

## **Information Seeking Behavior of Research Scholars of Faculty of Social Science, University of Kashmir: A Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The present paper deals with the information seeking behaviour of Research scholars of Faculty of social science, University of Kashmir. The overall purpose of the study was to determine about their information requirements and also to determine their awareness of library services available to them. The paper also discusses knowledge and use of electronic sources, problems in finding information and satisfaction of research scholars for library resources and services. A well structured questionnaire was distributed among the research-scholars for data collections. Descriptive statistical measures such as percentages and frequency distribution were employed for data analysis. The findings of the survey reveal useful facts about the Information Seeking Behaviour of research scholars. The survey indicated that the majority of scholars adopt different search strategies. There are a number of scholars who use different tools to keep ourselves up-to-date using services like CAS and SDI. 64.1% scholars preferred web sources over documentary sources. 67.1% of scholar's access libraries subscribed journals while 32.8% scholars access journal articles through personal subscription. When we look at the awareness of research scholars, it was found that 83.5% of scholars are aware of the various services provided by the library. The scholars do, face a number of problems in their information-seeking activities. It is found that the top ranking problem mentioned by majority (46.2%) of the scholars is that the information is scattered in too many sources. While the other problems which the scholars often face are very expensive information sources and lack of technical support.*

**Keywords:** Information, Information Seeking Behavior, Library resources, Research Scholars, Information Search, Information Needs, University of Kashmir.

## **I. Introduction**

Information is a sensible statement, opinion, fact, concept or ideas or an association of statement “information could be considered as means to an end but not the end itself. Information seeking behavior refers to the way people search for and utilize information. Wilson (2000) has described information-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. He described information seeking behavior as purposive seeking of information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. Information seeking behavior is the micro-level of behavior employed by the searcher in interacting with information systems of all kinds, be it between the seeker and the system, or the pure method of creating and following up on a search. It is the complex pattern of actions and interactions which people engage in when seeking information of whatever kind and for various purposes. To put it in straight words, “information seeking behavior is the way in which the user goes about seeking and obtaining information”. The users information behavior is reflected in his relationship with the information he or she is seeking and its related products and services. The information seeking behavior is influenced by various factors, for instance, knowledge about the information, use of information product, accessibility to information, status and relation with people etc. The behavior includes a number of components like attitude, approach, activity, information gathering, pattern of seeking information and psychological temperament etc.

Information seeking behavior is the way people or users of information seek documents or information and the way they go about searching their required information by following a complex pattern of actions and procedures. In this process, users may ask for assistance from the person(s) engaged in the library or in a particular section or unit. The user’s information seeking behavior is reflected in his relationship to the information unit and its various services. Earlier studies which were conducted to ascertain this behavior use a variety of information sources including formal and non-formal sources with varying emphasis from one discipline to other. “*Information seeking is thus a natural and necessary mechanism of human existences*” (Marchionini, 1995).

Information seeking behavior is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of need to satisfy some type of a goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with people. Information seeking is a broad term, which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express his information needs, seek, evaluate and select information, and finally uses it to satisfy his information needs. Various factors affect the information seeking behaviors of an individual or a group of individuals, i.e. purpose for information, channels and sources of information and barriers to information. Information seeking is a basic activity of an individual.

Information seeking behavior is a complex activity, requiring access to diverse information resources to deal with work-related, personal and social information problems. Information-seeking behavior refers to strategies for locating information, and has three elements: people, information, and systems. The study of individual information-seeking behavior requires understanding of the psychological state of the user that may lead to insight into their expectations make it possible to predict information-seeking activity.

Information seeking is a fluid and situation-dependent activity where a seeker's actions are influenced by access to information, perceived quality and trust in the information source (Boyd, 2004). Information-seeking behavior is articulated in various forms, from reading printed material to research and experimentation. Research scholars, students and faculties vigorously seek recent information from various media available in libraries. Libraries must recognize the information needs of faculty and students in order to address those needs. Human behavior in finding, using and communicating information is complex. Many of the theoretical frameworks developed by library and information science (LIS) scholars focus on information-seeking activities, but information behavior in its widest sense also includes communication and provision of information. Thus, Ingwersen and Jarvelin (2005) define information behavior as “generation, acquisition, management, use and communication of information, and information seeking”. Of these terms, information need is the oldest and most popular so far. However, the concept of information need has not always been accepted without reservations. Seeking and retrieving information is an essential aspect of knowledge workers activities during problem-solving and decision-making tasks. In recent years, user-oriented Information Seeking (IS) research methods rooted in the social sciences have been integrated with Information Retrieval (IR) research approaches based on computer science to capitalize on the strengths of each field. Normally, users seek information from a variety of sources to satisfy their needs, which are often vague initially and evolve during the search process is based on the notion that users may start with a broader topic, adjust their information needs based on the pieces of information they encounter and then form a new query. A user may repeat an information retrieval activity and revise a query several times until his/her information needs are fulfilled. This “bit-at-a-time” retrieval approach is called “berry picking” because the search or information seeking behavior evolves over time. Hider (2006) observed that users might change the search goal, either consciously or unconsciously, while they are interacting with systems. Information seeking (IS) involves searching for, extracting, and using information for a specific purpose when a person does not have sufficient prior knowledge. IR can be regarded as a process of IS, so the latter may include one or more information retrieval activities.

### **Information need**

Information need is an individual or group's desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. The ‘information’ and ‘need’ in ‘information need’ are an inseparable interconnection. Needs and interests call forth information. Information needs of individuals in an organization differ depending upon their respective functions and tasks, the level of their knowledge and experience (in the specific field of specialization and in the use of information systems and services), their particular interest and need to satisfy which they seek information, on the breadth and depth of their interest profiles, and on the nature of the subject or field of specialization or interest. Information needs — the type, coverage, depth — of a user may differ considerably depending upon the his/her activity at the moment — for instance, when entering a new field of research as compared to when seeking a solution to a specific problem in a field already familiar to the person. An information seeking behavior of a user may result from the recognition of some information need.

Everybody needs information for one purpose or the other in order to quench one's thirst by following a required set of steps. Information is needed by variety of users today. Thus, the information is used largely by a wide cross section of people in the world resulting in to the coining of new terms like information explosion, information society and information age etc.

The concept of information needs was coined by an American information journalist

Robert S. Taylor in his article "The Process of Asking Questions" published in *American Documentation* (Now is *Journal of the American Society of Information Science and Technology*).

In this paper, Taylor attempted to describe how an inquirer obtains an answer from an information system, by performing the process consciously or unconsciously; also he studied the reciprocal influence between the inquirer and a given system.

According to Taylor, information need has four levels:

1. The conscious and unconscious need for information not existing in the remembered experience of the investigator. In terms of the query range, this level might be called the "ideal question" — the question which would bring from the ideal system exactly what the inquirer, if he could state his need. It is the actual, but unexpressed, need for information
2. The conscious mental description of an ill-defined area of in decision. In this level, the inquirer might talk to someone else in the field to get an answer.
3. A researcher forms a rational statement of his question. This statement is a rational and unambiguous description of the inquirer's doubts.
4. The question as presented to the information system.

## **II. Statement of Problem**

Research scholars use different ways for accessing information relevant to their field of investigation. Present study is focusing on information seeking behavior of the research scholars in the faculty of social science, University of Kashmir and will determine the awareness of scholars with the library , library services etc.

## **III. Objectives of the Study**

Objectives of the study are enumerated as under:

1. To discover the awareness of researchers regarding services provided by a library.
2. To determine the researcher's strategy for searching.
3. To identify the different information resources used by Research Scholars.
4. To know the utilization of different library services.
5. To identify the information searching methods adopted while searching for information in the library.

## **IV. Scope**

The scope of the study is limited to ascertain the information seeking behavior of research scholars belonging to the faculty of social science, University of Kashmir, Srinagar.

## **V. Methodology**

A questionnaire based survey method was adopted to gather the data on the information seeking behavior of research scholars. The questionnaires were distributed among 80 respondents belonging to the faculty of social science. Out of 80 questionnaires, 67 filled in questionnaires were returned by the respondents. Data collected thus was analyzed in order to achieve the objectives.

## **VI. Literature Review**

Extensive research has been done in the field of information-seeking behavior of different user groups. This literature review is not intended to cover all of the literature on information-seeking behavior. The purpose of this literature review is to provide an over view of research studies involving information seeking behavior of researchers. **Jamali and Nicholas (2008)** revealed that differences in information-seeking behavior exist among people with different academic status. They identified that those with higher academic status, such as professors, relied more on word of mouth and interpersonal communications such as conferences for keeping up to date, while PhD students were more likely to use alerting services.

**Kuffalikar and Mahakulkar (2003)** analyzed the information-seeking behavior of users of Nagpur University and found that internet surfing, conferences/seminars/workshops/refresher courses have widely helped the users in seeking current, updated information in their respective fields. The study also reported that user dependence was more on informal modes of communication than the formal. The study by **Mahawar et al. (2009)** on geologists revealed that most of them depended on conferences and seminars for up to date information.

**Khan's and Zaidi's (2009)** study on use of online databases by research scholars revealed that they largely used online databases for their research work and to update subject knowledge. Singh and **Satija (2008)** reviewed that agricultural scientists have great dependence in meeting their information requirements on their institutional libraries. **Geetha (2004)** in her study on the information needs and information-gathering behavior of research scholars in the Pure Science departments of the University of Kerala found that the collection of reference sources, indexing and abstracting sources, as well as computer-based information sources in the Kerala University library system was only partially adequate to meet research scholars' needs. The study of information needs and gathering dates back to 1948 when Bernal and others presented a paper on scientific information at the 1948 Royal Society Conference (**Anwar, Al-Ansari and Abdullah, 2004**). **Shokeen and Kushik (2002)**, studied about information seeking behavior of social scientists working in the universities located in Haryana. They reported, most of the scientists visit the library daily. The first preferred method of searching the required information by the social scientists followed by searching through indexing and abstracting periodicals and citations in articles respectively.

**Suriya, Sangeetha and Nambhi (2004)**, carried out a research work on “Information seeking behavior of faculty members from government Arts College in Cuddalore district”. The purpose of their study was to investigate how faculty members seek information from the library. It mentions that most of the respondents (38.12%) visited the library several times a week to meet their information needs.

**Manoj, P. & Majid (2005)** has conducted the study to determine the information needs and seeking behavior of litigation lawyers. The purpose was to investigate the types of information sources and the preferences of lawyers in selecting different information sources. It also investigates the different types of information required at various stages of a case and tries to understand the adequacy of information to the lawyers. MAHO (2007) has conducted electronic interview of 60 researches of 14 countries including U.S., Germany, Australia, India, Russia etc. and found that scholars conducting research face many difficulties in accessing credible information for their research. The barriers include lack of academic structure, research support based information sources and widely scattered information sources. The study of **Kaushik & Kanchi's (2007)** revealed that 57.69% respondents read newspaper daily and 33.33% read occasionally. A majority of users 58.33% used general

magazines, 14.73% read magazines on films 16.67% has read magazines related to various competitions. More female undergraduates have been found reading religious and competitive books. The female undergraduate students have been found devoting more time for reading at home as compared to male U.G. students. The use of Internet by rural U.G. students was very low. There were only sixteen respondents out of one hundred fifty six, which used the Internet.

Research in information-seeking behavior, motivation, critical thinking, and learning theory was explored by **Weiler (2005)**. Author compared in a search for possible motivating factors behind students' dependence on television and the internet for their information needs. The research indicates that only a very small percentage of the general population prefers to learn by reading. **Shafique (2009)** also explored the research student's satisfaction with the library services of the same department and found that most of the research students did not find their departmental library services very satisfactory. She also recommended many library services to fulfill research student's information needs. **Cothey (2002)** examined, the information seeking behavior of 206 college students using the World Wide Web during a ten month period. The study was intended to suggest how the general population uses the web. It was concluded that web users have become more passive and more eclectic as they become more experienced using the web. It was also discovered that they use less querying techniques. However, their web usage was more sporadic, which might suggest greater selectivity. As more people use the internet as a source of information, the issue of source credibility and trust in web sites becomes important. The World Wide Web is being used by the members primarily to seek general, factual, ephemeral or very specific information.

## VII. Data Analysis and interpretation

The data analysis is based on the structured questionnaires which were distributed among the scholars of faculty of social science. Questionnaires were distributed among 80 scholars. However, responses were collected from 67 scholars; out of Which 40 were males and 27 were females. Data provided by the respondents is presented under following headings:

### (1) Effect of internet on information seeking behavior

Scholars under the scope of present study reveal that information seeking behavior of most of the scholars is affected by using the internet, shown in table 1.

**Table 1** Effect of Internet

| Option | Male         | Female       | Total N     |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Yes    | 35<br>(52.2) | 24<br>(35.8) | 59<br>(88)  |
| No     | 5<br>(7.4)   | 3<br>(4.5)   | 8<br>(11.9) |

*Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage*

The study reveals that the information seeking behavior of most of the scholars (88%) is affected by using the internet as evident from the table 1 above. While there are some of the respondents (11.9%) whose information seeking behavior is not affected at all by using the Internet .



### (2) Search strategies adopted

Scholars under the scope of present study adopt different search strategies in order to get required information shown in table 2.

**Table 2** Search Strategies adopted

| Search Strategies | Male         | Female       | Total               |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Boolean search    | 23<br>(34.3) | 12<br>(17.9) | 35<br><b>(52.2)</b> |
| Truncation search | 3<br>(4.4)   | 2<br>(2.9)   | 5<br><b>(7.4)</b>   |
| Proximity search  | 7<br>(10.4)  | 6<br>(8.9)   | 13<br><b>(19.4)</b> |
| Phrase Search     | 7<br>(10.4)  | 7<br>(10.4)  | 14<br><b>(20.8)</b> |

Table 2 indicates that search strategies adopted by the scholars while seeking their information on the internet varies by a great margin. It is evident from the table above that most of the respondents (52.2%) adopt Boolean search followed by the respondents (20.8%) who adopt phrase search strategy for searching information. And a fewer number of scholars that are (7.4%) adopt truncation strategy.

### (3) Tools adopted for document searching

Scholars under the scope of present study adopt different tools for searching the documents shown in table 3.

**Table 3** Tools Adopted For Document Searching

| Source            | Always       | Often        | Never        |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| OPAC              | 40<br>(59.7) | 20<br>(29.8) | 7<br>(10.4)  |
| Printed Catalogue | --           | 11<br>(16.4) | 56<br>(83.5) |

It is prominent from the table 3 that there is large number of scholars (59.7%) who always use OPAC followed by respondents (29.8%) who often use OPAC for searching the documents while there are least number of respondents (10.4) who never consult OPAC. The table 3 also shows that printed catalogue is often used by some of the scholars (16.4%) for searching the documents. While majority of the respondents (83.5%) never use printed catalogue.

### (4) Method used for seeking help

Scholars under the scope of present study use different methods for seeking help as shown in table 4.

**Table 4** Method Used For Seeking Help

| Method              | Male      | Female    | Total            |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| Reference Librarian | 28 (41.7) | 15 (22.3) | 43 <b>(64.1)</b> |
| Friend/Colleague    | 4 (5.9)   | 1 (1.4)   | 5 <b>(7.4)</b>   |
| Research Guide      | 8 (11.9)  | 11 (16.4) | 19 <b>(28.3)</b> |
| Other               | -         | -         | -                |

Table 4 shows that majority of the scholars (64.1%) seek help from reference librarian followed by number of respondents (28.3%) who seek help from research guide. Whereas, least number of scholars (7.4%) take help from friends/ colleagues.

**(5) Tools used for keeping abreast of current developments**

Scholars under the scope of present study use number of tools for staying abreast of current developments as shown in table 5.

**Table 5** Tools Used for keeping Abreast

| <b>Tools</b>   | <b>Always</b> | <b>Often</b> | <b>Never</b> |
|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| E-mail alert   | 30<br>(44.7)  | 37<br>(55.2) | --           |
| Scanning of current issues of print/online journals            | 33<br>(49.2)  | 21<br>(31.3) | 13<br>(19.4) |
| Through various services provided by library like CAS/SDI etc. | 42<br>(62.6)  | 18<br>(26.8) | 7<br>(10.4)  |
| Scanning recent issues of abstracting tools                    | 33<br>(49.2)  | 22<br>(32.8) | 12<br>(17.9) |
| Personal communication.  | 28<br>(41.7)  | 7<br>(10.4)  | 32<br>(47.7) |

From table 5, it is evident that all the respondents use email in one way or the other way for keeping themselves abreast with latest developments. The study reveals that there are respondents (44.7%) who always stay abreast of current developments through email alerts while others (55.2%) often keep themselves abreast through this service.

**(i) Scanning of current issues of print/online journals:** Table 5 indicates that there are various respondents (49.2%) who always keep themselves abreast by Scanning of current issues of print/online journals while as there are some other respondents (31.3%) who often use this tool. Also least number of respondents (19.4%) never makes use of this service/tool.

**(ii) CAS/SDI:** Data in table 5 reveals that majority of the respondents (62.6%) who always keep themselves abreast of current developments through various services provided by library. While there are some other respondents (26.8%) who often make use of this service. Table also depicts that least number of respondents (10.4%) never make use of this service.

**(iii) Scanning recent issues of abstracting tools:** Data in table 5 depicts that most of the scholars (49.2%) always make use of this service while some of the respondents (32.8%) often make use of this service. It is also evident from the table that a least number of scholars (17.9%) never make use of this service.

**(iv) Personal communication:** Data in table 5 reveals that majority of the respondents (41.7%) always make personal communications for staying abreast of current developments while least number of respondents (10.4%) often make use of this service. Also as evident from the table (47.7%) never have personal communications.

**(6) Source preferred for seeking required information**

Scholars under the scope of present study prefer different sources for seeking required information as shown in table 6.



**Table 6** Source preferred for seeking information.

| Source             | Male         | Female       | Total N      |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Web Source         | 31<br>(46.2) | 12<br>(17.9) | 43<br>(64.1) |
| Documentary Source | 9<br>(13.4)  | 15<br>(22.3) | 24<br>(35.8) |

Table 6 reveals that majority of the respondents (64.1%) prefer web sources for seeking their required information on the web followed by a least number of respondents (35.8%) who prefer documentary source.

**(7) Information resources used in research**

Scholars under the scope of present study use various information resources in research as shown in table 7.

**Table 7** Information Resources Used In Research

| Information Sources    | Always       | Often        | Never        |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Internet               | 65<br>(97)   | 2<br>(2.9)   | --           |
| Books                  | 58<br>(86.5) | 9<br>(13.4)  | --           |
| Patents                | 50<br>(74.6) | 8<br>(11.9)  | 9<br>(13.4)  |
| Conference Proceedings | 35<br>(52.2) | 19<br>(28.3) | 13<br>(19.4) |
| Audio/video/CDROM/DVD  | 22<br>(32.8) | 32<br>(47.7) | 13<br>(19.4) |
| Thesis                 | 21<br>(31.3) | 29<br>(43.2) | 17<br>(25.3) |
| Online journals        | 42<br>(62.6) | 17<br>(25.3) | 8<br>(11.9)  |

**(i) Internet:** It is evident from the table 7 that majority of the respondents (97%) always use internet as an information source in research while least number of respondents (2.9%) often make use of internet.

**(ii) Books:** It is shown in the table 7 that greater part of the respondents (86.5%) use books as an information source in research while a least number of respondents (13.4%) use books on often basis in research.

**(iii) Patents:** Data in the table 7 depicts that a major portion of scholars (74.6%) always use patents as an information source in research while some of the respondents (13.4%) often make use of patents in research.

**(iv) Conference proceedings:** Table 7 shows that a greater part or respondents (52.2%) go for conference proceedings in research and there are other respondents (28.3%) often make use of conference proceedings in research. While there are least number of respondents (19.4%) who never consult conference proceedings in research.

**(v) Audio/video/CDROM/DVD:** Data in table 7 shows that majority of the respondents (47.7%) who often make use of Audio/video/CDROM/DVD information sources in research followed by respondents (32.8%) who always make use of these sources in research and also a least number of respondents (19.4%) who never use these types of information sources.

**(vi) Thesis:** It is evident from the table 7 that a greater part of respondents (43.2%) often make use of thesis as an information source in research while there are some other respondents (31.3%) who always use thesis as an information source followed by a lowest number of respondents (25.3%) who never make use of thesis.

**(vii) Online journals:** It is prevalent from the study that a bulk number of respondents (62.6%) always make use of online journals as an information source in research followed by (25.3%) who often make use of online journals, while a least number of respondents (11.9%) never make use of this information source.

### **(8) Problems Faced In Seeking the Information**

Scholars under the scope of present study face much kind of problems while seeking their required information as shown in table 8.

**Table 8** Problems Faced In Seeking the Information.

| <b>Problems</b>                              | <b>Always</b> | <b>Often</b> | <b>Never</b> |
|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Information is scattered in too many sources | 31<br>(46.2)  | 19<br>(28.3) | 17<br>(25.3) |
| Information sources are very expensive       | 18<br>(26.8)  | 39<br>(58.2) | 10<br>(14.9) |
| Latest information sources are not available | 23<br>(34.3)  | 29<br>(43.2) | 15<br>(22.3) |
| Non-availability of e-journals and databases | 17<br>(25.3)  | 24<br>(35.8) | 26<br>(38.8) |
| Required material is not available           | 15<br>(22.3)  | 37<br>(55.2) | 15<br>(22.3) |
| Lack of time allotted by the library         | 13<br>(19.4)  | 21<br>(31.3) | 33<br>(49.2) |
| Lack of technical support                    | 16<br>(23.8)  | 39<br>(58.2) | 12<br>(17.9) |
| Language Barrier                             | 11<br>(16.4)  | 33<br>(49.2) | 23<br>(34.3) |

The study reveals that majority of the respondents (46.2%) always face the problem that the information is scattered in too many sources followed by (34.3%) that often face the problem regarding latest information sources which are not available, while the other respondents (58.2%) often face the problems of expensive sources of information and lack of technical support.

### **(9) Awareness of various Library Services**

Scholars under the scope of present study make use of different library services and awareness to these services varies from person to person as shown in table 9.

**Table 9** Awareness of various Library Services

| <b>Library services</b>           | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>To some extent</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Indexing and abstracting services | 22 (32.8)  | 15 (22.3) | 30 (44.7)             |
| Bibliographic services            | 27 (40.2)  | 12 (17.9) | 28 (41.7)             |
| Reprographic services             | 48 (71.6)  | -         | 19 (28.3)             |
| Interlibrary loan services        | 43 (64.1)  | 7 (10.4)  | 17 (25.3)             |
| Reference services                | 56 (83.5)  | 4 (5.9)   | 7 (10.4)              |

The study reveals that majority of the respondents (83.5%) are aware of the reference services provided by the library and the least number of the scholars (10.4%) are to some extent aware of this reference service. Also depicting from the table, a great number of respondents (71.6%) are aware of the reprographic services followed by (40.2%) bibliographic services. While there are some respondents (22.3%) who are not aware of indexing and abstracting services followed by other respondents (17.9%) who are not aware of bibliographic service.

**(10) Satisfaction of Library Services**

Scholars under the scope of present study take advantage of various library services and provide their response about these library services as shown in table 10.

**Table 10** Satisfaction of Library Services

| <b>Library</b>                | <b>Highly satisfied</b> | <b>Satisfied</b> | <b>Less satisfied</b> | <b>Not satisfied</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Alama Iqbal library services  | 42<br>(62.6)            | 7<br>(10.4)      | 10<br>(14.9)          | 8<br>(11.9)          |
| Departmental library services | 25<br>(37.3)            | 12<br>(17.9)     | 19<br>(28.3)          | 11<br>(16.4)         |

Data in Table 10 elucidates that bulk of the respondents 42(62.6%) are highly satisfied by the services of the Alama Iqbal library while some of the respondents 8(11.9%) are not satisfied by the services of the library. Also evident from the table, majority of the respondents 25(37.3%) are highly satisfied by the services of the departmental library followed by 11(16.4%) who are not satisfied by the services of the departmental library.

**(11) Location of information seeking activities**

Scholars under the scope of present study seek information at various locations as shown in table 11.

**Table 11** Location of information Seeking Activities

| <b>Location</b>      | <b>Always</b> | <b>Often</b> | <b>Never</b> |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Home                 | 6<br>(8.9)    | 22<br>(32.8) | 39<br>(58.2) |
| Departmental Library | 26<br>(38.8)  | 37<br>(55.2) | 4<br>(5.9)   |
| Central Library      | 46<br>(68.6)  | 21<br>(31.3) | --           |
| Hostel               | 37<br>(55.2)  | 30<br>(44.7) | --           |

The study reveals that majority of the respondents (68.6%) seek information at central library followed by (55.2%) who seek information at hostel while there are other respondents (38.8%) and (8.9%) has their information seeking activities at departmental library and home respectively. Also depicted from the table 11, majority of the scholars (55.2%) often seek information at departmental library and a least number of respondents (5.9%) and (58.2%) never seek information at departmental library and home respectively.

**(12) Format preferred for obtaining information**

Scholars under the scope of present study prefer different sources for seeking required information as shown in table 12.

**Table 12** Format Preferred

| Source          | Male         | Female       | Total N      |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Print copy      | 16<br>(23.8) | 13<br>(19.4) | 29<br>(43.2) |
| Electronic copy | 24<br>(35.8) | 14<br>(20.8) | 38<br>(56.7) |

Data in the table 12 elucidates that greater part of respondents (56.7%) prefer electronic format for obtaining information followed by other portion of respondents (43.2%) who prefer print format for obtaining their required information.

**(13) Accession to journal articles**

Scholars under the scope of present study prefer different sources for seeking required information as shown in table 13.

**Table 13** Accession to Journal Articles

| Source                                    | Male         | Female       | Total N      |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Library's subscribed journals             | 27<br>(40.2) | 18<br>(26.8) | 45<br>(67.1) |
| Personal subscription to print/e-journals | 13<br>(19.4) | 9<br>(13.4)  | 22<br>(32.8) |
| Other                                     | -            | -            | -            |

From table 13 it is evident that majority of the respondents (67.1%) access library's subscribed journals for quenching their information needs followed by respondents (32.8%) who get access to journals by personal subscription to print/e-journals.

**(14) Information channels consulted**

Scholars under the scope of present study seek consult different information channels shown in table 14.

**Table 14** Information channels Consulted

| Channels            | Always       | Often        | Never        |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Personal collection | 24<br>(35.8) | 36<br>(53.7) | 7<br>(10.4)  |
| Central Library     | 47<br>(70.1) | 20<br>(29.8) | --           |
| Book stores         | 13<br>(19.4) | 17<br>(25.3) | 37<br>(55.2) |
| Colleagues          | 16<br>(23.8) | 19<br>(28.3) | 32<br>(47.7) |

The study depicts that majority of the respondents (70.1%) always consult central library as an information channel while other respondents (29.8%) often consult this channel. Table 14 also indicates that least number of respondents (19.4%) always consult book stores as an information channel followed by a majority of respondents (55.2%) who never consult book stores.

**IX. Findings**

Extensive reading and study of the data collected resulted in the identification of different information seeking behavior of scholars which is based on analysis and interpretation of the data on “information seeking behavior of scholars of faculty of social science”. The various findings are listed below under different headings:

- **Effect of Internet on information seeking Behavior:** The respondents were asked whether their information seeking behavior was affected by using the internet. The study shows that 88% of the scholars were affected by using the internet among them the male respondent's behavior is largely affected.
- **Search Strategies Adopted:** The respondents were asked about the search strategies adopted for seeking the information on the internet. The study shows that majority of the respondents 52.2% adopted Boolean search strategy for seeking the information while a few respondents 7.4% adopt truncation search strategy. The study indicates that Boolean search strategy is widely adopted by these respondents for seeking their required information on the internet.
- **Tools Adopted For Document Searching:** The respondents were asked about the tools they adopt while searching the documents. It is found that OPAC is an important tool which is always adopted by 59.7% scholars for searching the documents while there is less use of printed catalogue.
- **Reason for Using OPAC:** The respondents were asked to mention the reason behind using the OPAC. After studying, it is found that 71.7% scholars gave the reason that the document retrieval is relevant while 28.3% scholars gave the reason that retrieval of information is quick and easy.
- **Method Used for Seeking Help:** The respondents were asked to indicate the method which they use for seeking the information. It is found that 64.1% seek help from reference librarian. Whereas 7.4% scholars seek information by consulting friend/colleague.
- **Tools Used for keeping Abreast Of Current Development:** Respondents were asked about the various tools which they use for staying abreast of current developments. After studying the data, it is found that 62.6% respondents always keep themselves abreast and up to date through CAS/SDI etc. services provided by the library followed by 49.2% respondents who stay abreast through scanning of current issues of print/online journals and scanning recent issues of abstracting tools. It is also found that 47.7% respondents never make use of personal communications.
- **Source preferred for seeking required information:** Respondents were asked to indicate their preference for web/documentary sources. It was found that 64.1% respondents preferred web sources over documentary sources. While 35.8% showed preference for documentary sources.
- **Accession to Journal Articles:** The respondents were asked to indicate how they access journal articles for seeking information. It is found that 67.1% of respondents' access library's subscribed journals while 32.8% respondents access journal articles through personal subscription. Thus, it clearly shows that library's subscribed journals are accessed much more by the respondents.
- **Format Preferred for Obtaining Information:** Respondents were asked about the format they prefer among print and electronic for obtaining information. It is found that 56.7% of respondents prefer electronic format over print format. Thus respondents desire more exposure to electronic sources.
- **Information Resources Used In Research:** The respondents were asked that how frequently they use information resources in research. It is found that 97% of

respondents always use internet followed by 86.5% of respondents who use books as information source in research. Whereas 47.7% of respondents often make use of audio/video/CDROM/DVD as information source in research. Also found that 25.3% of respondents never make use of thesis as an information source in research.

- **Problems Faced In Seeking the Information:** The scholars do, face a number of problems in their information-seeking activities. The respondents were asked to mention the problems faced by them while seeking information to meet their needs. It is found that the top ranking problem mentioned by a majority (46.2%) of the respondents is that the information is scattered in too many sources. A majority (34.3%) complain that the latest information sources are not available. While the other problems which the respondents often face are very expensive information sources and lack of technical support.
- **Awareness of various Library Services:** The library provides various services which are useful in one way or the other. The respondents were asked to mention their awareness about these various library services. It is found that 83.5% of respondents are aware of reference services provided by the library followed by 71.6% of respondents who are aware of reprographic services. While 44.7% of respondents are to some extent aware of indexing and abstracting services.
- **Satisfaction of Library Services:** As known about the library services provided to scholars useful in research. The respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction level of these services provided by the central and departmental libraries. It is found that 62.6% of respondents are highly satisfied by the services of central library while 11.9% of respondents are not satisfied by the services. Talking about departmental library, it is found that 37.3% of respondents are highly satisfied by the library services while 16.4% of respondents are not satisfied by the services.
- **Location of information Seeking Activities:** The scholars do seek information at different locations. The respondents were asked to mention the location of information seeking activities. It is found that majority (68.6%) of the scholars seek information at central library followed by 38.8% of respondents who seek information in the departmental library. While there are 58.2% of respondents who never seek information at home.
- **Format Preferred for Obtaining Information:** Respondents were asked about the format they prefer among print and electronic for obtaining information. It is found that 56.7% of respondents prefer electronic format over print format. Thus respondents desire more exposure to electronic sources.
- **Accession to Journal Articles:** The respondents were asked to indicate how they access journal articles for seeking information. It is found that 67.1% of respondents' access library's subscribed journals while 32.8% respondents access journal articles through personal subscription. Thus, it clearly shows that library's subscribed journals are accessed much more by the respondents.
- **Information channels Consulted:** The respondents were asked to mention the information channels they consult during research for seeking information. It is found that 70.1% of respondents consult central library as an information channel while 53.7% of respondents often consult personal collections. Also found that 55.2% of respondents never consult book stores.

## **X. Suggestions**

There are various issues which need to be suggested. Therefore, an attempt is made to suggest the following things which could be useful in future:



The survey indicated that the majority of respondents use internet and email facility among the computer based services available in library. Very less users search CD ROM databases. Internet is therefore described as the backbone of the information superhighway. Libraries should encourage the faculty in use of library by providing Current Awareness Service in general and Selective Dissemination of Information service in particular. Libraries should also develop their collection in different formats with a variety of resources. It is clear that, more number of hours spend on information gathering activities like browsing e-journals on internet, searching for related information, E-mail alerts and correspondence. This shows that the online activity is more than the traditional activities. This shows the trend of use of electronic resources is more than the print. Therefore the libraries have to make an effort to develop the more and more electronic resources. They must also provide free internet services to users to make acquaint with the online resources. As evident from the study that majority of the scholars seek help from reference librarian. Thus, It is suggested that the library must provide adequate information and communication technology facilities for reference librarians such as internet, laser printers, scanners, fax machines, telephones etc. with a view to offer many services to varied number of scholars. It was analyzed from most of the responses that the library staff lacks professionals to a great deal for supporting researchers in many aspects. Therefore, it is suggested that the library must acquire professional personnel's in order to provide technical support to research scholars.

## **XI. Conclusion**

The core of the library profession remains the same, but methods and tools for information delivery 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. Although some useful services like current awareness service and selective dissemination of information 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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