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Use of Information Sources by Research Scholars: A Case Study of Gulbarga University

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Introduction

Information is regarded as a critical resource, ranking just after air, water, food, and shelter (Kemp, 1976). People need information for making decisions. They may acquire information through the research process, which is the process of finding ideas, facts, and new information by systematic study. The new facts and ideas will be based on existing ones, which are found in the existing literature. Information is acquired, processed, and disseminated through the university library, “a place, where books and users interact together for the transmission of civilization and cultivation of human beings” and “the most important resource in the pursuit of the general goals and objectives of the institution of higher learning” (Nwosu 2000). For the library manager, it is necessary to understand how resources are being used, the changing needs of users, and their levels of satisfaction. The present study looks at the use of information by research scholars at Gulbarga University.

About the University

Gulbarga University was established in 1980 by an act of Karnataka State. Its jurisdiction extends to the five districts of Gulbarga: Bidar, Raichure, Ballary, and Koppal of Hyderabad, Karnataka. The main campus is positioned on 860 acres of land, six kilometers of east Gulbarga city. It has 37 post-graduate departments and 4 postgraduate centers. There are 230 colleges affiliated with the university, which enroll graduate and diploma courses in science, arts, fine arts, music, social science, technology, commerce education and law. (“About us,” 2008)

The Gulbarga University Library takes pains to meet user needs by providing user- focused services, with more than 220,000 books, 435 scientific journals, sixteen CD-ROM databases, 540 dissertations, theses, technical reports, conference papers, and rare books .

Objectives of the Study

- To discover how frequently research scholars visit the library
- To discover the purpose of visits to the library
- To discover users' opinions about the library collection
- To discover what sources the research scholars consult most frequently
- To discover levels of satisfaction with existing information sources
- To provide suggestions for development of library resources

Review of Related Literature

A number of few studies have been done on use of information sources by research scholars. Siddiqui (2001) conducted a study on the use of library collection of Jawaharlal Nehru University Library. A questionnaire was used to collect the data, which covered 99 scholars. The study found that 69 percent visit the library daily, and 31 percent found the library collection adequate to meet their information needs. Kawatra (1988) undertook a study on attitudes of research scholars towards use of resources and services. A sample of 109 research scholar drawn from three universities of Rajasthan found that a majority of scholars visit the library one to four times a week and scholars at all the three universities are not adequately involved in using the sources. Mallaiah and Badami (1993) studied the use of services and facilities of Mangalore University Library, covering 60 scholars. The majority of the research scholars visited the library for borrowing books, consulting periodicals, and more than half complained about the non-availability of current issues.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study is limited to full-time research scholars of the Gulbarga University who are pursuing their doctoral degree in science, social science, languages, commerce, and humanities.

Methodology

A questionnaire was used for collecting opinions of research scholars about information use. There are 305 PhD scholars. One hundred five questionnaires were distributed, and 83 were returned, a 79.04 percent response rate.

Results and Discussion

The collected data has analyzed and presented as follows:

Table 1: Gender distribution

Sex	No of respondents	Percentage
Female	27	32.53
Male	56	67.47
Total	83	100

Two thirds of respondents were male, and one third female.

Table 2: Frequency of library visits

Frequency	Female N=27	Male N=56	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
Daily once	18	35	63.9	1.64	1.054
Once in two days	06	10	19.3		
Once in a week	01	08	10.8		
Twice a week	00	01	1.2		
Rarely	02	02	4.8		
Total	27	56	100		

More than 60 percent of scholars reported visiting the library daily.

Table 3: Purpose

Purpose	Female N=27	Male N=56	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
To borrow & return book	05	10	18.1	2.99	1.293
To read book	04	04	9.6		
To browse Internet	09	30	47.0		
To consult theses & dissertation	02	03	6.0		
To read journal articles	07	09	19.3		
Total	27	56	100		

Nearly half the scholars visit the library to browse the Internet, while 10 to 20 percent also visit to read and borrow materials.

Table 4: Frequency of consulting information sources

Source	Female N=27	Male N=56	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
Books	08	15	28.9	2.01	.981
Periodicals	15	32	55.4		
Research reports	01	03	4.8		
Theses	02	04	7.2		
Encyclopedias	01	02	3.6		
Total	27	56	100		

More than half the scholars consult periodicals most frequently.

Table 5: Adequacy of collection

Response	Female N=27	Male N=56	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
Fully adequate	02	07	10.8	2.77	.915
Adequate	07	12	22.9		
Partially adequate	10	27	44.6		
Inadequate	08	10	21.7		
Total	27	56	100		

Nearly half feel that the collection of the library is partially adequate, while slightly more than one-fifth found the collection adequate to meet their needs and another fifth found it inadequate.

Table 6: Level of satisfaction

Level of satisfaction	Female N=27	Male N=56	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
Fully satisfied	05	07	14.5	2.33	.718
satisfied	12	20	38.6		
Not satisfied	10	29	47.0		
Total	27	56	100		

Nearly half are not satisfied with available resources

Table 7: Suggestions for improvement

Suggestion	Female N=27	Male N=56	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
New books to be added regularly	09	12	25.3	2.06	.755
New journals to be subscribed	11	25	43.4		
Access to e-journals provided	07	19	31.3		
Total	27	56	100		

A majority of scholars want the library to subscribe for new periodical titles, and nearly a third asked for access to electronic journals.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The study reveals that the library is used regularly by this population of scholars. While there are significant levels of use and satisfaction, scholars also clearly expressed the desire for more journals and for access to electronic journals.

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