Usage of Information Sources by PG Students of Social Science Faculty, AMU: A Survey

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Abstract

This study was conducted to know the usage of information sources by the PG students of Social Science Faculty, AMU. Questionnaire method was adopted to collect the data by using simple random sampling. The study aimed to identify the frequency and purpose of library visit, information sources most frequently used by the students, searching methods adopted, places of accessing e-sources and difficulties faced in search of information. Findings of the study and suggestions are given based on the analysis and interpretations of the study.

Keywords

Information sources, Electronic information sources, usage of information sources
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1. INTRODUCTION

Information is the most essential resource for the progress of each and every part of a society and in fact, no progress is possible without having sufficient information. Those who possess information are always in a beneficial position in comparison to those who do not have it and here libraries play a very crucial role in bridging this information divide. "Information is an important and key resource for every organization and is an essential input for all types of organization. Libraries are organized information centres as they 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 user's satisfaction" (Biradar, D. Kumar & Mahesh, 2009).

"Over the centuries, libraries have been the keepers and distributors of books, journals, maps and other materials that are used by users in the learning process" (Pavani, 2007). Libraries provide required information through their information sources to the users whether they are undergraduates, postgraduates, research scholars, teachers or anybody who need information.

Usage of information sources is the most important step during the process of gathering information for study purpose, to update knowledge or for any other purpose. Information sources include books, journal, encyclopaedias, dissertations, etc. that users use for fulfilling their information needs. The growth of information technology (IT) in libraries has changed the whole scenario of seeking information by users. Internet has made possible for the users to access electronic sources such as e-books, e-journals, databases, etc. from anywhere at any time. Hence, in the present paper an attempt is made to investigate the usage of information sources by the PG students of social science faculty, AMU.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine frequency and purpose of library visit.
2. To find out the information sources consulted by the users.
3. To analyze the purpose of using information sources.
4. To know about the methods for searching information by users.
5. To find out the usage of e-sources by the respondents.
6. To examine the place of accessing e-sources.

7. To find out the problems faced by the students while searching information.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hussain & Krishna Kumar (2013) investigated the utilization of information resources and services of the Master School of Management Technology. It was found that most of the users visit library for study purpose and they mostly consult books, periodicals, newspapers whereas maps, charts, microfilms are least used by users. Lee, Paik & Joo (2012) investigated the selection as well as the factors related to the selection of information resources by undergraduate students for their academic search tasks. The study reaffirmed that online information resources were given more preference than print sources by the students. Bindu K & Chandrappa S (2012) attempted to find out the use of information resources and services in the veterinary colleges of Karnataka by the teachers, research scholars and PG students**.** The study revealed that usefulness and preferences of information sources varied with the users, nature of information required and its ease of access. CD-ROM databases and on-line databases were found to be the most used electronic resources and current journals and reference books were most used print resources.

Biradar, D.Kumar & Mahesh (2009) conducted a study to know about the extent of usage of information sources especially agricultural science periodicals and services offered by Agricultural Science College, Shimoga. It was found that users used books more in comparison to the periodicals. The study also revealed that in spite of the availability of non-documentary sources, users were not using them because of the lack of awareness and inconvenience in the use of these sources. Kanniyappan, Nithyanandam and Ravichandran (2008) investigated the use of different types of electronic resources and services by the faculty members. The findings show that the electronic resources influenced the reading behaviour of faculty member as they preferred more electronic version for their academic development. Khongtim and Marbaniang (2008) find out in their paper that many students depend on the library for their study and still do not use internet as one of the source of information

Ugah (2008) studies the relationship of availability and accessibility as variables with the use of library services and seeking information resources. The study revealed that these variables have a great effect on the use of library services because sometimes either resource was not available or it was available not easily accessible to the users. So, the library services are not being fully used by the students because of the apparent shortcomings in availability and accessibility. Liu (2006) explored the extent of using print sources verses electronic resources by the graduate students. The findings show that electronic sources are more frequently used by students than print sources. Convenient access and ease in searching are the most common factors that determined the use of electronic sources. Lohar and Kumbar (2002) attempted to know the use of library facilities and information sources among the faculty members in Sahyadri Colleges, Shimoga. The study revealed that mostly respondents visit library for consulting text books, reference books and to read the newspapers for current information. Tadasad and Metasheela (2001) conducted a survey on postgraduate (PG) students of Gulbarga University. The study revealed that most of the students used the information sources like books, newspapers, popular magazines, class notes, notes of seniors for their academic purposes. Beside these, the majority of students never used memoranda, diaries and letters, CD databases, course material of open universities, research reports, etc.

4. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was used for collecting opinion of PG students at Social Science Faculty of AMU regarding the usage of information sources they consulted for their study. One hundred seventy (170) questionnaires were distributed among the students of different departments by a simple random method out of which 165 filled questionnaires were received, showing 97.5 percent response rate.

5. DATE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The findings of the present study are summarized and presented here with the tables and graphs.

5.1. Status of respondents

Table 1: Status of Respondents

S. No	Questionnaire administered	Questionnaire received	%
1.	170	165	97%

One hundred seventy (170) questionnaires were distributed among the PG students of different departments by a simple random method to know the

usage of information sources, out of which 165 filled questionnaires were received, showing 97.5 percent response rate.

5.2. Frequency of visiting the library

Table 2 shows the frequency of visiting to the library by the PG students of Social Science Faculty. The respondents were given five options like *daily, once in a week, twice in a week, fortnightly* and *when required*. The analysis of the responses is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of visiting the library

S. No.	Frequency of visit	No. of Respondents	%
1	Daily	66	40
2	Once in a Week	40	24.24
3	Twice in a Week	42	25.45
4	Fortnightly	11	6.67
5	When required	6	3.63

The data reveals that in social science faculty, among 165 PG students 40 % respondents visit library daily, 25.45% visit library twice in a week, 24.24% respondents visit once in a week, 6.67% visit fortnightly and 3.63 % visit the library when they require.

5.3. Purpose of visiting the library

Question was asked to the respondents to know their purpose of visiting to the library. The respondents were given four options to select namely: *to borrow books, consult periodicals, read newspapers* and *any other*. The replies given are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Purpose of visiting the library

S. No.	Purpose	No. of respondents	%
1.	To borrow books	105	63.63%
2.	Consult periodicals	28	16.96%
3.	Read newspapers	35	21.21%
4.	Any other	17	10.30%

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It is observed from the Table 3 that out of 165 PG students 63.63% PG students visit to the library to borrow books, 21.21% visit to read newspapers, 16.96% respondents said that they visit the library to consult periodicals, and 10.30% visit for other purposes.

5.4. Usage of information sources by PG Students

A question was posed to the respondents to know about the information sources they consult. The respondents were given following options to select from namely: *General books, Journals/Periodicals, Encyclopaedias, Patents/Standards, Thesis/Dissertations* and *Reports*. The replies given are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: **Usage of information sources by PG Students**

S. No.	Sources	No. of respondents	%
1.	General books	80	48.48
2.	Journals/Periodicals	21	12.72
3.	Encyclopaedias	29	17.57
4.	Patents/Standards	0	0
5.	Thesis/Dissertations	35	21.21
6.	Reports	6	3.63

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It is evident from Table 4, 48.48% respondents use General books to meet the information needs, 21.21% use thesis/dissertations, 17.57% use Encyclopaedias, 12.72% consult Journals/Periodicals to meet the information needs, 3.63% use Reports and none of the respondents use Patents/Standards.

5.5. Purpose of using information sources

A question was asked to the respondents to know about the information sources they consult. The respondents were given the following options namely: *to update knowledge, for study, to prepare assignment, and for dissertation.* The replies given are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Purpose of using information sources

S.	Purpose	No. of	Percentag
1.	To update	38	23.03%
2.	For study	67	40.60%
3.	To prepare	56	33.93%
4.	For Dissertation	43	26.06%

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It is evident from Table 5, that 40.60% respondent's purpose of using information sources was for study followed by 33.93% to prepare assignment, 26.06% for dissertations and 23.03% respondents use sources of information to update knowledge.

5.6. Methods for searching of Information

A question was asked to the respondents to know about the methods they adopt for searching information. The respondents were given the following options: *contents page, indexes, references given at the end of chapters, references given at the end of journal articles* and *subject bibliographies.* The replies given are shown in Table 6.

Table-6: **Methods for searching of Information**

S. No	Methods	No. of responden	%
1.	Contents page	36	21.81
2.	Indexes	41	24.84
3.	References given at the end of chapters	56	33.93
4.	References given at the end of journal articles	31	18.78
5.	Subject bibliographies	7	4.24

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It is evident from Table 6, that 33.93% respondents search through references given at the end of chapters, 24.84% use indexes, 21.81% use contents page,18.78% use references given at the end of journal articles and 4.24% respondents use subject bibliographies for searching information.

5.7. Usage of E-resources by PG students

A question was asked to the respondents to know about the usage of e-sources. The respondents were given options such as: *journals, books, reference sources, Newspaper &Magazines* and *databases* to select from. The replies given are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: **Usage of Electronic Sources by PG Students**

S. No.	Sources	No. of respondent	%
1.	E-books	11	6.66
2.	E-Journals/Periodicals	81	49.09
3.	Reference sources	47	28.48
4.	Newspapers & Magazines	35	21.21
5.	Databases	21	12.72

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It is evident from Table 7, that e-journal/periodical (49.09%) were the most used electronic source of information by the students followed by reference sources (28.48%) such as dictionaries, directories, encyclopaedias, etc. while 21.21% used newspapers & magazines, 12.72% used databases and only 6.66% users read e-books for fulfilling their information needs.

5.8. Places from where Electronic Sources were accessed

A question was asked to the respondents to know about the places from where they accessed electronic sources. The respondents were given the following options to choose from: *Maulana Azad Library, university computer centre, departmental lab, home* and *any other*. The replies given are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: **Places for accessing Electronic Sources**

S. No	Places	No. of respondent	%
1.	Maulana Azad Library	37	22.42
2.	University computer centre	41	24.84
3.	Departmental lab	59	35.75
4.	Home	29	17.57
5.	Any other	13	7.87

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table 8, shows the places from where the electronic information sources are accessed by PG students. Among 165 PG students, 35.75% use Departmental lab, 24.84% use University computer centre, 22.42% respondents use Maulana Azad Library, 17.57% respondents access electronic sources from home and 7.87% use other places to access electronic sources.

5.9. Difficulties faced in obtaining Information

A question was asked to the respondents to know about the difficulties they faced during searching of information. The respondents were given following options to select from: *materials are not available,*

lack of time, information scattered in too many sources, lack of knowledge in using the library, do not know how to use the catalogue and *any other*. The replies given are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: **Difficulties faced in obtaining Information**

S. No	Difficulties	No. of respondents	%
1.	Materials are not available	56	33.93
2.	Lack of time	35	21.21
3.	Information scattered in too many sources	46	27.87
4.	Lack of knowledge in using the library	14	8.48
5.	Do not know how to use the catalogue	16	9.69
6.	Any other	9	5.45

(Multiple answers were permitted)

Table-9 shows the problems faced by respondents while, obtaining information. Majority (33.93%) of respondents said that the unavailability of material they require as a hindrance. Other problems were identified as information scattered in too many sources (27.87%), lack of time (21.21%), 9.69% said they "do not know how to use the catalogue", 8.48% believed lack of knowledge in using the library as a problem, while 5.45% respondents had some other problems.

6. FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the data the following findings are formed:-

1. The study reveals that majority of the PG students visit the Library daily, followed by weekly visits.
2. Majority of students visit to the library to borrow books followed by to read newspapers and to consult periodicals.
3. It was found that maximum number of PG students used general books for getting their required information, followed by consulting thesis/dissertations, encyclopaedias and journals/periodicals.
4. The analysis of the data reveals that most of the PG students consult information sources usually for study purposes followed by using them for preparing assignment and dissertations.
5. Majority of students used references given at the end of chapters for searching the required information followed by using indexes.
6. The analysis of the data reveals that majority of the students used e-journals followed by reference sources, newspapers and magazines.
7. The analysis of the data reveals that majority of students use departmental lab followed by university computer centre and Maulana Azad Library for accessing electronic information sources.
8. The study shows that majority of students face problems such as: 'materials are not available', 'information is scattered in too many sources' as well as 'lack of time' in obtaining information.

7. CONCLUSION

This study sought to examine the "Information sources consulted by PG students of Social Science Faculty, AMU, Aligarh" to get an overview of their information requirements. Information sources consulted by PG students are likely to differ from one department to another. However, this is the responsibility of library to fulfil the information needs and demands of the users. Majority of students visit library daily for borrowing books to accomplish their information needs. Chief sources of information were found to be the books, thesis/dissertations, encyclopaedias journals/encyclopaedias for study purposes. At the same time they also use electronic sources such as e-journals, reference sources, etc. Though there are some hindrances in obtaining these sources of information such as unavailability of the required material, information scattered in too many sources and lack of time in obtaining such sources. So, the libraries have to tackle with all these obstacles and provide better facilities to the users so that they regularly come to the library and use the information sources available in the library.

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