

**INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF LIBRARY
USERS OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN INDIA****YAKUB MATHANGI,**

Librarian

,KRR Government Degree College,

Kodad_TS.

Abstract

This study was hinged on the information needs and seeking behaviour of library and information science post graduates in India. Three questions were raised to put the study in the right perspective. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (simple percentage and frequency counts). The finding from the study showed that the information required by post undergraduates of library and information science includes: information for personal developmentsocio-security, etc. The approach of undergraduates in LIS when seeking information includes: seeking information from course-mates online, consultation of designated chat groups, consulting lecturers, e-books, e-journals, and use of professional services. Also, it was shown that they consult various sources when seeking information, such as e-books, ejournals, websites, social networking sites, e-magazines, print materials, search engines, mass media, etc.

Keywords: *Library and Information Science, Post graduates, information needs, information-seeking behavior,*

Introduction**USER INFORMATION NEEDS**

User information needs refer to the specific requirements and demands of individuals or groups seeking information to fulfill a particular purpose or address a question or problem. Understanding user information needs is crucial for libraries, information organizations, and information professionals to effectively provide the required information and services. Here are some key aspects of user information needs:

Identifying the Information Need: The first step is to identify what the user is looking for. This may involve a reference interview, a conversation, or an analysis of the user's query or request to determine the specific information required.

Purpose and Context: Understanding the purpose and context of the information need is essential. Different users may seek the same information for diverse reasons, such as academic research, personal interest, decision-making, or problem-solving.

Type of Information: Users may need various types of information, including facts, data, research articles, books, reports, statistics, or practical advice.

Specific Topics or Subjects: Users often have specific topics or subjects in mind, so librarians and information professionals need to determine these to provide relevant resources.

Depth and Level of Detail: Users may require information at different levels of detail, from a general overview to in-depth, specialized content.

Format and Medium: Users may have preferences for the format and medium of information. Some may prefer printed books, while others may prefer digital resources, audio, or video content.

Timeliness: The urgency of the information need is important. Some users require the most up-to-date information, while others may be interested in historical or timeless information.

Search Skills and Expertise: Users' proficiency in information retrieval and searching can vary widely. Understanding the user's search skills can help in providing appropriate guidance and support.

Language and Accessibility: Consideration of the user's language and accessibility requirements is crucial, especially for users with disabilities or those who may need materials in languages other than the dominant one.

Cost Constraints: Some users may have budget constraints, so finding cost-effective or free resources may be necessary.

Ethical and Legal Considerations: Ensure that the information provided adheres to ethical and legal standards, such as copyright restrictions.

Interactivity and Personalization: In today's digital age, users may expect interactive or personalized information services, tailored to their specific needs and preferences.

Feedback and Evaluation: Encouraging users to provide feedback on the information provided allows for ongoing improvement in meeting information needs.

Privacy and Data Security: Protecting user privacy and data security is essential, especially when dealing with sensitive or personal information needs.

Continual Assessment: Information organizations and professionals should continually assess and adapt their services to evolving user needs and technology trends.

Understanding and effectively addressing user information needs is at the core of the mission of libraries and information services. This requires a user-centered approach, strong communication and reference skills, and a commitment to providing high-quality and relevant information resources and services.

University Libraries in India

University libraries in India serve as vital hubs for academic and research activities. They support the educational and research missions of universities by providing access to a wide range of resources, facilitating learning and research, and offering various services to students, faculty, and researchers. Here are some key features and aspects of university libraries in India:



Diverse Collections: University libraries in India maintain extensive collections of books, journals, research papers, and electronic resources across various academic disciplines. These collections support undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs.

Digital Resources: In recent years, there has been a significant emphasis on digital resources. University libraries provide access to e-books, e-journals, databases, and open access repositories to cater to the evolving needs of users.

Special Collections: Many university libraries house special collections, which may include rare books, manuscripts, theses, and historical documents, allowing researchers to access unique and valuable materials.

Interlibrary Loan Services: When a particular resource is not available within a university's collection, interlibrary loan services enable users to borrow materials from other libraries in the region or across the country.

Academic Support: Libraries often provide academic support services such as citation help, reference assistance, and research consultations to assist students and faculty in their scholarly work.

Open Access Initiatives: Some university libraries are actively involved in promoting open access publishing, hosting institutional repositories, and encouraging researchers to make their work openly accessible.

Information Literacy Programs: University libraries in India offer information literacy programs to equip students with the skills to effectively find, evaluate, and use information, both in print and digital formats.

Collaborative and Quiet Spaces: Libraries provide spaces for both collaborative learning and individual study. These spaces are equipped with Wi-Fi, computers, and printing facilities.

Cultural and Social Events: Many university libraries organize cultural and social events, book talks, author interactions, and exhibitions to promote a culture of reading and learning.

Language and Multilingual Support: Given India's linguistic diversity, university libraries often offer resources in multiple languages to accommodate students and faculty from various linguistic backgrounds.

Access to Government Publications: Libraries often house government publications, which are valuable for research in fields such as public administration, policy studies, and governance.

Research Support Services: University libraries provide services that support research activities, including assistance with literature reviews, data management, and access to specialized databases.

Access to Theses and Dissertations: Many university libraries maintain collections of theses and dissertations, making these valuable research outputs accessible to the academic community.

Library Consortia: Some universities are part of library consortia that enable resource sharing, collective purchasing of databases and journals, and cooperation in digitization projects.

Modernization and Technology: University libraries are continually modernizing their infrastructure and adopting the latest technologies to improve user services and provide seamless access to digital resources.

INFORMATION NEEDS Of UNIVERSITY LIBRARY USERS

In university libraries, information needs vary widely depending on the academic disciplines, research areas, and the specific requirements of students, faculty, and researchers. To meet these diverse information needs, university libraries play a crucial role in providing access to a wide range of resources and services. Here are some common information needs and how university libraries address them:

Textbooks and Course Materials: University libraries often maintain copies of textbooks and course materials for students to borrow, reducing the financial burden on students.

Academic Journals and Databases: Access to academic journals and databases is essential for research. University libraries subscribe to a variety of these resources, allowing students and faculty to access the latest research articles and papers.

Books and E-books: University libraries house a vast collection of books, both in print and electronic formats, to support research and general reading needs.

Reference and Research Assistance: Librarians offer reference and research assistance to help users navigate resources, formulate research questions, and find relevant information.

Interlibrary Loan Services: If a specific resource is not available in the university library, interlibrary loan services allow users to borrow materials from other libraries.

Data and Statistics Resources: Libraries often provide access to data repositories, statistical databases, and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) resources to support research in various disciplines.

Archival and Special Collections: University libraries may house rare and unique materials in their special collections, including manuscripts, archives, and historical documents.

Citation and Research Management Tools: Libraries offer guidance on citation styles (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) and provide access to reference management software like EndNote and Zotero.

Digital Scholarship Services: Libraries support digital scholarship, offering guidance on data management, data visualization, and digital humanities projects.

Collaborative and Quiet Spaces: Libraries provide spaces for individual study, group collaboration, and quiet research.

Technology and Equipment: Libraries may offer access to computers, printers, scanners, and other technology resources.

Workshops and Instruction: Libraries offer workshops and instruction sessions on information literacy, database searching, and academic skills.

Accessibility Services: Libraries strive to make their resources and services accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.

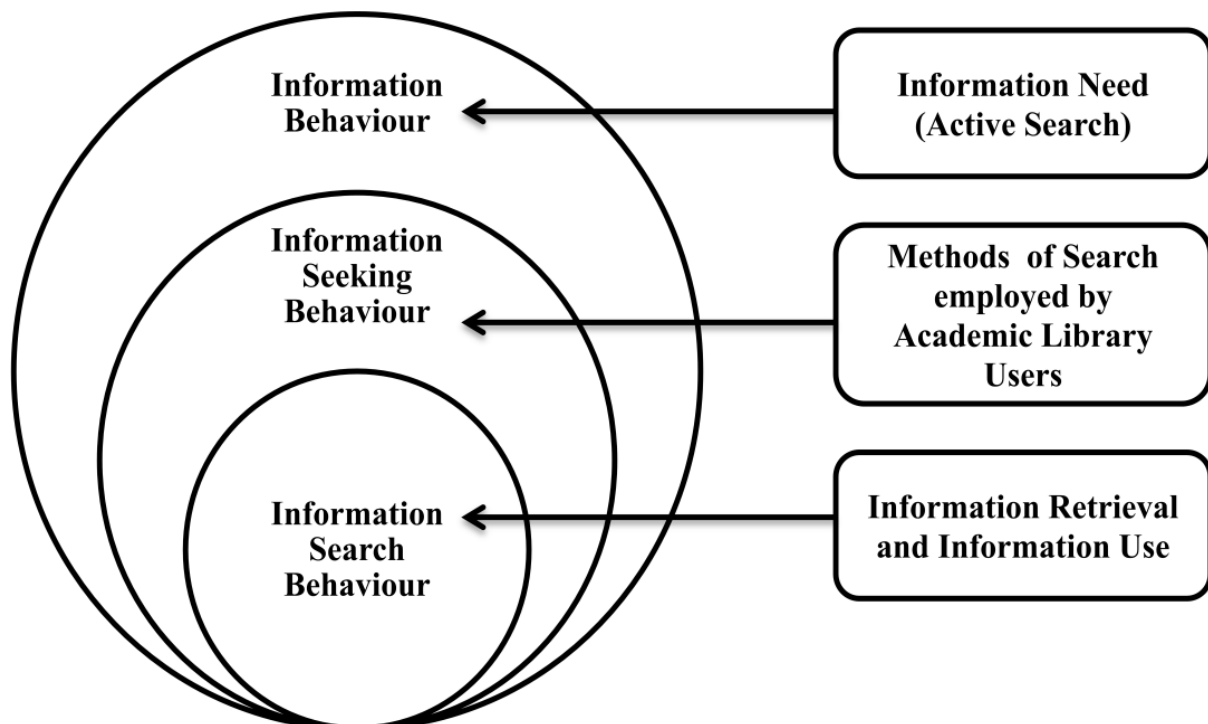
Open Access Initiatives: Some university libraries are involved in open access initiatives, promoting free and open availability of research materials.

Support for Multilingual Users: Libraries may offer services and resources in multiple languages to support international and non-native English-speaking students and researchers.

Current Awareness and Alerts: Libraries may provide tools and services for users to stay updated with the latest research in their fields through email alerts or RSS feeds.

Thesis and Dissertation Support: Many libraries assist graduate students in formatting, submitting, and archiving their theses and dissertations.

University libraries play a vital role in supporting the academic and research missions of their institutions by providing access to the information resources and services needed for learning, teaching, and scholarship. They often adapt to evolving technologies and changing user needs to remain relevant in the digital age.



Information seeking behavior of users

Information seeking behavior refers to the ways individuals seek, acquire, and use information to satisfy their information needs. Understanding how users seek information is essential for information professionals, including librarians, to provide better services and resources. Information seeking behavior can vary widely based on factors like the user's purpose, context, and information literacy. Here are some common patterns and models of information seeking behavior:

Exploratory Behavior:

Users engage in exploratory behavior when they are in the early stages of information seeking, often to understand a topic or define their research question.

- A. Activities may include browsing books, skimming articles, and searching broadly on the web.
- B. They seek to gain an initial overview of the subject before delving deeper.

Focused Behavior:

As users narrow down their information needs, they engage in more focused behavior.

- A. This often involves targeted database searches, consulting specialized sources, or asking experts for advice.
- B. Users aim to find specific, detailed information related to their research question.

Directed Behavior:

Directed behavior occurs when users have a well-defined information need.

- A. They may use advanced search strategies, such as Boolean operators, to precisely locate relevant information.
- B. Direct behavior is common in academic and professional research.

Reformulation and Refinement:

Information seeking is an iterative process.

- A. Users may reformulate their queries and refine their searches based on the information they find.
- B. They continuously evaluate and adjust their search strategies.

Serendipitous Behavior:

Sometimes users encounter valuable information by chance while seeking something else.

- A. This serendipitous discovery is common, especially in digital environments with recommendations and related content.

Social Behavior:

- A. Users often seek information through social interactions. They may ask peers, colleagues, or online communities for recommendations or advice.
- B. Social networks and social media play a significant role in this behavior.

Berrypicking Model:

- A. The Berrypicking model suggests that information seeking is not always a linear process but resembles picking berries from different bushes.
- B. Users may start with a broad query, pick some information, refine their query, and repeat the process until their information needs are met.

Information Avoidance:

- A. Users may also exhibit information avoidance behavior, where they actively avoid or ignore certain types of information that do not align with their beliefs, attitudes, or preferences.

Cognitive Authority Behavior:

- A. Users often trust sources or experts they consider credible, and they may exhibit behavior of relying on cognitive authority.
- B. They may turn to respected journals, scholars, or institutions for information.

Satisficing Behavior:

In situations where time or resources are limited, users may engage in satisficing behavior, where they settle for the first adequate source of information rather than seeking the best source.

Understanding these various aspects of information seeking behavior is essential for information professionals to design effective information services and systems that cater to users' diverse needs and behaviors. It also informs the development of information literacy programs to help users become more effective seekers of information.

Information Seeking behavior and Needs in University Libraries

Information seeking needs and behaviors in university libraries in India share many similarities with libraries around the world, but they are also influenced by unique cultural, educational, and technological factors specific to the country. Here's an overview of the information seeking needs and seeking behavior in university libraries in India:

Information Seeking Needs:

Academic Research: University libraries in India play a critical role in supporting academic research. Faculty and students have a constant need for academic journals, books, and electronic resources to advance their research projects and publish scholarly work.

Curriculum Support: University libraries help students meet their academic curriculum requirements by providing textbooks, reference materials, and online resources. This is especially important for students who may not be able to afford all their required textbooks.

Competitive Exams: Many students in India prepare for competitive exams for admissions into higher education institutions or government jobs. University libraries often provide study materials, test preparation resources, and reference materials.

Multilingual Resources: India is a linguistically diverse country with numerous regional languages. Libraries need to cater to the language preferences of their users by offering resources in various languages.

Government and Policy Research: Universities often conduct research on government policies, socioeconomic issues, and public administration. Access to government publications and policy-related resources is essential.

Interdisciplinary Research: Indian universities promote interdisciplinary research, which means libraries must provide resources that cover a wide range of subjects.

Open Access and Open Educational Resources (OER): Many institutions in India are actively promoting open access and open educational resources to reduce the financial burden on students and increase access to quality education materials.

Information Seeking Behavior:

Digitalization and Online Access: Like elsewhere, there is a growing trend of users seeking information online. University libraries in India offer extensive digital resources, including e-books, e-journals, and databases to support this trend.

Library Catalog and Online Searches: Students and faculty use the library catalog and online databases to search for books, articles, and other materials. Librarians often provide guidance on how to use these tools effectively.

Research Support Services: Librarians play a significant role in assisting users with research needs. They help with search strategies, citation management, and accessing specialized databases.

Interlibrary Loan Services: In cases where a particular resource is not available within a university library, interlibrary loan services allow users to borrow materials from other libraries.

Reference Assistance: Librarians offer reference services to help users find relevant resources and answer their information queries.

Collaborative Learning and Study Spaces: University libraries provide collaborative spaces for group study and quiet spaces for individual study and research.

Digital Literacy Workshops: Given the increasing reliance on digital resources, university libraries often conduct workshops and training programs on digital literacy and information literacy.

Language Support: Libraries may provide resources in multiple languages to cater to the diverse linguistic needs of students and faculty.

Promotion of Open Access: Many university libraries actively promote open access publishing, hosting institutional repositories, and assisting with open access compliance for research publications.

The information seeking needs and behavior in university libraries in India reflect the evolving trends in academia and technology. Universities and libraries are continually adapting to meet the diverse and changing needs of their users, with a focus on both traditional and digital resources and services.

References

01.Baro, E. E., Onyenania, G. O., &Osaheni, O. (2010). *Information-seeking behavior ofundergraduate students in the humanities in three universities in Nigeria. SA JnlLibs & Info Sci* 76(2), 109-117.

02.Bhatti, R. (2008). *Information needs of students. Islamia University Library: Bahawalpur.*

03.Bronstein, J. (2010). *Selecting and using information sources: Source preferences andinformation pathways of Israeli Library and Information Science Students.Information Research*, 15(4), 1-15



04. Bruce, H. (2005). *Personal, anticipated information need. Information Research, 10(3)*.
05. Emmanuel, O. S., & Jegede, O. R. (2011). *Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour and Use of Information Resources by Mba Students at a Nigerian University. An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia, 5(4), 250-264.*
06. Friedlander, A. (2002). *Dimensions and use of Scholarly Information Environment. Introduction to a data set assembled by the Digital Library Federation and Outsell Inc. <http://www.Clr.org/pubs/reports/pub110/contents.html>*
07. Kadir, M. R. A., Johari, N. I. S., Hussin, N. (2018). *Information needs and information seeking behavior: A case study of students in private university libraries. International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education & Development, 7(3), 226-235.*
08. KOC University Library Glossary (2014), *Definition of Information: <http://staging.brewwww.com/skl/en/node/66>*
09. Nwagwu, W.E. & Oshiname, R. (2009). *Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Nurses at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria. African Journal of Library, Archival and Information Science, 19, 125-38*
10. Okoh, M. I., & Ijiekhuamhen, O. P. (2014). *Information Seeking Behaviour of Undergraduates in a Nigerian university. Journal of Information and Knowledge Management, 5(2), 69-83.*