity about information need

information. The replies given by them are shown in Table5.8.

and purpose (8.26%), Non availability of study material (5.50%), Language barrier(2.75%) and remaining of them (1.83%) replied that library staff unwilling service faced by them.

5. Findings of the Study**The major findings of the study are:**

1. Majority of the respondents (34.86%) visit library on alternative days
2. Majority of the respondents (35.78%) are spend one to two hours in the library.
3. Maximum number of respondents (66.6%) need information for their academic use.
4. Majority of the respondent (55.96%) has purpose of seeking information in the library for preparing the examination.
5. Maximum number of respondent (72.48%) preferred information both electronic and printed sources.
6. Majority of the respondents (88.99%) use books as main sources information.
7. Majority of the respondents (94.50%) frequently used google search engine.
8. Maximum number of students (42.2%) faced problem of old information while seeking information.

6. Suggestions:

1. Students need to make regular visits to the library to obtain the necessary information. Making library visits a habit is essential, as it contributes to becoming a knowledgeable individual through daily exploration.
2. A significant number of respondents are not dedicating most of their time to the library. Therefore, students should allocate a minimum of three to four hours for library visits, engaging with reference materials and other reading resources.
3. The majority of the respondents replied that information materials are old Therefore, it is advisable to acquire the latest books and other materials, ensuring that the library remains updated with relevant and current resources.

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