



INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A STUDY ON SELECTED UNIVERSITIES OF ASSAM

Parismita Bora¹, Rahul Borah²

¹Student, Dibrugarh University, Assam

²Student, Dibrugarh university, Assam

ABSTRACT

Every person has its own information needs and their own way of finding information. Their information needs varies depending upon their age, profession, field of study, culture, geographic location. In this regards library of any types plays a vital role in giving a direction to the users to reach at their desired destination of information search. The present study mainly deals with the information seeking behaviour of user of university libraries. The study is carried out in six universities of Assam. Questioner has been distributed randomly among the users, their responses has been collected, tabulated and interpreted accordingly.

KEYWORDS: *Information seeking behaviour, Information needs, University students, University library, Assam.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is one of the most important assets in 21st century. It is a fundamental and indispensable resource which is required in every sphere of human civilization. The human need for information is unlimited and varies accordingly. People use information for understanding a phenomenon, to run a machine, to do research, developing a new technology, to understand a existing technology, for decision making etc. Information needs of people varies from person to person a student needs information to prepare his study notes, to prepare for exams, complete projects and assignments, a researcher needs information to carry out his research work, discover new things, to understand existing things, to keep himself up to date, a teacher will need information to know about different teaching techniques, to prepare his teaching plan etc. There is no one who doesn't need information whether he is teacher, student, farmer, homemaker, scientist, or engaged in any other profession. Since there seems diversity in information need so as in information seeking behaviour. Here libraries of all types plays an important role in fulfilling the information needs of their users. It provides the right information to the right uses at the right time. Since the information seeking behaviour of people varies so libraries should always try to meet the information need of each type of individual in regards to the parent organization to whom it is attached.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Purnima (2005) in her work "Information Needs in Higher Education: A Study of College Faculties in Manipur" ascertained the information needs of college and university faculties. Survey revealed that majority of the college faculty members needed information for academic work, whereas university faculty members needed information to update knowledge and for research work.

Padmini, K (2006) highlights information literacy competency in the present day context and its immense importance among the academic as well as non- academic users. **Krishnan.G(2008)** in his survey conducted to examine the information needs and information use pattern of the academicians of seven institutes of fashion technology in India. Authors suggested having functional and effective collection development programme to meet information needs of users and need to popularize the less used services to ensure their optimum utilization, conduct regular user education programmes, acquire both print and non-print material, move towards digitalization, etc.

Meenakshi (2007) in the article "use and usage of information resources in government college libraries of Chandigarh: A study" discusses uses and usage of information resources in government college libraries of Chandigarh. She highlights the focal issues of the



college going students and their information seeking behaviour along with the changing perspectives among the teachers of the colleges under study

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to examine the information seeking behaviour of user of university library. The present study is based on the following general objective

1. To understand the information seeking behaviour of users of university libraries
2. To examine the method of information seeking by those users
3. To identify the library resources used by them
4. To identify the problem faced by them while seeking information

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the present study data has been collected from the library users of 6 universities of Assam. Simple random method has been used and questioner is used as a tool for data collection. Questioner was prepared and distributed randomly among the users. After collecting the questioners from the respondents their responses were noted, their frequency calculated and tabulated accordingly.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Universities Under Study

For the present study 6 universities of Assam has been selected. The libraries of these universities are acquitted with libraries having good collection of printed and non printed collection with ICT infrastructure. The name of the universities, their year of establishment and name of the libraries are provided in the following table-

Table No. 1. Universities under study

S.No	University name	Establishment year	Name of the library
1	Gauhati University(GU)	1948	K.K Handiqui library
2	Assam Agricultural University(AAU)	1969	Rev. B.M Pugh University library
3	Dibrugarh University(DU)	1965	LNB library
4	Tezpur University(TU)	1994	Central Library , TU
5	Kaziranga University(KU)	2012	Central Library KU
6	Assam Women University(AWU)	2013	Central Library AWU

5.2. Respondents Profile

Altogether 180 questioner has been distributed among the users of library in six above mentioned universities. Out of 180, 147 responses has been received from the users. Number of responses received from users is shown in the table given below

Table No.2 Respondent's Profile

University	No. Of Respondent	Percentage
GU	25	17
AAU	19	13
DU	49	27
TU	27	19
KU	21	14
AWU	16	10
Total	147	100

Table No.2 and Figure no 1 shows the number of responses received from the library users from the university under studied. It is apparent from the table that total 147 responses has been received. Out of the six universities highest number of responses has been received from DU which is 27% followed by TU, GU, KU, AAU and lowest response has been received from AWU i.e. 10%.

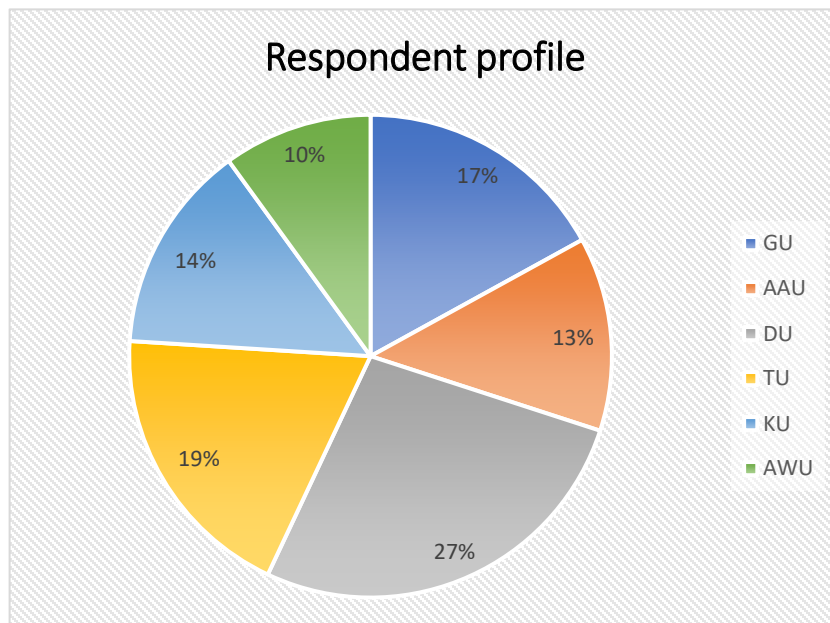


Figure No.1.respodents profile

5.3.Library Visit Pattern

Table No.3 Library Visit pattern of Users

Library visit pattern	No. Of respondent	Percentage
Daily	63	42
Weekly	47	31
Monthly	12	8
Irregular	25	17

Table No. 3 represents the visiting pattern of respondent to the library. It can be noted from the table that most of the respondent visits library on daily basis. Number of respondent that visits library daily is 63 in number, i.e. 42% . Percentage of respondent who visits library weekly and monthly is 31% and 8% respectively. 17% of the respondent are irregular in visiting library.

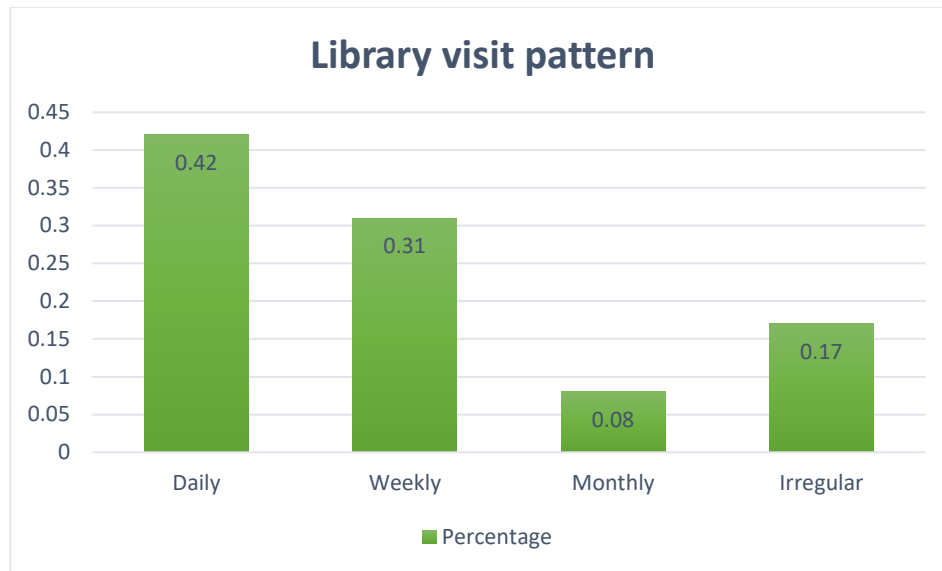


Figure No. 2 : Library visit pattern

5.4.Purpose of seeking Information by users

The users of university library visits library and seeks information for various purposes such as for preparing class notes, preparing for competitive exams, reading newspaper, research purpose etc. The following table ranks the purpose of seeking information by users according to the responses received. The respondent were asked to ranked the option into and multiple responses were allowed.

Table No. 4 Information seeking purpose

S.No	Information seeking purpose	Frequency	Percentage
1	Preparing class notes	89	30
2	Preparation for competitive exam	77	26
3	Reading newspaper	57	19
4	Research purpose	42	14
5	Other	29	9

It is shown in the **table no.4** that majority of users 89 (30%) visits library for the purpose of preparing class notes . 77 respondents (26%) visit library for the preparation of competitive exams. 57 respondents visits library for reading newspapers. Respondents who visits library for research purpose is 42 in number (14%). 29(9%) responses that came from users shows that they visits library for various other purposes. It is clear from the **figure 3** that maximum respondent (30%) visits library for preparing class notes and 9% which is least among all the categories visits library for other purpose.

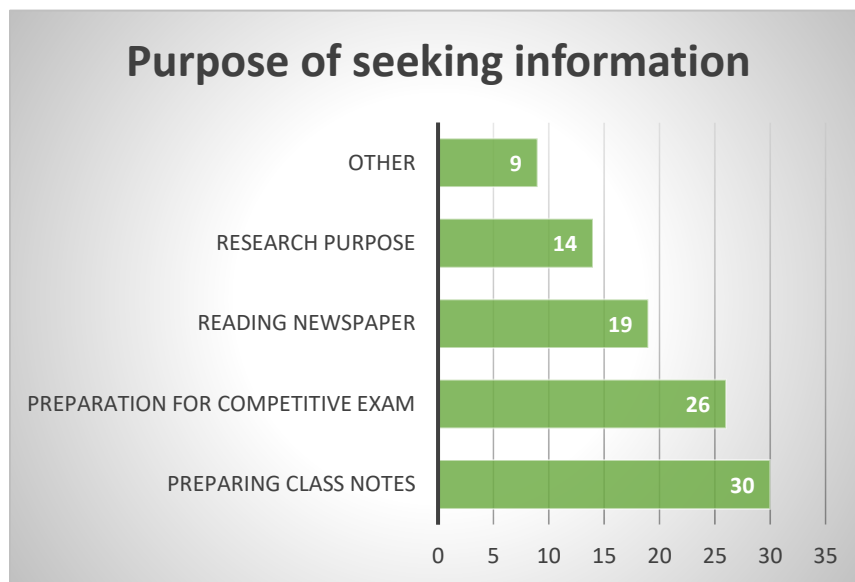


Figure No.3 : Purpose of seeking information

5.5. Information seeking methods

Library users adopt various strategies for finding desired information among them access to online materials, taking help from library staff, using OPAC, indexing and abstracting journals, library catalogues are common. The respondents are asked to rank these methods of seeking information and the responses are tabulated accordingly.

Table 5 : Methods of seeking information

S.No	Method of information seeking	Frequency	Percentage
1	Online access	94	33
2	Taking help from library staff	77	27
3	OPAC	38	13
4	Indexing and abstracting journal	29	10
5	Library catalogue	8	2
6	Others	36	12

It can be noted from the **table no. 5** that most of the respondents i.e 94 (33%) goes for online access while seeking information. 77 respondents(27%) takes help from library staff, 38 respondents(13%) uses OPAC, 29 respondents(10%) seeks for indexing and abstracting journals , 36 (12%) seeks information from other sources and only 2% of users uses library catalogue to seek information.

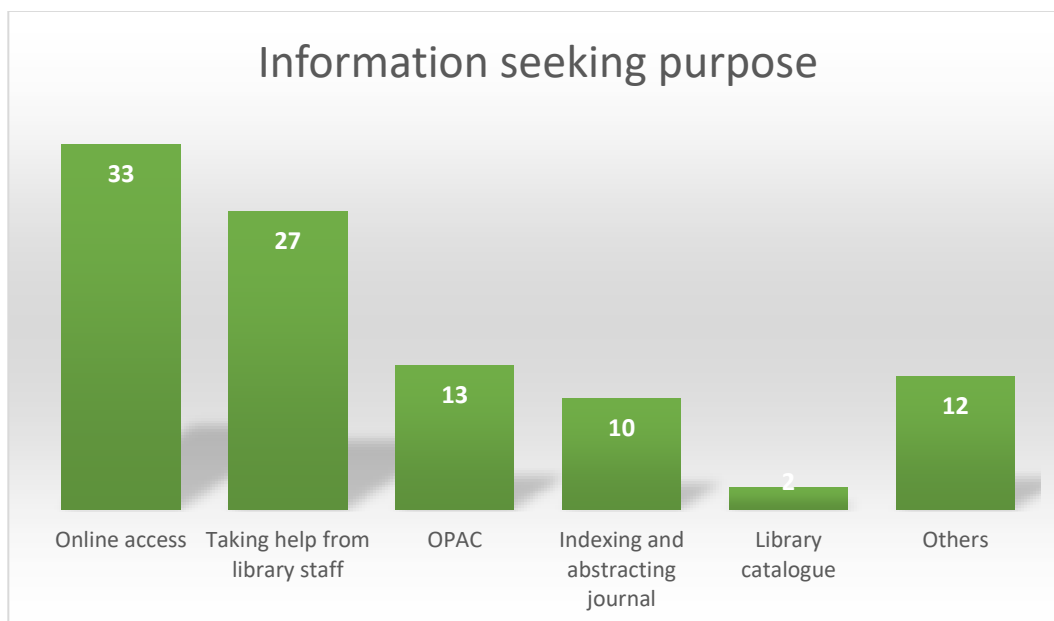


Figure No. 4: information seeking purpose

5.6. Library resources

Various resources available in library includes books, journals and periodicals, e-resources, newspaper, theses and dissertation, CD Rom, various types of online resources. The following table ranks the resources used by the library users according to the responses received.

Table No.6 Preference of library resources

S.No	Resources	Frequency	Percentage
1	Book	89	23
2	Online resources	82	21
3	E- resources	75	19
	Newspaper	53	13
4	Journals	39	10
5	Thesis/dissertation	30	7
7	CD Rom	6	1
8	Other	11	3

Table No. 6 shows the preferences on resources of library users. The maximum number of users i.e. 89(23%) prefers books over all other resources followed by online resources 82(21%), E- resources 75(19%), Newspaper 53(13%), journals 39(10%), thesis and dissertation 30(7%), others sources 11(3%) and CD Rom 6(1%) which is least preferred by the users.

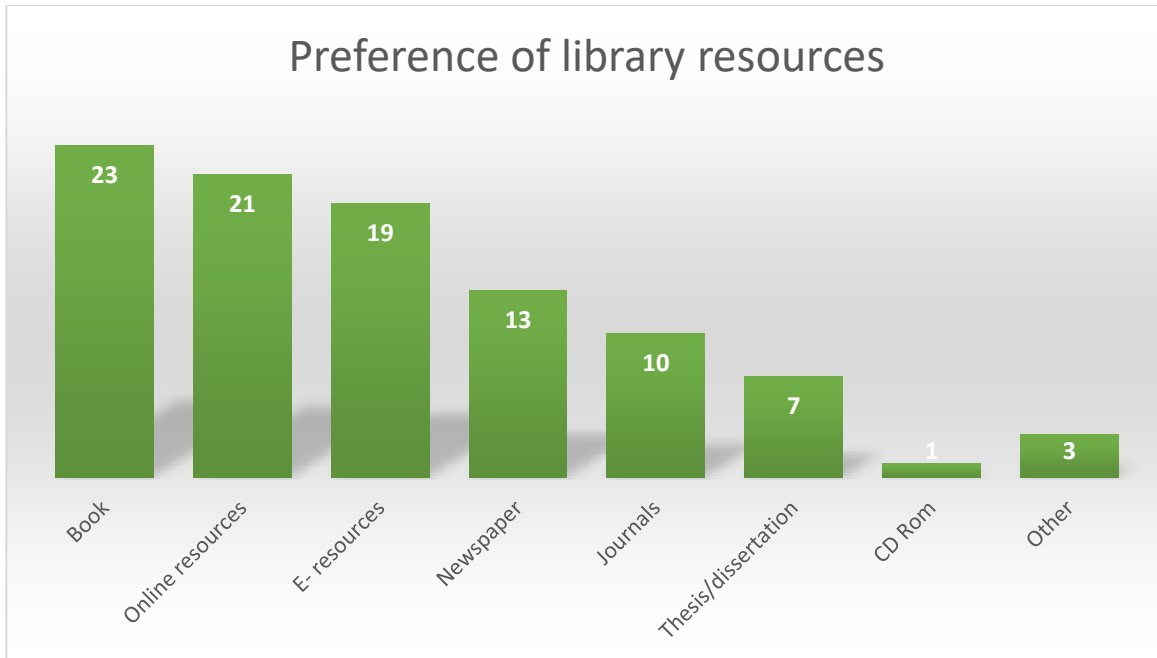


Figure No.5. Preference of library resources

5.7.Problem faced while seeking information

Table No. 7 Problems faced while seeking information

S.No	Problem faced	Frequency	Percentage
1	Poor Internet facility	84	29
2	Lack of knowledge regarding search strategy	77	27
3	Lack of relevant text	54	19
4	Lack of scholarly journal	42	15
5	Unwillingness of library staff	26	9

Table No.7 shows various types of problems faced while seeking information by users. It can be noted that most of the responses 84 (29%) that came from respondents shows poor internet facility as one of the main problem faced while seeking information. 77(27%) choose lack of knowledge regarding search strategy followed by Lack of relevant text 54(19%), 42(15%) responses came for unavailability of scholarly journals, and 26(9%) responses for unwillingness of library staff.

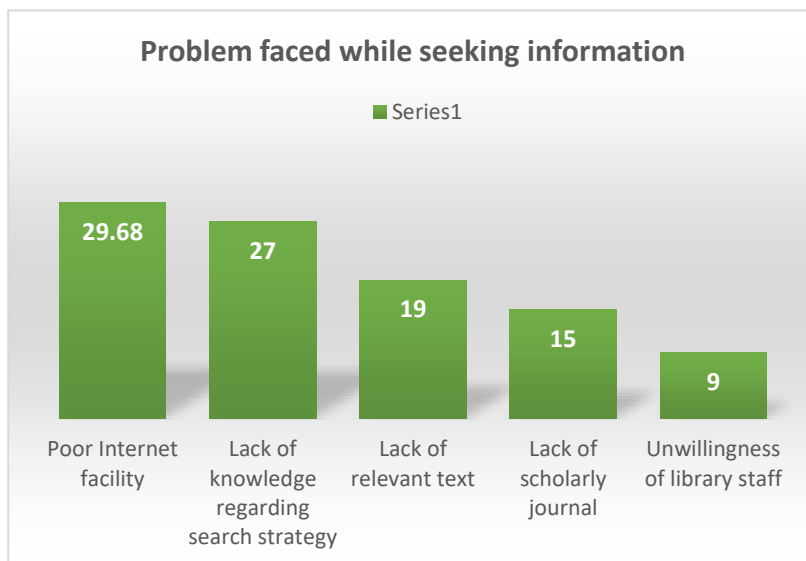


Figure No.6: problems faced while seeking information

6. FINDINGS

From the analysed data following findings can be made-

1. Purpose of information seeking

The main purpose of information seeking by the library user is to prepare class notes which is preferred by 30% of the respondents. (table no.4)

2. Methods used for seeking information

Study shows that maximum users 94(33%) prefers online resources as a method for seeking information. (table no.5)

3. Most preferred library resource

It is found that Books stands in the number 1 rank of preference list of library resources which is preferred by 89(23%) respondents. (table no.6)

4. Problem faced while seeking information

It can be concluded from the study that poor internet facility is one of the main problem faced by most of library users 84(29%) while seeking information. (table no.7)

7. CONCLUSION

The information need of people varies from person to person according to their age, in regards of their educational background, field of study, area of interest etc. As the utmost goal of the libraries should be to provide right information to the right user at the right time so it should always try to identify the needs of users and to provide them with all the required information. As of the present study which is mainly concerned with information seeking behaviour of the users of university library it is seen that users of university library mainly visits the library for seeking resources or information to prepare their class notes followed by preparing for competitive exams, research works, reading newspapers. So it is the responsibility of the library to provide them with all the required information without any constrains. It is can be concluded from the study that most of the users preferred online resources for seeking information so the library authority should ensure whether internet is working properly or not. Online resources has become an important and vital part of our information need so libraries should try to incorporate proper infrastructure and training to both the staff and users on using online resources so that information seeking process of the user did not get hampered due to lack of knowledge.

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