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# Study of Information Seeking Behavior and Library Use Pattern of Researchers in the Banasthali University

A.K.Pareek\*  
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## **Abstract**

*This study was undertaken to determine the information seeking behavior and library use by research scholars at the Banasthali 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 out of 150 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 (ILL); Documentary delivery.*

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## **Introduction**

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&2</sup> 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.

Information is very important to every aspect of today's information society or human being. The process of information acquiring, using and implementing information are known as information seeking behavior. In the case of academicians, researchers and students it is even more important because they all need right and update information for their research need. Information seeking behavior is a broad term, it involves a set of actions that takes by individuals or groups to show their information need, seek information, check & select the information to fulfill their requirement or information needs. As Wilson describes Information seeking is a term describing the ways individuals seek, evaluate, select, and use information. In the course of seeking new information, the individual may interact with different people, analog tools, and computer-based information systems.<sup>3</sup>

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 journals and electronic media, the library has the duty to provide and maintain efficient services.<sup>4</sup>

Technological advancements and innovations have changed today libraries from store house to gateways of information. ICT has completely changed the scenario of traditional libraries and meaning of storage, preservation and dissemination.

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### **Banasthali University: An Introduction**

Banasthali University (Banasthali Vidyapith) was founded by Pandit Hiralal Shastri (First Chief Minister of Rajasthan) to organize programme of rural reconstruction on the lines laid down by Mahatma Gandhi, and to train social workers as named Jiwan Kutir. The name Banasthali Vidyapith was adopted in 1943. This also happened to be the year when undergraduate courses were first introduced. The institution was granted the status of a deemed university in 1983 by the University Grants Commission.<sup>5</sup>

Today Banasthali University is a unique, 'A' grade accredited by NAAC, fully residential women's university, which offers an integrated education system, extending from primary to Ph.D. level. Banasthali University known with great impact of premier institute for women's education. Today more than 300 certificate, diploma, undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes are running in Banasthali University. The present strength of the students at Banasthali University is about 12000.

### **Library System of Banasthali University**

The library system of the Banasthali University comprise of central library and department libraries. The Banasthali University central library came into existence in 1935. Till 1939 the library procured 1700 books and a Reading Room for students. "Veerbala" a quarterly journal was also brought out for students to improve their creative ability and writing. The library collection grew to 5000 and 12,000 books in 1945 and 1955 respectively.<sup>5</sup>

Today it has a collection of more than 195000 including books (text and reference), bound periodicals, manuscripts, vedas, albums, atlas, slides, theses and dissertation, project reports, etc. Library subscribes 297 national journals, 102 international journals, 13 general magazines and 15 news papers. A Banasthali library system comprises separate libraries for their department apart from central library. The central library has total 7871 registered users. During 2009-10 and 2010-11 167515 and 188441 visitors visit the library respectly. Total 280796(2009-10) & 298248 (2010-11) check-in and check-outs have been made by the Banasthali University Central Library.

The library completely automated using Libsys system. The library has CD-ROM on many subject area and also available e-journals through UGC-INFONET consortia and institutional subscription based. Near 8000 scholarly e-journals made available to its users from all area of learning from world's major publishers. The Banasthali University system has digitized books collection where more than 20000 old and rare books available through its websites to users. In last session near 1280 articles have been delivered by the Banasthali University Central Library to Indian universities under JCCC@UGC-INFONET document delivery.

### **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-technology literature.<sup>6</sup>

Dhyani (1974) conducts a survey of 100 readers at Rajasthan University Library, Jaipur. The study revealed that generally the readers showed interest in using the library at college level. As result, university libraries are functioning at a sub-optimal level or their effectiveness is not at the required level.<sup>7</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>8</sup> Thomas investigated in his research that students perceived the faculty as very approachable but the information available for them was fragmented. He also observed that students have a wide range of needs.<sup>9</sup>

During the last decades the interest in students' library use and information behavior has increased mainly because of the increase in student numbers and libraries needs to meet their clients' demands in the best possible way. Studies of students' attitudes to and use of university libraries has been conducted in several countries. Findings from earlier studies concerning students problems in trying to use the library are validated in the studies performed in 80's and 90's.<sup>10</sup> Kanungo made an attempt to investigate the methods of seeking information seeking information by the women researcher in the disciplines of history and political science in the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal University. The study attempts to make a comparative analysis of the methods adopted by these researchers in finding, accessing and seeking information. Being empirical in nature, the study has been conducted in the form of a 'user survey' using questionnaire and interview methods.<sup>11</sup>

Gowda and Shivalingaiah conduct a study about Information Seeking Patterns of Researchers in the University Libraries in Karnataka state. The study reveals that the research scholars depend upon their respective university library as their channel of information which is followed by Internet facility. The research scholars prefer to gather research articles which serve their research purposes and to visit the library to borrow books. Further the responses show that web pages are their preferred mode of communication. The research scholars visit less frequently and less time in the library. The results show the significant differences among the research scholars of various disciplines with regard to the library use patterns for information. Based on the use patterns of university libraries care has to be taken to attract the research scholars to visit the library to exploit the university library information resources, facilities and services to meet their research needs. Further to match the information requirements of the research scholars, the university libraries have to equip with world class information services at their desk tops.<sup>12</sup>

Laura and others conduct a study on information-seeking behavior of basic science researchers, in this study examines the information-seeking behaviors 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>13</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 scholars
- To find out information sources of consulted by the users mostly
- To find out awareness of the library services
- To know the main purpose of information seeking behavior

## Methodology

The target populations in the study were research scholars (Ph.D.) at the Banasthali University. A survey method was used for data collection. A total of 150 questionnaires with open and close-ended questionnaire on the information seeking behavior of research scholars were distributed randomly to respondents. Out of 150, 110 filled-in questionnaires were returned by the users with the over all response rate 73%. 10 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete information.

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.

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Daily	42	42%
2-3 times in a week	41	41%
Weekly	12	12%
Monthly	05	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 Frequency of Library Visit

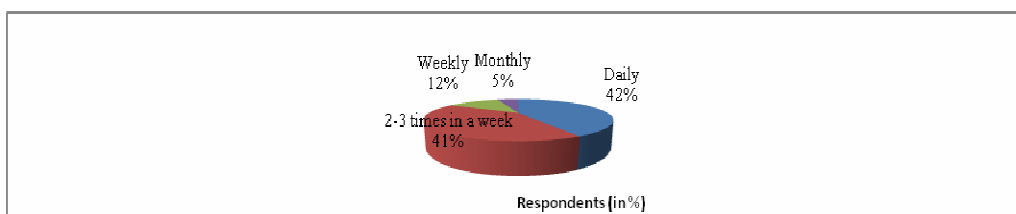


Fig. 1. Frequency of Library Visit

### 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.

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>In percentage (%)</u>
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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 Purpose of Library Visit

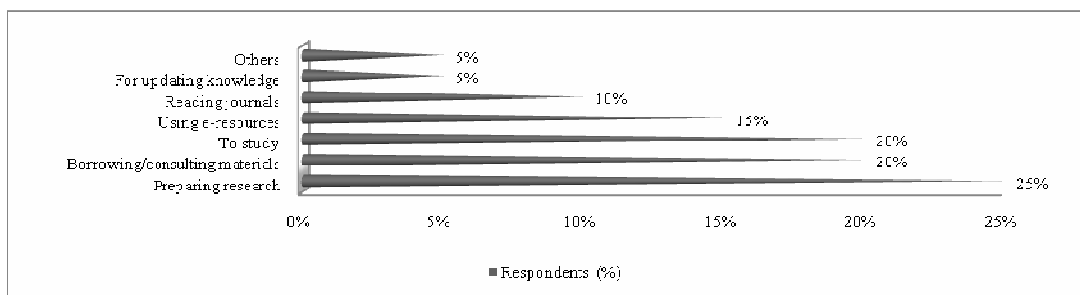


Fig 2 Purpose of Library Visit

### 3. Methods of Information Seeking

In response of method of information seeking table 3 indicates that research guides (subject experts), central library and internet are the most reliable sources for their seeking information while friends/colleagues and other library are less used by the researchers for their information seeking.

Source	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Research Guide	35	35%
BU Library	30	30%
Internet	25	25%
Friends/colleagues	05	05%
Other Library	05	05%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 Method of Information Seeking

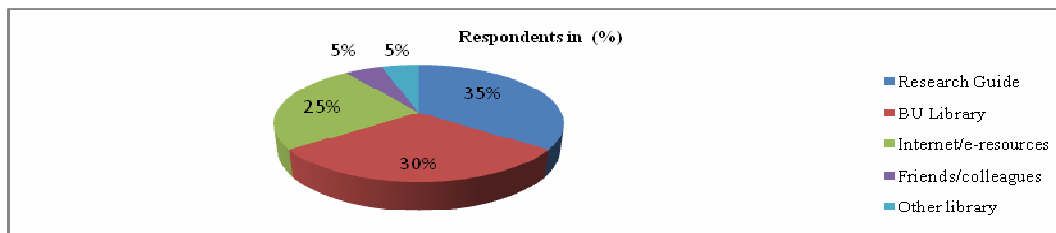


Fig 3 Method of Information Seeking

### 4. Use of the Library sources and services

Table 4 indicates that borrowing facility, reference books, journals, theses/dissertations are being utilized majorly while e-resources are used marginally and ILL is less utilized by the researchers. The findings shows that there is a necessity to create awareness of use of e-resources and document delivery services among users.

Sources	Lot	Some	Never
Borrowing facility	71	27	02
Reference services (CAS/SDI)	32	40	28
Ref. books and journals	65	30	05
Thesis/Dissertations/Project reports	62	30	08
Inter Library Loan (ILL)	04	11	85

Table 4 Use of the Library Sources and Services

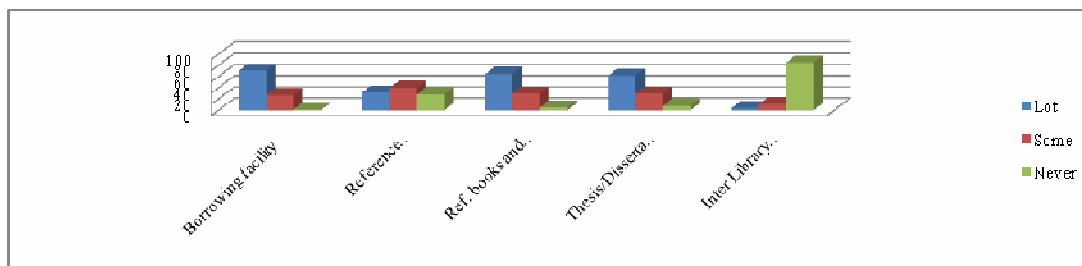


Fig 4 Use of the Library Sources and services

## 5. Purpose of Seeking Information

Table 5 indicates in response of purpose 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 purposes of seeking information by the researchers respectively which have less priority.

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>In percentage (%)</u>
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%

Table 5 Purpose of Seeking Information

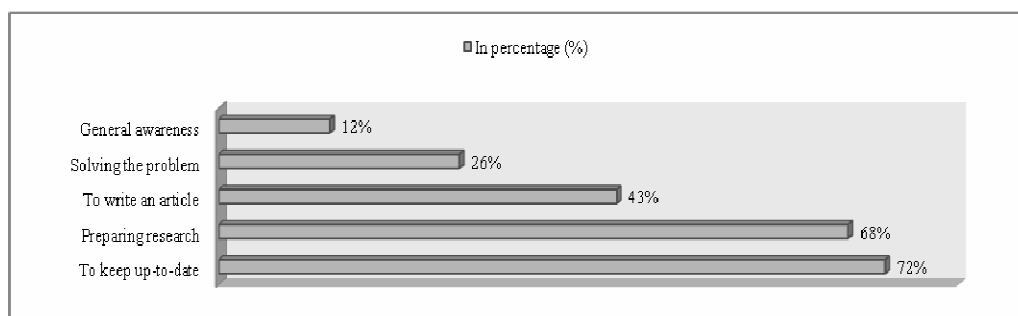


Fig 5 Purpose of Seeking Information

## 6. Document Searching

Table 6 shows that OPAC is an important facility and document searching method for researchers with support of 71.33% respondents while there is less used of print catalogue card. The main reason of use of OPAC is fast, efficient and prompt searching system with combination searching (AND, OR, NOT).

<u>Services</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
OPAC	71.33%	28.67%
Print Card Catalogue	18%	82%

Table 6 Document Searching

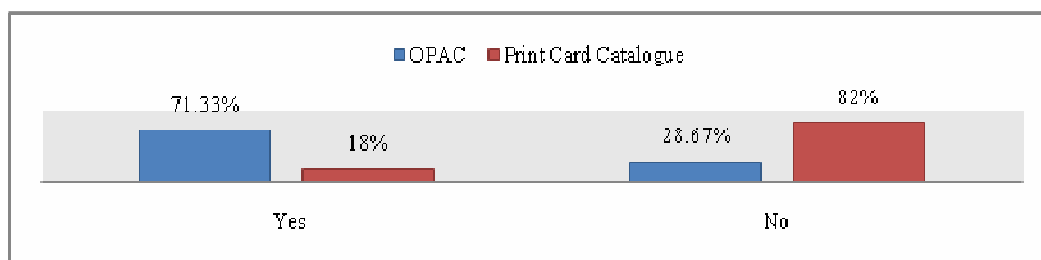


Fig 6 Document Searching

## 7. Problem Faced in Library Using

Table 7 indicates in response of problem faced during library visit 32% researchers found that library has lack of information materials according their need, 30% researchers don't know how to access e- resources, 18% researchers don't know that how to search a document or other materials in library, 10% researchers face the problem that library opening hours are not sufficient, 10% researcher are not familiar with OPAC and 8% researchers comments that library staff are not helping nature. On the basis of above finding a collection development policy and users' awareness programmes are necessary for maximum utilization of the library.

Problems	Respondents	In percentage (%)
Lack of latest information materials	32	32%
Don't know how to use e-resources	28	28%
Lack of knowledge how to use library	15	15%
Lack of time	10	10%
Don't know how to use OPAC	10	10%
Library staff not supportive	05	05%

Table 7. Problem Faced in Library Using

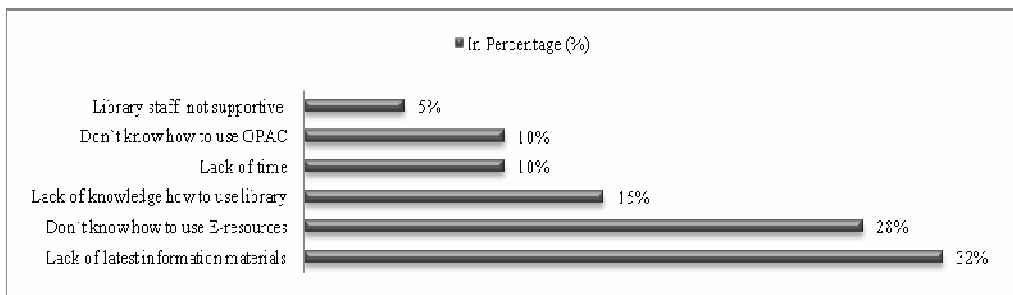


Fig 7. Problem Faced in Library Using

## 8. Rate Your Library

Table 8 shows that researchers are mostly satisfy with library OPAC facility, reference section, reading room facility, borrowing facility, staff behavior and reprography facility. Researchers are less satisfy with collection of books, e-resources lab, availability of print journals and e-resources. Researchers are less satisfies with shelving of the books there is a need to do remedial steps in this regard.

Sources and services	Very adequately	Adequately	Inadequately	No response
OPAC	64	20	06	10
Reference Section	30	40	26	04
Journals (Print)	25	45	25	05
Collection of Books	30	42	28	Nil
E-journals/database	26	40	04	30
E-resources lab	30	44	04	22
Reading room	52	48	02	Nil
Behavior of library staff	38	44	06	12
Shelving of the books	26	54	12	08
Reprography facility	22	52	20	06
Borrowing facility	52	46	10	Nil

Table 8 Rate your Library

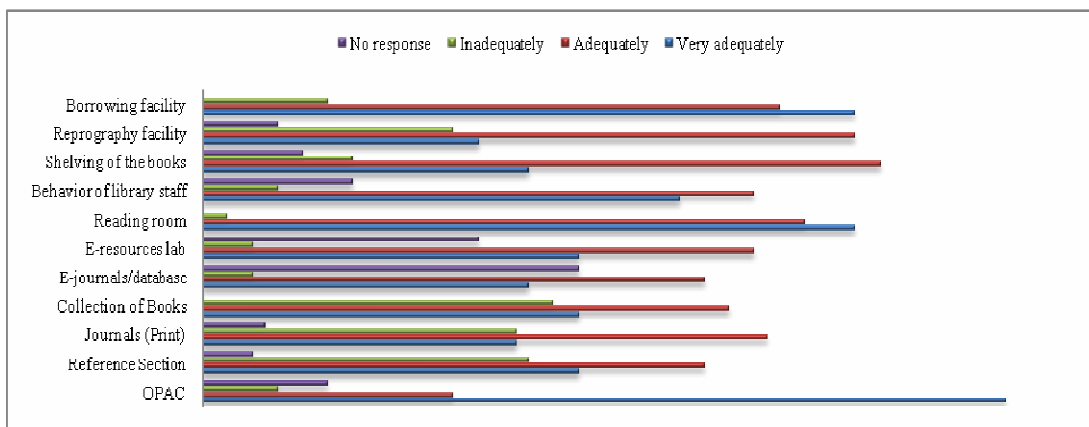


Fig 8 Rate your Library



## 9. Use of e-resources

Table 9 indicates that researchers found less useful availability of e-resources according to their need they show its main reason their language medium, many researchers specially humanity and education are pursuing their research in Hindi 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.

S. No.	E-resources	Lot	Some	Never	No response
1	E-journals (UGC-INFONET)	18	55	15	12
2	E-journals (Institutional subscription)	15	48	12	25
3	Digital e-books	10	32	40	18
4	Document Delivery Services (Through JCCC)	8	22	40	30
5	CD ROM	8	22	40	30

Table 9 Use of e-resources

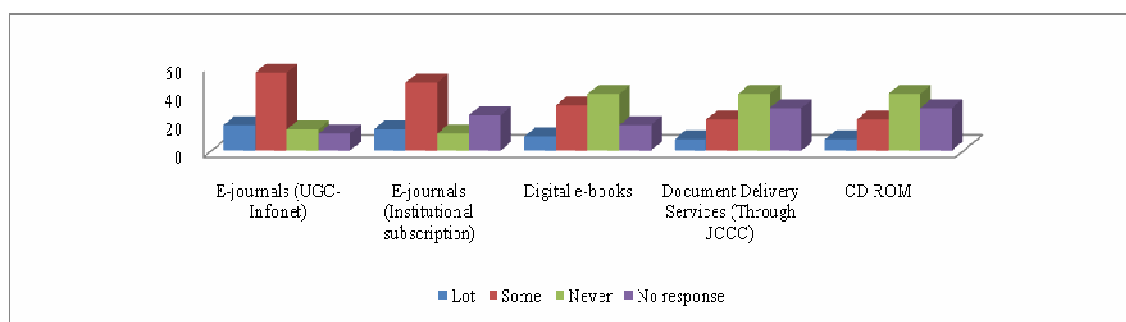


Fig 9 Use of e-resources

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study 100 research scholars were surveyed of Banasthali 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 Banasthali University Central Library play an 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.

There is a need to make a plan for effective or better utilization of library sources and services. Some suggestions which have been received by the researchers are given here under with planning remedial steps are as:

- i). need of advance training for researchers,
- ii). use of library sources should be included in research curriculum,
- iii). need of orientation programmes or periodically training programmes by the library staff,
- iv). in library handling of technology, computers, network should be developed,
- v). access of e-resources should be available at hostels through local network,
- vi). need to concentrate on proper book shelving and preservation,
- vii). ILL through document delivery services should be increased,
- viii). need to examine the possibility future development of library,
- ix). need to make a library website,
- x). there is a need to marketing library services.

Although researchers accept that library provides them effective and useful services. Information seeking behavior differs from one discipline to another. After implementing some recommendations library system of Banasthali University might be capable of handling the complex of information need and demands of the researchers.

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