

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF POST GRADUATE STUDENTS OF MIDNAPORE COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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Abstract: - *This study was undertaken to determine the information seeking behavior of PG students of Midnapore College (Autonomous), through a questionnaire survey method, reveals that informal channels are more used for information gathering. The overall purpose of the study was to determine what their information requirements and also determine their awareness of library services available to them. The study was collected data on the information requirements of PG students. Data was gathered from 86 PG students close (multiple tick option) questionnaires. Finding indicate that guidance in the use of library resources and services is necessary to help PG students meet some of their information requirements. Text books / journals are preferred for formal source of information course work. The time spent in borrowing / reading literature for various purposes has also been studied. The aim of this study is to identify information seeking behavior, information needs, how to library resources and services are utilized by PG Students.*

Keywords: Information Seeking Behavior; Information Need; User Studies of Students; Library Resources; Library Services.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Information is a key element for any Post Graduate student. Presently Post Graduate students are getting their desired information easily and in a short time with the help of computer with internet and different social media. Information is a critical resource in the operation and management of institution. Timely

availability of relevant information is vital for effective performance of management functions such as planning, organizing, leading and controlling. Information Seeking Behavior is a broad term encompassing the ways individuals articulate their information needs, seek, evaluate, select and use information. Information Seeking Behavior of PG students is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to

satisfy their academic goal. It is, therefore, desirable to understand the purpose for which information is required, the environment in which the user operates user's skills in identifying the needed information, different channels and sources preferred for acquiring information, and barriers to information.

The present study is an attempt to examine the information seeking activities of Post Graduate students of Midnapore College (Autonomous), West Bengal and the various formal and informal sources of information used by them. The present situation has given rise to the growing concept of determining the pattern of searching is said to be considered Information Seeking Behavior (ISB).

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The Post Graduate students of an Institute used Central Library for different information purpose. Their attitudes reflect to which the efforts of the librarians are successful in developing the resources and services of the Central Library to meet user's needs of the institute. The main objectives are as follows:

- a) To assessment of needs of PG students of Midnapore College (Autonomous).
- b) To find out the purpose of information seeking.
- c) To understand the psychology of the PG students for their information seeking behavior.

- d) To identify the problems faced by the PG students regarding information seeking.
- e) Verify and know the amount of time spend on information seeking.
- f) To find out the users knowledge about electronic legal information resources.
- g) To examine the information seeking strategies, use of communication modes in seeking information and use of information source for internal assessment and semester examination.
- h) To identify the different source of information used by Midnapore College library PG users.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

User studies are one of the most research areas in library and information science and from large body of literature in the discipline (Siatri, 1999). Since user studies first appeared in the late 1940s, their number has constantly increased. Kawatra (1992) described the literature of user studies is large and varied and the main problem of reviewing this literature related to this topic is that it is scattered throughout many discipline. There are several compilations of user studies. The most inclusive bibliography is 'Bibliography of use Surveys 1950 – 1970' compiled by Atkins in 1971.

Sethi (1990) respondents preferred journals, books and reference sources for meeting their information needs.

4. CONCEPT OF INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR:

Information seeking behavior is the application of attitudes through set of actions in order to achieve desired information need. When attitudes and actions are collaborated the performance emerges. Based on the level of performance, the satisfaction level of the acquired information is determined. Wilson (1999) defines the term information seeking 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. Thus it includes face-to-face communication with others, as well as the passive reception of information as in, for example watching television advertisements without any intention to act on the information given. Case (2002) defined information behavior as “Information behavior encompasses information seeking as well as the totality of other unintentional or passive behaviors (such as glimpsing or encountering information) as well as purposive behavior that do not involve seeking such as avoiding information”.

5. METHODOLOGY:

The plan should consist of at least these steps:

- Surveying the previous studies and literature in general and learning about all aspects of user studies.

- Determining the objectives of the study.
- Determining the variables to be studied and the model to be followed.
- Selecting the sample of the population to be studied.
- Determining the method of collection of data for observation.
- Determining the method of analysis of data or observations.
- Determining the ways of presentation and utilization of results, including dissemination.

5.1 Selection of method / technique:-

The primary function of surveys is to collect information that can then be analyzed to produce conclusions. There are several survey techniques available for user studies such as, questionnaire method, personal interview, observation by self. The methods available for collection of data as follow:-

- **Surveying:** questioning and obtaining answers directly from post graduate students about their behavior, attributes, values, conditions and/or preferences. This is by far the most often used method in user studies, but also the most obtrusive and thus potentially the most biased or limited of methods.

- **Observation:** making direct observation on the communication behavior of post graduate students in a given situations, practices, time periods, etc..

There are three kinds of tools used in collection of data:-

- Observation
- Questionnaire
- Interview

5.2 Questionnaires design:-

A set of questionnaire was developed. Questions were constructed from the literature of user studies, and then referred to. A good questionnaire is one that is easy for the respondent to complete and easy to analyze.

The format of the questionnaire was based upon close-ended questions to measure the intensity of views of respondents to the questionnaires. These structured questions are multiple-choice items (multiple tick option) from which respondents were asked to choose.

5.3 Population of the study:-

A sample survey was conducted of the total population of post graduate students from all departments of Midnapore College (Autonomous). The target populations in the study were of post graduate students from all departments of Midnapore College

(Autonomous).A questionnaires on the information seeking behavior of post graduate students were distributed randomly to respondents. Out of total 100 questionnaires distributed to post graduate students. 86 were received with an overall response rate of 86 %. The population of the study is given follows:

Distribution of questionnaire and responses received from post graduate students of Midnapore College (Autonomous):

Gender	No. of Questionnaire distributed	Total no. of respondents	Response percentage
Male	60	51	85%
Female	40	35	87.5%

5.4 Data collection method:-

The survey or fieldwork was carried out at the Central Library and all PG departments (PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, MATHEMATICS, ZOOLOGY, BOTANY, PHYSIOLOGY, ENGLISH, BENGALI, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, SANSKRIT, POLITICAL SCIENCE etc.) of Midnapore College (Autonomous) from month of October to November 2017. The questionnaires were personally handed to post graduate students and requested to return the fulfilled questionnaires.

While distributing of questionnaires to post graduate students, the resource or services of respondents was taken to get proportionate

number of respondents according to their major. Attempts were also made to have 51 numbers of male and 35 numbers of female respondents.

5.5 Data analysis method:-

The data gathered from post graduate students, and then analyzed. Frequency distribution on all variables on the questionnaires was done to get the overall picture of how respondents' responded to each question on the survey instrument. The data were analyzed using MS-Excel and suitable graphical representations were made to depict the findings.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

Table 1. Frequency of visit to the library

Sl. No.	Frequency	Male	Female	Total respondents	Percentage (%)
i	Daily	5	5	10	11.627
ii	2-3 times in a week	11	6	17	19.767
iii	Weekly	18	10	28	32.558
iv	Fortnightly	5	2	7	8.139
v	3 times in a month	2	1	3	3.488
vi	Monthly	10	11	21	24.418

Survey respondents were asked whether they visit to the library daily / 2-3 times in a week / weekly/ fortnightly / 3 times in a month /monthly. As shown in table-1, the majority of PG students 32.558% (male-35.294% and female-28.571%) are visit to the library weekly, followed by 24.418% (male-19.607% and female-31.428%) monthly, 19.767% (male-21.568% and female-17.142%) visit to the library 2-3 times in a week, 11.627% (male-9.803% and female-14.285%) visit to the library daily, 8.139% (male-9.803% and female-5.714%) visit to the library fortnightly while, 3.488% (male-3.921% and female-2.857%) come to the library 3 times in a month by PG students. It indicates that library is being used by the post graduate students mostly.

Table 2. Purpose of visit to the library

Sl. No	Purposes	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
i	To use reading hall for self documents study	29	33.72
ii	To study library books	52	60.465
iii	To issue/return of books	72	83.72
iv	Browsing the books on shelves	26	30.232
v	Use of the references materials	7	8.139
vi	To access e-books/e-	32	37.209

	journals/e-resources		
vii	To read journals (printed/back volumes)	15	17.441
vii			
i	To access internet	51	59.302
ix	To download scholarly articles	5	5.813
x	To know the latest arrivals (print books and journals)	18	20.93
xi	To read newspapers and magazines	23	26.744

In response of purpose of visit to the library table-2 indicates that to issue/return of books 72 (83.72%), to study library books 52 (60.465%), to access internet 51 (59.302%) and to access e-books/e-journals/e-resources 32 (37.209%) are the four main purposes of the post graduate students to visit or come library. To use reading hall for self documents study followed by 29 (33.72%) post graduate students, 26 (30.232%) post graduate students come to browsing the books on shelves, 23 (26.744%) post graduate students to read newspapers and magazines, 18 (20.93%) post graduate students to know the latest arrivals (print books and journals), 15 (17.441%) post graduate students to read journals (printed back volume), 7 (8.139%) post graduate students use of the references materials and 5 (5.813%) have to download scholarly articles.

Table 3. Purpose of seeking information

Sl. No	Purposes	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
i	Basic study of books on syllabus area	78	90.697
ii	Study of relevant journal articles	21	24.418
iii	Preparing for examination	71	82.558
iv	Solving the problem to relevant information	36	41.86
v	To keep up-to date on specialized area of study	54	62.79
vi	General awareness	9	10.465

Table-3 indicates in response of purpose of seeking information that to basic study of books on syllabus area 78 (90.697%), preparing for examination 71 (82.558%) and to keep up-to date on specialized area of study 54 (62.79%) are the three main purpose of seeking information by the post graduate students. Solving the problem to relevant information 36 (41.86%) and Study of

relevant journal articles 21 (24.418%) followed by post graduate students. General awareness 9 (10.465%) are another purposes of seeking information by the post graduate students respectively which have less priority.

Table 4. Use of communication modes in seeking information

Sl. No	Communication mediums	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
i	Through personal visit to library	77	89.534
ii	Through fax/e-mail	11	12.79
iii	Through online service	63	73.255
iv	Any other mode	3	3.488

Table- 4 indicates in response of use of communication modes in seeking information that to through personal visit to library 77 (89.534%) and through online service 63 (73.255%) are the main two use of communication modes in seeking information. Through fax/e-mail 11 (12.79%) and any other mode (Dial-A-books, Dial-A-fact, etc) 3

(3.488%) are another use of communication modes in seeking information by the post graduate students respectively which have less priority.

Table 5. Use of document search service

Sl. No.	Services	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
i	Web OPAC	78	90.697
ii	Library web site	52	60.465
iii	Any other	8	9.302

Table-5 shows that Web OPAC and Library web site is an important facility and document searching method for post graduate students with support of 78 (90.697%) Web OPAC and 52 (60.465%) library web site using respondents while there is less used of any other (print book catalogue) 8 (9.302%). The main reason of use of OPAC is fast efficient and prompt searching system with combination searching (AND, OR, NOT) and Library web site use are very simple.

Table 6. Use of services

		1st priority	2nd priority	3rd priority	Total No	(%)	Rank
Sl. No.	Services	Total (%)	Total (%)	Total (%)			
i	Circulation services	47 (54.651)	15 (17.441)	8 (9.302)	70	81.395	2
ii	Reference service	31 (36.046)	18 (20.930)	15 (17.441)	64	74.418	4
iii	Referral service	21 (24.418)	26 (30.232)	10 (11.627)	57	66.279	5
iv	Seminar/workshop/ conference proceedings	36 (41.860)	21 (24.418)	15 (17.441)	72	83.720	1
v	Translation service	7 (8.139)	16 (18.604)	17 (19.767)	40	46.511	8
vi	Bibliographic service	6 (6.976)	14 (16.279)	9 (10.465)	29	33.720	10
vii	Newspapers/ newspaper clippings service	5 (5.813)	13 (15.116)	21 (24.418)	39	45.348	9
viii	Reprographic service	4 (4.651)	17 (19.767)	8 (9.302)	29	33.720	11
ix	Document delivery service	25 (29.069)	13 (15.116)	11 (12.790)	49	56.976	7
x	CAS (Current Awareness Service)	32 (37.209)	15 (17.441)	20 (23.255)	67	77.906	3
xi	SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information)	21 (24.418)	20 (23.255)	16 (18.604)	57	66.279	6

Priority of use of services is one of the important activities of information intermediaries and knowing the priority of the post graduate students helps them to develop a better systems approach to information retrieval and dissemination. On analysis it is evident that post graduate students gave priority to circulation services (54.651%), seminar/workshop/conference proceedings (41.860%), CAS (37.209%) and reference service (36.046%). Table- 6 presents data on rank order of sources used of services. It is evident that the general preference is seminar/workshop/ conference proceedings 83.720%, circulation services 81.395%, CAS 77.906%, reference service 74.418%, referral service 66.279%, SDI 66.279%, document delivery service 56.976%, translation service 46.511%, newspapers/newspaper clippings service 45.348%, bibliographic service 33.720% and reprographic service 33.720%.

Table 7. Use of informal source of information

Sl. No.	Informal sources	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
i	Attending seminar/workshop/conferences	69	80.232
ii	Training & orientation	47	54.651
iii	Group discussion	57	66.279

The respondents were asked as to why they attend seminars, workshops and conferences.

The overall result obtained are presented in table- 7 which shows that use of informal source of information large number of respondents attending seminar/workshop/conferences (80.232%) from all the three spheres have indicated that such programmed are very beneficial as one can gain knowledge from listening to presentations and discussions. Further, one can also develop professional contacts and relationships through this forum. The second preference of respondents was group discussion (66.279%), followed by training & orientation (54.651%).

Table 8. Use of e-resources

Sl. No.	Sources	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
i	E-journals	58	67.441
ii	E- books	68	79.069
iii	Document delivery service	17	19.767
iv	CD-ROM	54	62.790
v	Internet	74	86.046
vi	E-mail	37	43.023
vii	E-bulletin boards & discussion groups	20	23.255
viii	Website of central library	56	65.116

ix	Web OPAC	57	66.279
x	Web OPAC of other libraries	22	25.581

Table-8 indicates that post graduate students use of e-resources according their need that shows large number of respondents 86.046% internet, 79.069% e- books and 67.441% e-journals. The use of e-resources medium number of respondents 66.279% web OPAC, 65.116% website of central library, 62.790% CD-ROM and 43.023% e-mail, are another use of e-resources 25.581% web OPAC of other libraries, 23.255% e-bulletin boards & discussion groups, 19.767% document delivery service by the post graduate students respectively which have less priority.

Table 9. User satisfaction of library

Sl. No.	Attributes	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
i	Adequacy of resource	67	77.906
ii	Organization library collection	43	50.00
iii	Adequacy of journal collection	24	27.906
iv	Adequacy of popular books	54	62.790
v	Competency of library staff	50	58.139
vi	Attitude of library staff	59	68.604

vii	Ease of library OPAC	51	59.302
viii	Comprehensiveness of library website	33	38.372
ix	Library internet facility	40	46.511
x	Library environment	63	73.255
xi	Process of borrowing	58	67.441
xii	Convenience in membership procedure	50	58.139
xiii	Adequate of photocopy facility	8	9.302
xiv	Adequate of opening hours	62	72.093
xv	Satisfaction of overall quality of library services	71	82.558

Table-9 indicates the findings shows that satisfaction of library use is adequacy of resource 67 (77.906%), organization library collection 43 (50.00%), adequacy of journal collection 24 (27.906%), adequacy of popular books 54 (62.790%), competency of library staff 50 (58.139%), attitude of library staff 59 (68.604%), ease of library OPAC 51 (59.302%), comprehensiveness of library website 33 (38.372%), library internet facility 40 (46.511%), library environment 63 (73.255%), process of borrowing 58 (67.441%), convenience in membership procedure 50 (58.139%), adequate of photocopy facility 8 (9.302%), adequate of opening hours 62 (72.093%) and satisfaction of overall quality of library services 71 (82.558%) is utilized by the post graduate students. Table-10

reveals that the maximum of all post graduate students are averagely satisfied of library use.

Table 10. Suggestions for improvement

Sl. No.	Suggestions	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
i	Enrich the collection of printed text books/general books with latest editions	68	79.069
ii	Increase the access range of e-journals and e-books	57	66.279

The majority of post graduate students want the library to subscribe for printed text books, general books and access to e-journals and e-books. In response of suggestion of improvement table-10 indicates that enrich the collection of printed text books/general books with latest editions 79.069% and increase the access range of e-journals and e-books 66.279%.

7. FINDING OF THE STUDY:

- a. The post graduate students used both formal and informal channels of information for assessment and examination.
- b. The primary books were used by post graduate students.
- c. The post graduate students medium used of printed and e-journals.

d. The majority of post graduate students response of purpose of visit to the library indicates that to issue/return of books and study library books.

e. The response of purpose of seeking information that to basic study of books on syllabus area, preparing for examination and to keep up-to date on specialized area of study are the three main purpose of seeking information by the post graduate students.

f. The PG students response of use of communication modes in seeking information that to through personal visit to library and through online service are the main two use of communication modes in seeking information.

g. The study shows that web OPAC and library web site is an important facility and document searching method for post graduate students.

h. The Priority of use of services is one of the important activities of information intermediaries and knowing the priority of the post graduate students helps them to develop a better systems approach to information retrieval and dissemination. Post graduate students gave priority to circulation services, seminar/workshop/conference proceedings, CAS and reference service.

i. The study of shows that use of informal source of information large number of post graduate students respondents attending seminar/workshop/conferences have indicated that such programmed are very beneficial as one can gain knowledge from listening to presentations and discussions.

j. The post graduate students use of e-resources according their need that shows large number of respondents internet, e-books and e-journals.

k. The study indicates the findings shows that satisfaction of library use, reveals that the maximum of all post graduate students are averagely satisfied of library use.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

Information has become a vital resource for sustenance. More we use information more we gain knowledge. To achieve professional competency in any subject, the users first and foremost priority is to obtain right information at a right time and to do so, one has to develop the right seeking behavior and searching strategy. Among various modes of information seeking, they also made personal visit to libraries to find particular information useful for their post graduate students. Similarly, post graduate students give priority to those information sources which contain current information useful for their assessment and examination. They also encounter problems relating to searching and obtaining information from different sources. However, the study reflects the clear picture of behavioral pattern of information seeking by post graduate students.

To improve the services and facilities of the library it is recommended that the libraries shall adopt the practice of taking feedback from the users by circulating a questionnaire which will

certainly help strengthen the library resources and services.

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