

Impact of Changing Information Seeking Behaviour of Users upon University Libraries

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Abstract:

The major goal of this research was to know the impact of changing information seeking behavior of users upon university libraries. An effort was also made to recognize different attributes of information seeking (i.e., methods for keeping update, utilization of social networking channels to locate information, use of digital resources to seek information, usage of ICTs etc). The study was conducted in different phases. In the first phase, a comprehensive review of related literature was conducted to understand the theoretical and technical aspects of the study. In the second phase, the instrument of the questionnaire was developed for data collection with the help of the reviewed literature. In the third phase, a sample was drawn from the target population and data was collected from the sample. In the fourth phase, the gathered data was analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In the last phase, conclusions, recommendations, and findings were drawn in the light of the analyzed data. Findings and recommendations of this study are fruitful in building resources and designing libraries services for meeting users' information needs and seeking behavior efficiently. This research is useful in establishing a friendly library system to accomplish the set objectives of the parent organization.

Key-Words: Information Seeking, Impact of IT upon Libraries, Impact of Users' Behaviors upon Librarians

Introduction:

Information is known as the basic need for humans in the present age of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Man can't survive in his respective discipline without information. Progress in information technology has offered today's information seekers different

opportunities to access the information resources in a variety of formats. Now, the latest tools are being utilized to find out relevant information.

Libraries have been recognized as a treasure of information and have tried to utilize modern technologies in acquiring, organizing, preserving, and disseminating information. Technology kept on growing in the field of librarianship. In the present age, the libraries have to serve their users according to their changing needs and behaviors. Now latest innovations have happened in libraries with respect to resources and services in the consequence of changing users' psychology. Now, libraries are actively engaged in building digital collections and repositories in order to facilitate their clients efficiently. Users' behaviors are placed on priority while collecting resources and designing services.

Man of present era requires information to keep himself updated of the latest developments in his field (Kumar, 2004). Information is needed to make decisions and to solve different problems. Information is not only the most important tool of man but it is also of his basic needs. Information is regarded as a vital source indispensable to the progress of an individual and society. Efficiency may be brought in every field of life through authentic information. Modern society has to depend on information for all of its activities. Every person has the requirement of information.

Kadli (2011) stated the impact of Information Technology on users' behaviors. Information Communication Technologies have brought a great revolution in all fields of life. Now people have become IT-minded. They quickly access the required information. They share information using the latest technologies. They don't depend on other people for accessing relevant content. They make completion of their assignments, term papers, projects, theses and other tasks well in time. They have become smart in the present age of information technology. They use the latest gadgets to complete the assigned works.

Keeping in view the changing behaviors of the users, it has become very much essential for the libraries to change their working style and meet the information needs of users on top priority so that they could get a better impression from the libraries. Libraries are the storehouses of knowledge and they need to accept changes with the passage of time in order to meet the demands of the required times.

Statement of the Problem:

Library user is at the center of the library's service. The modern philosophy of librarianship is user's centered approach. IT is encouraging library practitioners to change their practices and approaches. Librarians are feeling the need to redefine information resources and services. It is very essential for librarians to know the information seeking behavior of their users to serve them in the best efficient manner. This study will help in furnishing the library's resources and services in the best efficient manner.

Significance of the Study:

This study will prove beneficial in designing the library's resources and services according to the users' information seeking behaviors. Users are real assets of any organization and all resources and services are of no value if users are not satisfied. It is the dire need of the present age of ICTs to meet users' expectations and serve them in the best possible manner. This study will prove fruitful in the establishment of a user's friendly system.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are as following:

1. To find out the change in seeking behavior of users.
2. To explore the impact of information technology on users seeking behavior
3. To study the problems faced by users while seeking information.
4. To explore the changes made by libraries according to changed seeking behavior on the resources and services

Literature Review:

New Information and Communication Technologies are bringing a great change in users' behaviors. As a result, the libraries are also changing techniques in serving the users. All resources of the libraries are being organized keeping in view the needs of the users. In the present age, all activities of the libraries are user-centered so libraries make their best to satisfy the information needs of the users. Veeranjanyulu and Singh (2003) studied the benefits of Information Technology (IT) in the libraries of schools, colleges, and universities. The major goal of the study was to know the benefit of information technology. They concluded that libraries should design their services in accordance with users' needs because users have more significance in the present age of IT. They need to be provided information in multiple formats.

Library practitioners should use emerging technologies to satisfy the information needs of the users.

Sharma et al. (2009) presented thoughts about virtual resources and services. They said that libraries should implement the latest technologies in order to better serve their users. IT has changed the mind setup of users. So library resources and services need to be organized in an efficient style so that users may be satisfied with the same. Libraries should implement the latest technologies in the libraries so that users' needs may be fulfilled without facing any complications. Users in the present age have become IT literate. They have the latest IT equipment. They have the latest devices in their pockets. They want to locate required information in an easy way so it has become compulsory for libraries to redefine their resources and services because users may not be satisfied through old traditional methods.

Pandey (2010) studied the conservation of virtual resources in virtual libraries. The goal of the study was to know the value of the preservation of digital resources. He said that users have a liking attitude towards digital resources so libraries need to organize digital content in an efficient style. Users of the present time don't like to visit the libraries in person. They want to seek information from anywhere and at any time, therefore, libraries should not only build digital collections but also play a vital role in preserving digital resources in the best interests of the users.

Chou (2011) made research on the changes that were taking place due to innovations in information technology. Information and Communication Technologies have facilitated the users a lot. The objective of the research was to know the needs of users that were happening due to advancements in information technology. Now users can get information of their own choice around the clock. They face no physical boundaries. They like to locate needed information in a virtual format. Therefore, libraries need to digitize their collections and put them on the websites so that users may access required information without any delay.

Kumar (2012) made a study of the libraries related to IT environment in Haryana state. The major goal of the study was to know the impact of online resources on users. He stated about the status of online resources. Results of his study showed that libraries were trying to improve their infrastructure and re-designing services in accordance with users' needs. He concluded that libraries were giving importance to online publication to meet the information needs of their users.

Raval (2013) described that new changes were occurring in libraries due to change in technologies. He said that trends of the libraries need to be changed. Information access should be provided to all without any obstacles. There should be open source resources so that users could benefit a lot. Open sharing of information has become a basic need in the present age. Libraries need to design Facebook pages for the easiness of users. Information should be provided through the latest techniques so that users' needs may be satisfied.

In an electronic environment, the user's attitude has been changed. He likes to locate information within no time. This change has also brought a change in the working attitude of library practitioners. Kadli (2013) stated that today's librarians' responsibilities are of facilitators, mentors and information advisors. Librarians need to equip themselves with the latest techniques so that they can serve their users well. They need to attend refresher courses. They need to grab the latest expertise in the field so that they can perform well.

Sujatha (2014) explored information seeking behavior in the changing ICT environment. The study aimed to explore the impact of information communication technologies on library resources and services. He stated that IT has changed the routines of libraries. Libraries are accepting changes in the changing environment. Without implementing new technologies, libraries can't progress. Libraries need to implement new technologies in order to satisfy the needs of the users as they want. Users are becoming more and more technology-familiar. So, it is dire need of the present era to equip librarians with required skills with an aim to meet the information needs of the users in an efficient way.

Yuvaraj (2016) stated that new modes of wikis, blogs, Web 2.0, information commons, instant messaging had become common. He conducted this study to know new trends that were taking place in the changing environment. Users are interested in these technological innovations in order to make completion of their required tasks without any problem. Libraries need to adopt the latest software, services, resources, techniques, and methods so that libraries could get a better impression among the community. It has become a dire need of the present age for the librarian to focus on users' core areas for the improvement of library services and resources.

Research Design:

It is a social research that is based on questionnaires and personal visits. A quantitative approach followed by survey research design was opted to complete the study. The population of the study was the users of universities of Punjab. This sample comprises the library users of the

selected government sector universities of Punjab. The sampling of universities of Punjab was selected through random sampling using draw technique. A self-structured questionnaire was formulated and used to collect the data. A pilot study to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument was conducted. The response rate was 70% due to researchers' consistent efforts. Respondents were followed up through telephonic-conversation and by using personal references to receive an immediate response.

Data Analysis and Findings:

The following section presents data analysis, findings, and discussion.

General Information about the Respondents

The first part of the questionnaire was dealing with the personal information about the participants. A total of 350 users participated in this study. Acquired results show that majority of the participants were male respondents who were 72.5%. while 27.5% respondents were the females. It shows that males took more interest in this study and they were also more in number in their respective institutes. Frequency distribution of respondents' gender is presented in figure 1.

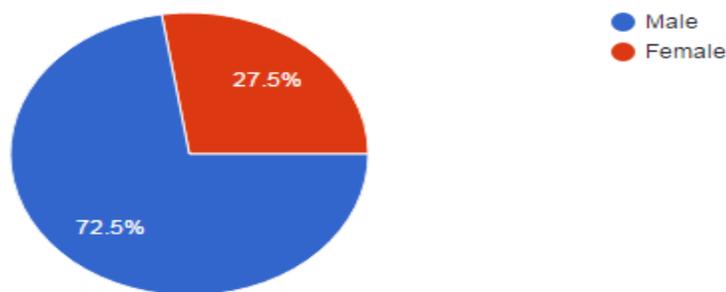


Figure 1: *Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Gender*

Impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Respondents were asked to mention the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) on their information seeking behavior. According to the results, 85.0% respondents stated that information technology had brought easiness in their process of seeking information while 15.0% stated that information technology had no impact on their information seeking behavior. This finding is similar to that of Chou (2011) who made research upon the changes that were taking place due to innovations in information technology. Information and Communication Technologies have facilitated the users a lot. Now users can get information of their own choice around the clock. They face no physical boundaries. They like to locate needed information in a virtual format. Frequency distribution of the acquired responses is presented in table 1.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Opinion about the Impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) on Information Seeking Behavior

Impact of I.T.	Frequency	Percent
Very different	255	85.0
About the same	95	15.0
Total	350	100.0

Respondents' Opinion about the Problems Faced During Seeking Information

The respondents were asked to give the opinion about the problems which they faced while seeking information. For this purpose, they were given different statements to rate which revealed their perception about the problem encountered by them during information seeking process. Acquired responses are analyzed in this section. Descriptive statistics presented in the following Table 2 show that respondents sometimes face the following problem "Information overload" (Mean=2.68) while they seldom face the following problems "Information is scattered in too many sources" (Mean=2.51), "Required material is not available"(Mean=2.32), "Information sources are very expensive" (Mean=2.31), "Latest information sources are not available"(Mean=2.13), "Lack of information about available sources" (Mean=1.82), "Lack of computer hardware or software"(Mean=1.71), "Lack of training to use the electronic resources" (Mean=1.70), "Lack of knowledge in using the library" (Mean=1.64).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Respondents’ Opinion about Problems Encountered During Information Seeking Process

Sr.	Problems	Mean	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	St. Deviation
1	Required material is not available	2.32	2	1	1	5	1.15
2	Information is scattered in too many sources	2.51	2.50	1	1	5	1.30
3	Information overload	2.68	3	3	1	5	1.14
4	Information sources are very expensive	2.31	2	1	1	5	1.20
5	Latest information sources are not available	2.13	2	1	1	5	1.11
6	Lack of training to use electronic resources	1.70	1	1	1	5	0.97
7	Lack of knowledge in using the library	1.64	1	1	1	5	0.84

Note: 5=Always, 4=Frequently, 3= Sometimes, 2=Seldom, 1=Never

CONCLUSION:

According to the acquired responses, male users utilize ICTs very much. They use emerging technology in order to fulfill their information needs. Information Technology has brought many changes in users’ behaviors to seek information. Users utilize many virtual sources to meet their information needs quickly. IT is a great blessing for them. They like to browse digital content without visiting the libraries. They use multiple resources. Respondent face the problems of scattered information, information-overload, costly nature of information resources, lack of training to properly avail digital resources and lack of knowledge and proficiency in using the library. The study has shown that libraries should design their resources and services according to users' information needs so that the real purpose of the library may be fulfilled.

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