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A Comparative Study on the Use of Information Sources among Undergraduates in Academic Institutions

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Abstract

In the present era of information explosion, the library, in all forms (academic, public, special etc.) acts as the inseparable part of the society and brain of the academic institution. As the quality of education is mostly judged by the quality of libraries of a particular nation. Besides this these (libraries) can help in the close examination of growth and development. Although with the introduction of world wide web, the position of the library does not appears to be the same. It (web) gives rise to a Generation of users (library users) who now perceive the web technology as the most familiar, convenient and expedient source of information. Meanwhile the library has a role here in the digital world as with print, in encouraging access paths to quality. But such role (s) need to be realized by the authorities is quite essential. So that these (libraries) stay relevant. The paper attempts to provide an insight regarding awareness, use and frequency of different types of resources consulted by the college students , purpose of using information resources and the problems encountered by the students while accessing these information resources (print/ digital)

Keywords : Library, Information, Awareness, Frequency, Purpose

Introduction

Academic libraries are considered to be the nerve centers of academic institutions, and must support teaching, research, and other academic programmes. Although there is need, libraries must provide maximum information with limited (available) resources. According to the definition taken from library and information science encyclopedia (**American Library Association , 1980)** academic libraries, are integral parts of the institutions they serve, design their collections and services to meet the instructional programs of the particular institution. The program of the academic library varies depending upon institution of which they are a part. Since the introduction of computerized resources have made the fast track of change possible that has challenged instruction librarians to continually develop new services and methods for teaching.

In the 1970s libraries designed workshops in the use of online catalogs; in the 1980s many libraries purchased CD-ROM sources and experimented with computer-assisted instruction (CAI). Library tours helped students learn which computers they would use to begin their research or find their books as well as become acquainted with the physical building. Class demonstrations commonly blended the use of both print and electronic resources. Many instruction librarians supported the pedagogical shift to teaching fundamental concepts rather than specific tools **(Hackman and Wageman, 1995).** The world of library is witnessing a tremendous change due to the developments in information technology and abundance increase in information. They are restoring to fast modes of communication such as. Computer, CD-ROM, computer networks and now on-line searching to cope with the increasing information demands of the users **(Michalak, 2012).** In order to justify the existence of libraries in the electronic world, these (libraries) must continue to perform one of the most important functions it now performs in the print-on-paper world: to organize the universe of resources in such a way that those most likely to be of value to the user community are made most accessible to this community, physically and intellectually (**Lancaster, 1997**).Thus the traditional concept of library has been redefined from a place to access books to one which houses the most advanced media including CD-ROM, Internet, and remote access to a wide range of resources. Even libraries are surrounded by networked data that is connected to a vast ocean of Internet-based services. Also electronic resources relevant to the professions are developing at an unprecedented pace. As a result the nature of libraries has changed dramatically, with the advent of these media (technological). Which are being used in libraries to process, store, retrieve and disseminate information. Infact libraries have now metamorphosed into digital institutions.

Review of literature

Asemi, Asefeh (2005) investigates the familiarity and use of digital resources by students through on-line and off-line databases of the Central Library available in the 4 academic libraries (MUI). The study reveals that use of digital resources is still poor among the medical students of the universities in the developing countries and the major reason is less use of off-line databases are infrequent periodic orientation as well as the education to use off-line databases. Meanwhile, **Haneefa (2005)** analyses the use of e-resources in special libraries in Kerala. The study explores the specific factors that promotes or hinders the use of electronic resources. The study takes place in 30 libraries and findings of the study indicate that majority of the special

libraries in Kerala have no OPAC, even though most of them are at various stages of computerization, very few libraries are using commercial online databases. Two libraries have a separate Digital Library and only three special libraries are participating in library consortia for accessing e-journals. On the other hand **Elam (2007)** emphasis on the impact of electronic resources and digital image databases by observing the information seeking behavior of art historians and concludes although art historians depends mostly on libraries to perform their tasks, many of them have limited awareness of electronic resources due to which they does not fully utilize the available resources to their fullest potential. Although the effect of information literacy on the utilization of electronic information resources in selected academic and research institutions in Uganda by teaching the users on how to access a variety of available information resources, evaluate them and apply them to address their needs has been accessing by (**Albert, 2007).** Thus **Salisu (2002)** rightly notices that the library is one of the main areas deeply affected by ICT which is the backbone of information age. This is due to the fact that the library being the main stay of information and knowledge has been made virtual such that library and information services extend beyond walls and physical buildings. As ICT has engendered a new approach to work and service delivery, and is a technological development that has changed work and job expectations. Apart from this **Creth (1996)** suggests that librarians can achieve values (which are considered as the foundation of the library profession) by actively seeking out users in a variety of setting and by making full use of information and multimedia technology, by offering instruction in a variety of formats (including Web based instruction and online tutorials). So that information professionals enable to manage the digital information System. Furthermore **Jestin & Parameswari (2002)** explores the challenges for library professionals in the new millennium of digital environment. Which includes, ICT and new digital technology as the major challenge to librarians? Also authors conclude that librarians should be ready to participate in the process of generating and distributing information and knowledge for quality of life and education for all. Librarians must unite to withstand the revolutions that will occur in the information and communication fields.

Methodology

Questionnaire was utilized as the data collection tool to determine the influence of technology on the information needs and the use of information sources by the students of degree colleges in Srinagar   (J & K. India). The questionnaire were distributed among 80 students pursuing
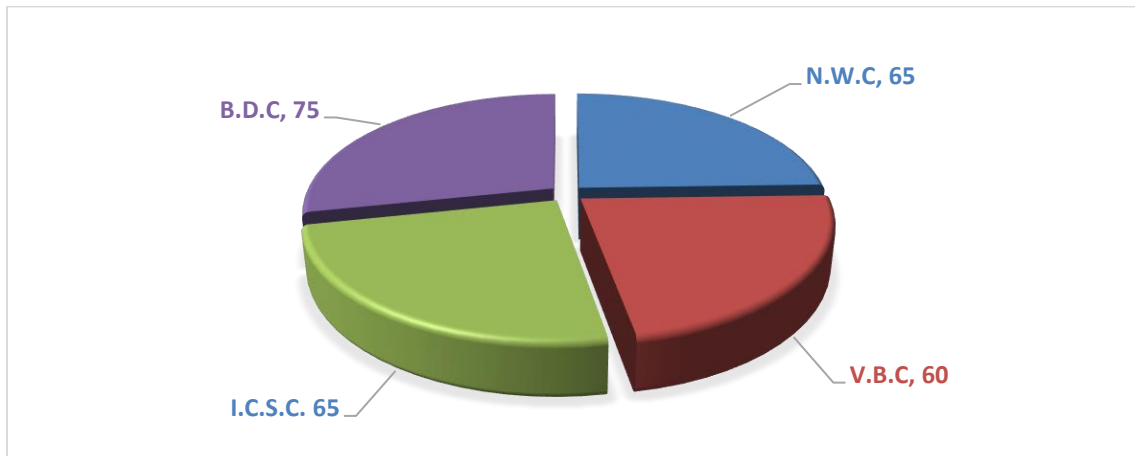
bachelors degree at colleges. All questions were related and helped us the influence of technology on academic libraries by analyzing the responses. Then the data was analyzed and interpreted for the outcome through the use of SPSS and Microsoft excel

Objectives

➢ To know about the awareness level and occurrence of different types of information sources by the college students
➢ To find out the purpose of using information resources, consulted by students
➢ To find out the problems encountered by the students while accessing and using sources of information

Data Analysis

Fig1: Awareness with Library resources (n=80)

| N.W. C: *Women's college Nawakadal* | V.B.C: *Vishwa Bharti college* |
| I.C.S.C.: *Islamia College of Science and Commerce* | B.D.C: *Bemina Degree College* |

Fig 1: Shows the distribution of students according to their awareness regarding the availability of   resources in their college library. The analysis of data shows that in Bemina Degree college highest (75%) respondents are having awareness regarding the resources available in the libraries. Followed by 65% respondents of women's college Nawakadal and Islamia college and

at lowest 60% respondents at Vishwa Bharti College are possessing the awareness about the available sources.

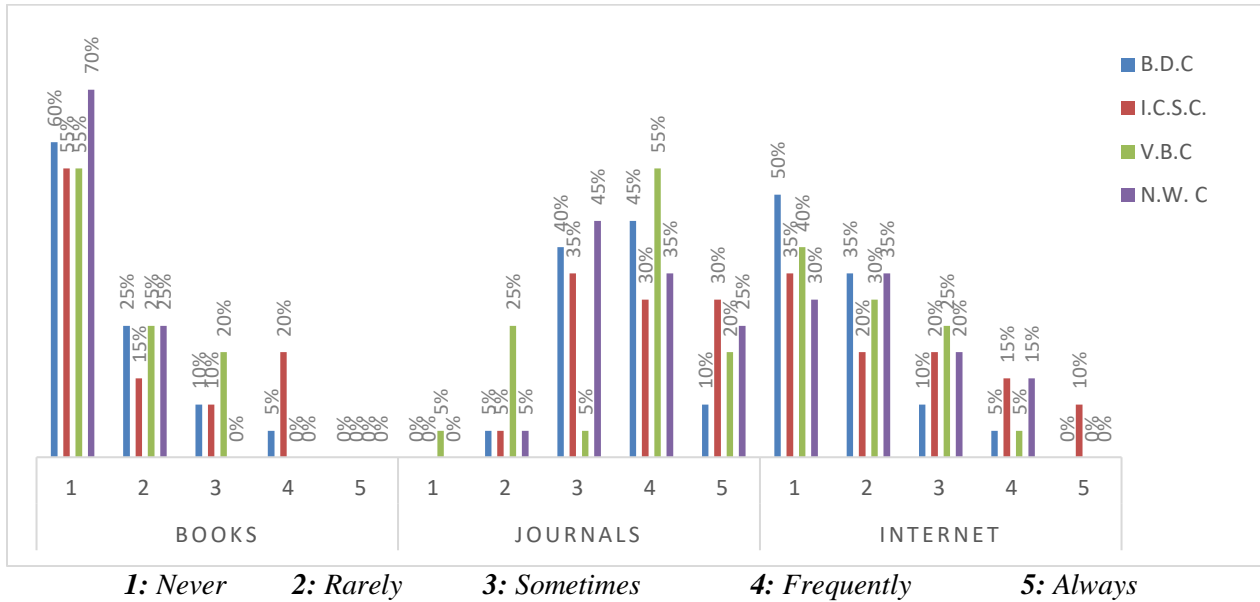**Fig 2:** *Frequency of using information sources*

1: Never   2: Rarely   3: Sometimes   4: Frequently   5: Always

Fig 3: *Frequency of using information sources*

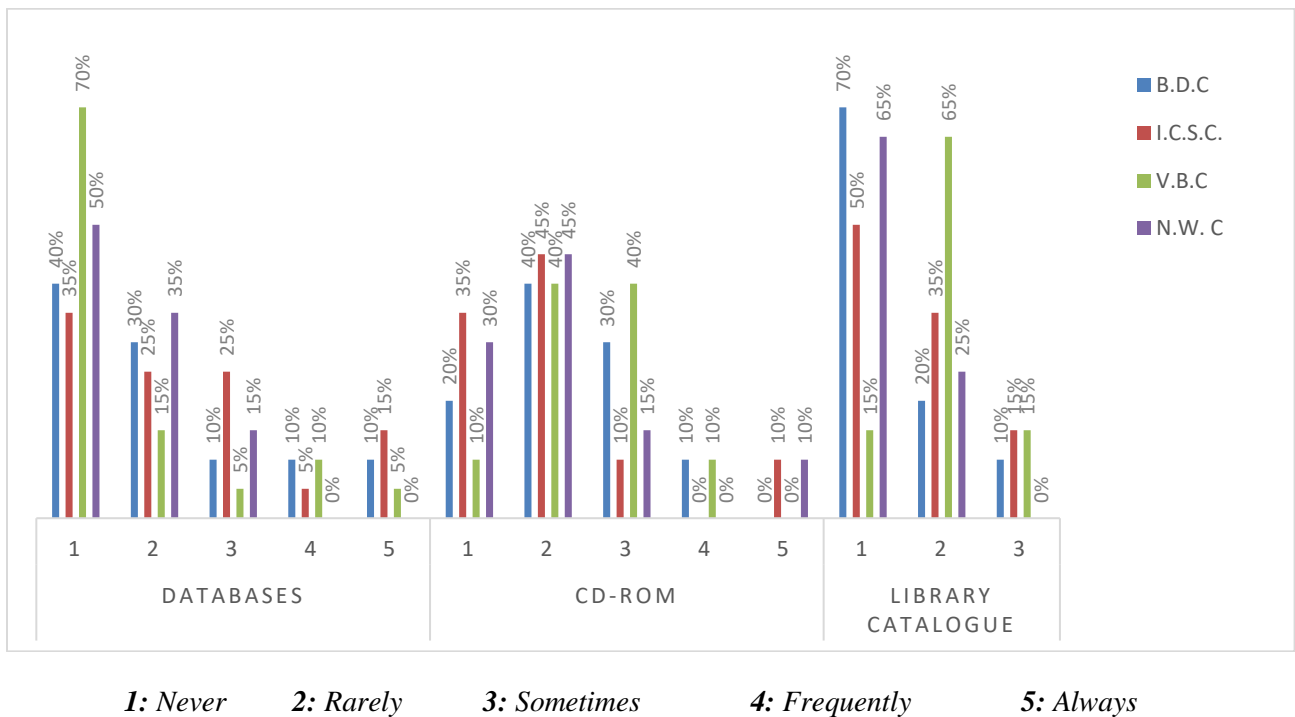*1: Never   2: Rarely   3: Sometimes   4: Frequently   5: Always*

Fig 2 & 3 provides the data regarding the use of resources that has been adopted widely by the students in the libraries that has been surveyed. It can be seen from data analysis internet is adopted highly 60% by the respondents, followed by books which has been adopted by the 50% at Bemina Degree college as the always used source of information. While as at Nawakadal college both (internet and books) were rated same (50%) as the always used source of information while as at Vishwa Bharti 40% respondents use books and 30% make use of internet as the source of information. Similarly, Islamia college provides the somewhat same response from respondents where 30% rated books and 25% internet as the always used source of information. While as in all the surveyed colleges journals has been used sometimes at highest, followed by CD-ROM and then databases. On the other hand library catalogues has been rated at highest as the never used source of information in all the selected colleges.

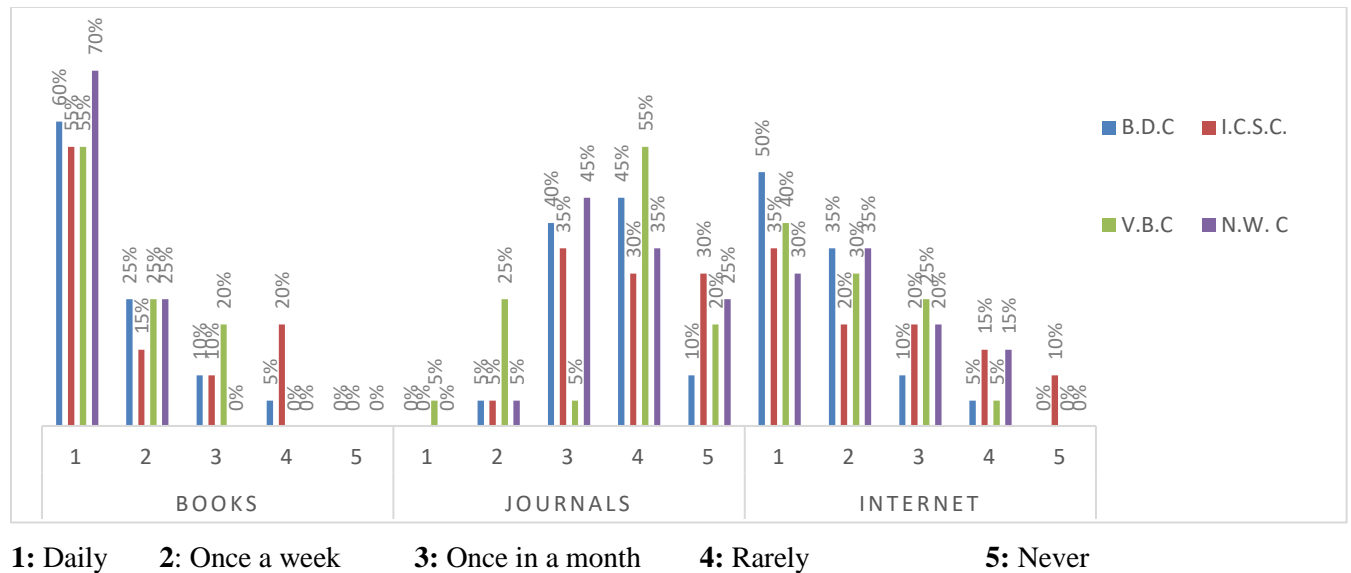***Fig 4: Frequency of using the Digital resources**

1: Daily   **2**: Once a week   **3:** Once in a month   **4:** Rarely   **5:** Never
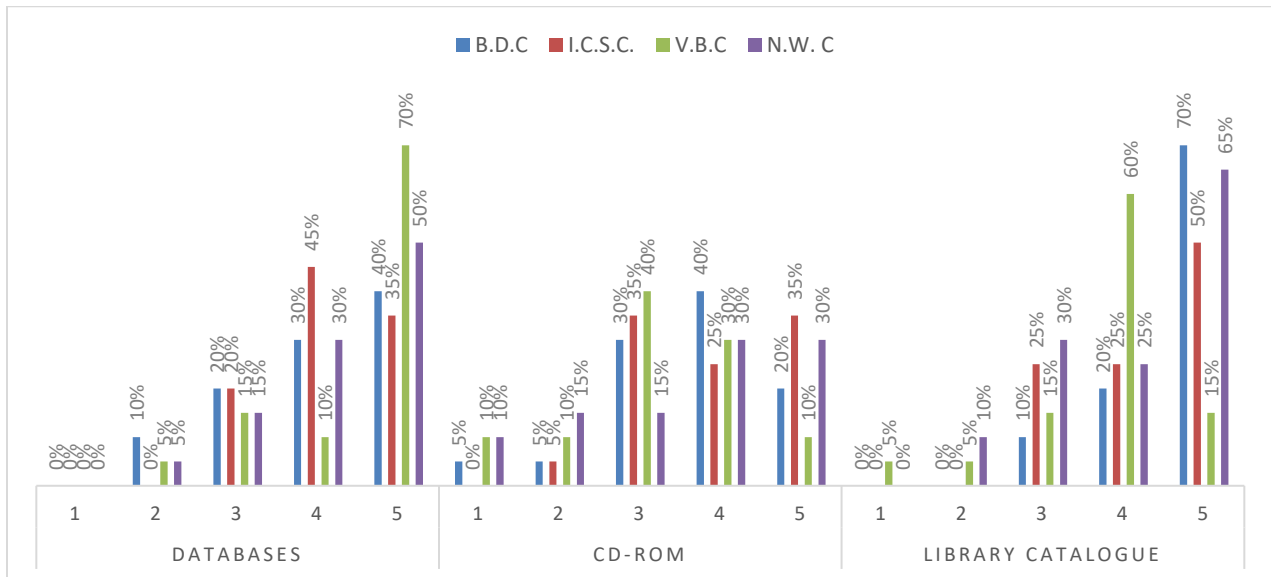
Fig 4 & 5 provides the data regarding the frequency with which information sources have been using by the respondents of libraries that has been surveyed. The data revealed that in Nawakadal college highest 70% of respondents use books on daily basis as the source of information. Followed by 60% of respondents from Bemina Degree college. Although 55% of respondents from Vishwa Bharti college and Gandhi college use the same source of information (books) on daily basis. While as, internet on daily basis as the source of information were used highly 50% of respondents at Bemina Degree college, followed by 40% respondents of Vishwa Bharti college, 35% at Gandhi college and at lowest rate 30% at Nawakadal college On the other hand it can be observed that 55% of respondents from Vishwa Bharti use journals on rarely basis followed by 45% of respondents Bemina Degree college, then 35% respondents from Nawakadal college and lowest 30% respondents of Islamia College use journals as the source of information on rarely basis. Further, the number of respondents who use CD-ROM on rarely basis were 40%, 30% and 25% belongs to Bemina Degree college, Nawakadal college, Vishwa Bharti and Islamia College respectively. Besides this 70% of respondents at Vishwa Bharti, 50% at Nawakadal college, 40% at Bemina Degree college and 35% at Gandhi, memorial college found to be not making use of databases. Similarly, 70% at Bemina Degree college, 65% at Nawakadal college, 50% at Islamia college and 15% at Vishwa Bharti never make use of library catalogues

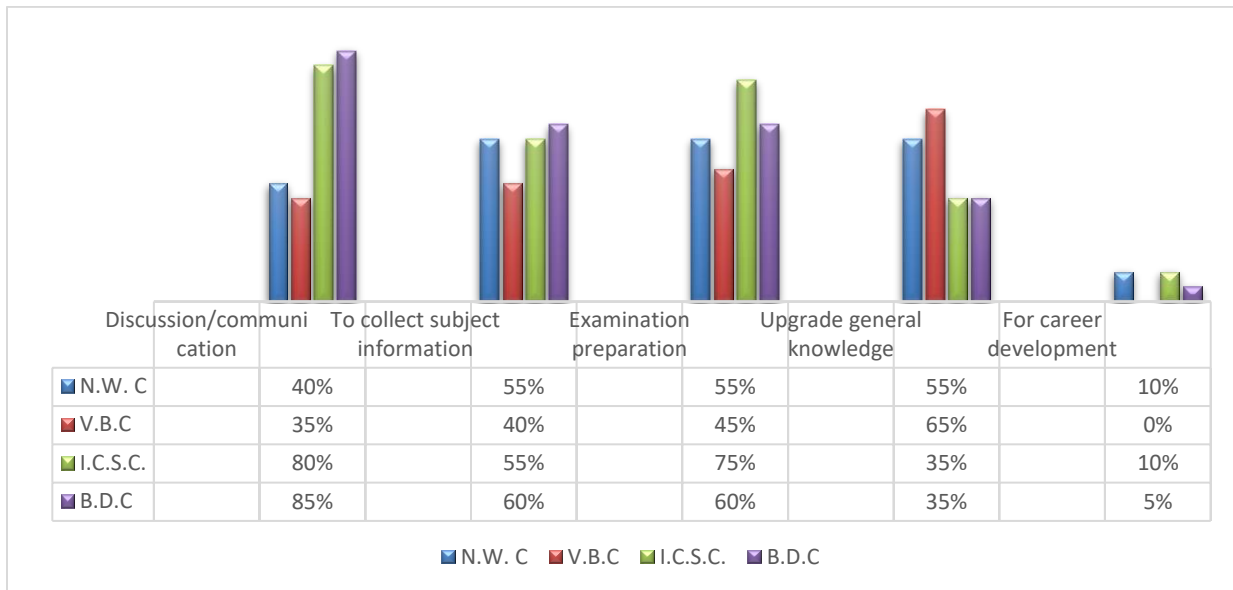|	Discussion/communication	To collect subject information	Examination preparation	Upgrade general knowledge	For career development
N.W. C	40%	55%	55%	55%	10%
V.B.C	35%	40%	45%	65%	0%
I.C.S.C.	80%	55%	75%	35%	10%
B.D.C	85%	60%	60%	35%	5%

N.W. C V.B.C I.C.S.C. B.D.C

Fig 6 It is evident from data analysis that majority 60% of respondents are making use of information sources for communication/discussion purpose and placed at rank-1. Followed by 58.75% of respondents choose examination preparation with the result placed at rank-2. Besides this, 52.5% of respondents select the purpose of collecting subject information and on the basis of received response this purpose has been kept at rank-3. While as 46.25% were making use of information sources for upgrading general knowledge and placed at rank-4. On the other hand 42.5% of respondents are making use for career development. Thus placed at the rank-5.

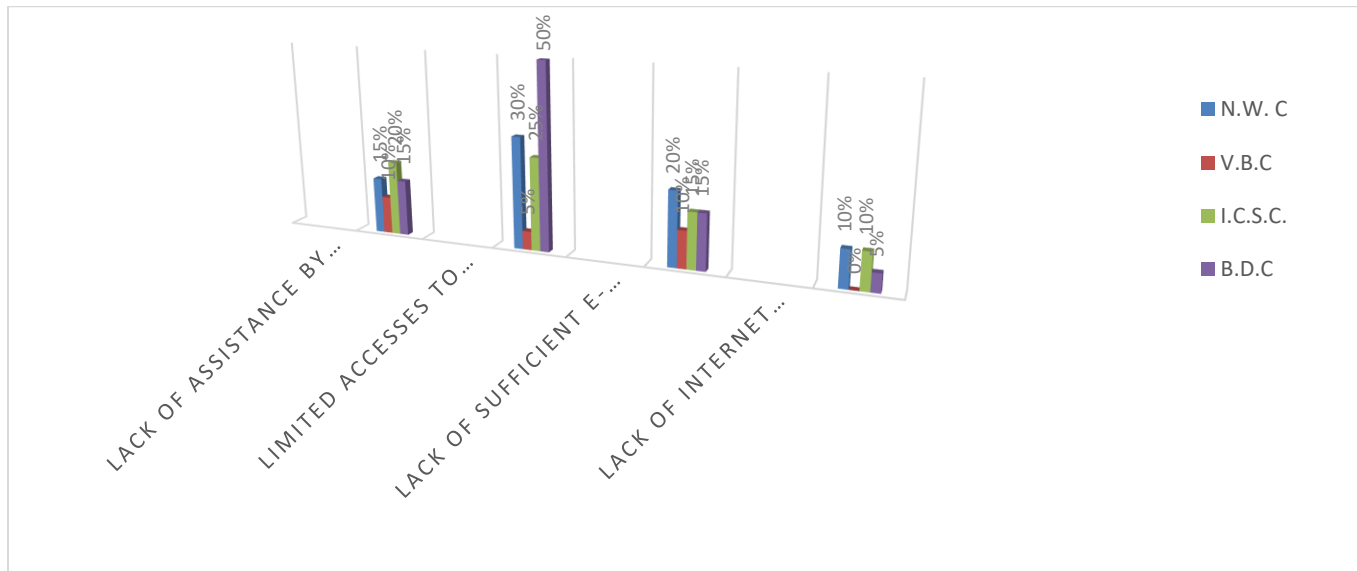*Fig 7: Barriers in accessing the information sources*

Fig 7 clearly depicts that majority of the respondents 55% considers lack of internet connectivity as the barrier thus placed at rank-1. It is followed by 51.25% of respondents who considers lack of assistance by library staff as the barrier and thus placed at rank-2. While as 50% of respondents choose lack of sufficient e-resources as the barrier in accessing information with the result placed at rank -3. On the other hand rank-4 has been provided to limited access to computers as 46.25% of respondents have selected it.

Conclusion

The fundamental goal of library is to provide right information to right users at right time and to fulfill this goal it is necessary for library professionals to keep pace with the changing need & demand of users in present digital and market oriented environment. As due to information explosion users are not able to deal with the problem of information overload. Technology will continue to change, and libraries and library professionals have to use the changing technology to provide the best access of resources and service to their users. Infact, the electronic information environment creates challenges for the library community and moving it away from the traditional paper-and-print format to technology based forms. Therefore, library is no longer defined simply as a building or a physical repository that houses information. with the result library professionals have to accept this challenge of digital age and change

in their role from custodian of knowledge to knowledge manager for performing their duties in a more effective and efficient manner.

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