Research in Information Seeking Behaviour in Academic Setting: An Indian Overview

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Abstract: - *Present paper investigates the Information Seeking Behaviour (ISB) of undergraduate and postgraduate students, of teachers and researchers in different academic environment. The paper is an overview of the studies on ISB done in India. Mainly doctoral studies conducted in India are included for the present study. The study included literature from the year 2002 to 2015 for the analyses. Findings of the study revealed that ISB of teachers, researchers and students affected by the new syllabus pattern, their ISB largely influenced by the academic information needs.*

Introduction

Research in any disciplines contributes knowledge and development in that subject. It is a focused, impartial and intellectual inquiry of a given problem. The beginning of doctoral research study in Library and Information Science (LIS) field was in 1950. Survey research was the most favored method opted by LIS researchers to assess library resources, services and other areas of LIS.

In India, user studies on libraries, library assessment, information needs and information seeking behavior (ISB) were consistently preferred topics of research since 1990s (Manjunatha, Sheshadri and Shivalingaiah 2010). On the contrary in UK, as noted by Wilson (1999) the research in ISB has occupied information scientists, since before the term 'information science' was coined. According to him the origins of ISB research go back to the Royal Society Scientific Information Conference of 1948, when a number of papers on the ISB of scientists and technologists were presented. Further he stated that, the term ISB was not used in the papers, which were generally about document and library use, but the origins are clearly there.

In 1981 Wilson published his first set of models of ISB, had their origins in a doctoral seminar presentation at the University of Maryland in 1971, when an attempt was made to map the processes involved in what was known at the time as 'User need research 'Wilson (1997).

This model located the concepts of *information need*, *information seeking*, *information exchange* and *information use* in flow diagram that charted the behaviour of an individual faced with the need to find information. The aim of this model was to outline the various areas covered by ISB. The model suggests that ISB arises as a consequence of a need perceived by an information user, who, in order to satisfy that need, makes demands upon formal or informal information sources or services, which result in success or failure to find relevant information. If successful, the individual then makes use of the information found and may either fully or partially satisfy the perceived need - or, indeed, fail to satisfy the need and have to reiterate the search process (Wilson, 1997).

Wilson (2000) very clearly defined the term Information behaviour, Information searching behaviour, Information seeking behaviour and information use behaviour. According to him

Information Behavior is the totality of human behavior rin relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking, and information use.

Information Seeking Behavior is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal.

Information Searching Behavior is the 'micro-level 'of behavior employed by the searcher in interacting with information systems of all kinds.

Information Use Behavior consists of the physical and mental acts involved in incorporating the information found into the person's existing knowledgebase. Wilson (2000)

The phenomenon of ISB is very old and has been studied systematically by many information scientists and researchers; still it has importance and relevancy because it is connected with user studies. User studies, Reader's studies or User needs studies are very significant in LIS research because these studies contribute to system improvement as well as to fulfill user's satisfaction. Many researches have been done and theories and models of ISB's are evolved, still conducting a user studies is a complex phenomenon.

Present paper is concerned mainly with ISB of undergraduate and postgraduate students, ISB of teachers and researchers in different academic environment. The paper is an overview of the studies of ISB done in India.

Objectives

1) To find out and review studies on ISB of students conducted in India.

2) To find out and review studies on ISB of teachers and researchers conducted in India.

Research Methodology

Literature from online repository Shodhganga of INFLIBNET was collected for the present study. Mainly doctoral studies conducted in India are included for the present study. The study included literature from the year 2002 to 2015 for the analyses.

Analysis and Findings

In 2004 Hegde studied ISB of pharmaceutical science college students and faculty members.

The study reported that user education programmes were very important for the effective use of library resources. The study emphasized that librarians should consider the relevance and importance ofthe online databases to the academic curriculum. Patitungkho (2005) conducted study of ISB of the teachers and the students in Rajabhat Universities. It was found that majority of teachers sought information for class lectures, up-dating knowledge and research work, whereas majority of students seek information for examination preparation, up-dating knowledge, and for project work. In the comparative study of ISB of post graduate students of two Universities i.e. Sri Venkateswara and Manonmaniam Sundaranar University Prabhavathi (2008) found that the main purposes of students' visit to the library were examination preparation, followed by preparation for competitive examinations and dissertation work.

In another study Shwetha (2010) examined ISB of students in the autonomous college libraries in Mangalore city and found that, lack of time, lack of access to all information were the problems faced by students while seeking information. Kadli (2011) investigated ISB of faculty members and students at commerce colleges in Mumbai. Study provided a broad over-view of the use and satisfaction of library resources and services, awareness about ICT, search tools and ISB and finally impact of ICT and internet on ISB of faculty members and students. Further, Anwar (2011) explored ISB of science students of Delhi University and found that majority of the science

students did not face any problem in getting required information. OPAC service was the most used IT based service in the library. Baladhandayutham (2011) studied online ISB of scholars, faculty members and students of Madurai Kamaraj University. Study reported that the internet usage were more by Male than female respondents. The level of use of internet skill was almost equal both in Science and Social Science department's respondents compared to Humanities departments. Suresh (2012) examined information needs and ISB of chemistry students. It was found that majority of respondents consulted faculty members and library staff for seeking information; they used library catalogue, keywords for searching information. Khandare (2013) studied information needs and ISB of faculty members and students of management institutes Pune. The study presented best practices for the management libraries to improve understanding about user's information needs and ISB. Ahmed (2013) examined the ISB of the students and faculty members in IIMs of Calcutta, Ahmedabad and Lucknow. Study reported that all the students and faculty members of IIMs used several methods and channels to seek required information. The students generally preferred to consult teachers, internet, textbooks, reference books and library catalogue, whereas teachers preferred to use books, abstracts, indexes, encyclopedias, online resources with the consultation of professionals and subject experts in the field. Study suggested that library staff should be helpful and approachable. Aruna (2015)

explored ISB of professional and non-professional students and found that demographic variables and educational qualifications contribute to ISB of students. Further professional students had high level of ISB than the non-professional students.

ISB of Teachers

Singh (2002) studied ISB of teachers of Bundelkhand University and found that teachers seek current information to keep them up to date and they were satisfied with the resources and services provided by the library. Online resources were in demand by the teachers. Further Gupta (2004) analysed information needs and ISB of the teachers of Allahabad University and found that teachers used various sources of information which includes, books, thesis, pamphlets, periodicals and news bulletin. It was also found that computerized services were used by very less number of teachers.Sekhar(2010) analysed ISB of degree college faculty in Andhra Pradesh and found that teachers seek information mainly from institutional library, through discussion with colleagues, conferences/ seminars, and outside libraries. Tholkappian (2011) found that majority of faculty members of University libraries used library resources and informal sources of information namely they consult professionals and subject experts in their area. The study suggested implementation of ISO standards to University libraries of Andhra Pradesh. It also suggested to creation of union catalogue for University libraries. Nayak (2012) conducted study on ISB of teachers in engineering college libraries and

reported that engineering college teachers were highly depended on books, articles and internet for teaching and research. It was found that changing pattern of new syllabus was a major environment factor that influence ISB. Other factors which influence ISB were AICTE norms, extra work given by higher authorities and information overload. Rangaiah (2012) investigated and analyzed information needs and ISB of engineering, medical and science faculty members of Siddhartha educational institutions. Study revealed that there was a difference in the level of use of reference service by these three faculty members. Engineering faculty members were used reference service more in number when compared to medical and science faculty members. Regarding academic and professional information needs and ISB of college and university teachers belonging to scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST), Bhabal (2013) reported top three information needs of SC and ST academicians i.e. knowledge of rules and regulations, research and publications and ICT applications. It was found that many of the respondents were first generation learners. Further, Khan (2015) examined information needs and ISB of faculty members of public Universities. The findings of this study revealed that the majority of faculty members used a broad range of resources when seeking information. Both print and electronic information resources played an essential role in the information seeking pursuits of the faculty members of the public universities.

ISB of Social Scientists, Scientists and Researchers

Choukhande (2004) explored information needs and use patterns of faculty members and research scholars. The study identified that most of the users could not express their needs properly and clearly. They seek advice from librarian for selection of the problem. Further study found that users were making more use of electronic sources of information for acquiring latest information and user education and information literacy programme had positive impact on handling of electronic resources. Kamble (2005) investigated ISB of social scientists in Marathwada University. Study found that the major purposes of social scientist of seeking information was, conducting research, writing article or book and updating of information in order to maintain professional competency. Study indicated that library was the most preferred channel of information for social scientists. Further, Mehaboobullah (2012) investigated impact of ICT in information seeking and enrichment of researchers in Universities in Kerala. Study found that researchers were not aware and they were not used ICT resources optimally, there was a need of serious efforts to raise the researchers' level of knowledge in ICT. Only then the impact of these resources could positively affect their research activity.

Findings

- It was found that user education and information literacy programmes had impact on information seeking of students, teachers and researchers.

There was a need for proper training and orientation of online resources or ICT based resources.

- Students and teachers were largely depending on the library to satisfy their academic information needs. Online resources were in demand by the teachers. ISB studies helps to improve understanding about users' information needs and ISB.

- Lack of time and lack of access to all information were the problems faced by students while seeking information. It was found that changing pattern of new syllabus was a major environment factor that influence ISB. Professional students had high level of ISB than the non-professional students

Conclusion

Information seeking is the process and information seeking behaviour is the expressions of library user's during the information seeking process. It is one of the heavily researched topics in LIS. Many researches on ISB are about the use of library resources by the users and their information needs or purpose of library visit. They are not analyzing or observing the actual ISB of users during the information seeking process, therefore there is a need of re-invention the different research methods apart from survey in LIS that will help to study and analyze actual ISB of user's during the information seeking process.The emphasis on ISB is important because behaviour is always greater than knowledge.

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