



## Information Seeking Behaviour and Library Use Pattern of Biotechnology Researchers in the Bharathidasan University in Tamilnadu

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was undertaken to determine the information seeking behavior and library use by research scholars at the Bharathidasan University. 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 collected data on the information requirements of researchers. Data were gathered from 100 researchers through open and closed questionnaire. Findings indicate that guidance in the use of library resources and services is necessary to help researchers meet some of their information requirements.*

**KEYWORDS:** Information seeking behavior; Library resources; e-resources; Inter-Library Loan; Documentary delivery.

### Introduction

The library is the most widely used source of information available to literate societies. Librarians must be aware of the kind of information being sought and how it can be obtained. Because of the rapidly escalating cost of purchasing and archiving print journal and electronic media, the library has the duty to provide and maintain efficient services. Today information plays a very important role in human kind's life and considered as basic resources. It also affects our personal and professional life information needed by all to making decisions and required as other natural resources in their day to day activity. In library and information science research is a substantial body of work addressing information related behavior, including information needs, information seeking and use of information resources <sup>1</sup>.

### Bharathidasan University

Bharathidasan University established in February 1982, and was named after the great revolutionary Tamil Poet, Bharathidasan (1891-1968). The motto of the University "We will create a brave new world" has been framed from Bharathidasan's poetic words. The year 2006-07 is the Silver Jubilee year for this great and vibrant University. The University has totally 4 Faculties, 16 Schools, 34 Departments and 11 Specialized Research Centers. There are 195 faculty members catering to 2372 students and scholars in the University.

### Library System of Bharathidasan University

The University Library is separately located in a well architecture multi-storied building in the main campus and is well furnished with all resources including e-library resources. In terms of learning resources, the library has a good collection of books and e-books in addition to subscribing a number of journals and audio-video cassettes. The library has INFLIBNET and DELNET facilities. The UGC infonet facility helps to access more than 10,000 e-resources including thousands of e-journals. Through the university's digital library, the students and faculty members can have access to more than 5,000 back volumes and 7,000 electronic books. The number of books, journals and periodicals are updated every year. The library is providing reprographic facilities for the benefit of students and research scholars. The library is kept open throughout the year [except on five national holidays] from 8 am to 8 pm. The library provides open access system for the users including students, research scholars and teaching faculty. In addition to the above central facility, the departments have their own libraries.

### Review of Literature

Krishan Kumar conducts a survey concerning teachers and research scholars in the Department of Chemistry, University of Delhi. The important finding of this survey was quite a large percentage of research fellows do not use the library as much as they ought to. The majority of researchers (71%) feel the need to improve their skill in the use of science and technology literature <sup>2</sup>.

Sethi studied the information seeking behavior of social science faculty in Indian Universities. Respondents preferred journals, books, government

documents and reference sources for meeting their information needs <sup>3</sup>.

Wilson (2000) perceives information seeking, searching, and use as associated with different stages of a goal oriented problem solving process. These stages are problem recognition, problem definition, problem resolution, and solution statement (where needed). Wilson's model does not integrate the three triads of information seeking (i.e., cognitive, physical, and affective behaviours) into this process <sup>4</sup>.

Laura and others conduct a study on information seeking behavior of basic science researchers, in this study examines the information seeking behaviours of basic science researchers to inform the development of customized library services. Although the basic science researchers expressed a positive attitude towards the library<sup>5</sup>.

### Objectives

- To find out information seeking behavior of the research scholars
- To find out the awareness and use of library resources by the research scholar
- To know the main purpose of information seeking behavior

### Methodology

The target populations in the study were research scholars (M.Phil and Ph.D.) at the Bharathidasan University. A survey method was used for data collection. A total of 120 questionnaires with open and close ended questionnaire on information seeking behavior of research scholars were distributed randomly to respondents. Out of 120, 100 questionnaires were returned by the users with the overall response rate 73%. The data gained from the responses were analyzed to understand research scholar's information seeking behavior, information needs and the extent to which these needs have been fulfilled by the university library system and its services.

### Data Analysis

#### 1.Frequency of Library Visit

Survey respondents were asked whether they visit library daily/weekly/monthly. As shown in table 1, the majority of researchers 42% are visit the library daily, followed by 2-3 times in a week by 41% researchers, 12% visit library weekly while 5% come library monthly. It indicates that library is being used by the research scholars mostly.

**Table: 1**

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Daily	42	42%
2-3 times in a week	41	41%
Weekly	12	12%
Monthly	05	5%
Total	100	100%

2. Purpose of Library Visit

In response of purpose of library visit table 2 indicates that preparing research, for borrowing study material, and using of e-resources are the three main purposes of the users to visit or come library. Reading journals followed by 10% researchers, 5% researchers come to update their knowledge and 5% have other purposes like as reading news papers, to know new arrivals and internet surfing.

Table: 2

Purpose	Respondents	Percentage
Preparing research	25	25%
To study	20	20%
Borrowing materials	20	20%
Using e-resources	15	15%
Reading journals	10	10%
For updating knowledge	5	5%
others	5	5%
Total	100	100%

3. Use of the Library sources and services

Table 3 indicates that borrowing facility, reference books, journals, thesis are being utilized majority while e-resources are used marginally and ILL is less utilized by the researchers. The findings show that there is a necessity to create awareness of use of e-resources and document delivery services among users.

Table: 3

Sources	Lot	Some	Never
Borrowing facility	71	27	02
Reference services	32	40	28
Reference books & Journals	65	30	05
Thesis	62	30	08
Inter Library Loan	04	11	85

4. Purpose of Seeking Information

Table 4 indicates in response of purpose of seeking information that to keep up-to-date and preparing researches are the two main purpose of seeking information by the researchers. Writing article, solving the problems and general awareness are another purpose of seeking information by the researchers respectively which have less priority.

Table: 4

Purpose	Respondents	Percentage
To keep up-to-date	72	72%
Preparing research	68	68%
To write an article	43	43%
Solving the problem	26	26%
General awareness	12	12%

Use of e-resources

Table 5 indicates that researchers found less useful availability of e-resources according their need they show its main reason their language medium, many researchers specially humanity and education are pursuing their research in Tamil medium in such case e-journals are less useful due to their language barriers. While some other researchers who are pursuing their research in English medium found it very useful. There is no satisfactory use of digitized e-books and documentary delivery services by the researchers specially and less use of CD ROM. There is a necessity to create awareness among the researchers to use e-resources at maximum.

Table: 5

E-resources	Lot	Some	Never	No response
E-journals (UGC-INFONET)	18	55	15	12
E-journals (Institutional subscription)	15	48	12	25
Digital e-books	10	32	40	18
Document Delivery Services	8	22	40	30
CD ROM	8	22	40	30

Conclusion

In this study 100 research scholars were surveyed of Bharathidasan University. This study investigates that IT based library services are being less utilized compared with print sources by the research scholars. Researchers use a variety of information sources for their research. Books and e-journals are considered mostly. Researchers perceived the Bharathidasan University Central Library play a effective role in meeting their research needs, they also prefer to consult research guide and library first. It was also noted that there was little awareness of e-resources available in library, less use of document delivery services.

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