

Assessing the Information Needs of Faculty Members of Hindi in Various Colleges of University of Delhi: A Case Study

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Sufficient knowledge about the information needs of the user is very important in order to develop good collection and to provide effective and efficient services to the users. This study tries to describe the information needs of faculty members in the discipline of Hindi in various colleges of University of Delhi. For the purpose of the study, a survey method was used. Data were collected by using questionnaire and interview methods from 96 faculty members of various colleges of University of Delhi. This study discusses about frequency of visit to the library, purpose of use of library and to assess their information needs with regard to the different types of sources and services used by them and it also tries to bring out the problems they face during the search for information. Also mentions suggestions given by the users about improvement of collection and services.

Keywords: *Information needs, Faculty members(FM), User study, Information seeking behaviour.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Information is an important and key resource for any organization. Information can be regarded as powerful instrument for all phases of life, especially in the area of teaching and research. The importance of information not only lies in its provision but in accessibility and utilization for effective development of information society. Libraries, especially the college libraries have limited resources with which they have to satisfy the information needs of their users. Therefore, libraries have to build their sources and services as per the information needs of their user community.

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The library is considered as the heart of any institution or organization especially of an academic institution. A college library plays a very important role as a part and parcel of teaching learning process. The all-round development of an academic institution depends on the library. Therefore, the college library should have a good collection of all types of information sources according to the information needs of the users.

A well-equipped and well-organized library is the foundation of modern educational structure. A quality library service can only be provided if we know the information needs of the users. The primary objective of a library is to meet the information needs of its users. The library staff should understand the user's need and his information requirements. All the services should be user based, according to their information needs. All the information services exist for the sake of users. Users are an important part of the library and information system. Therefore, it is important to know their information needs. Also in case a new service is to be provided then the opinion of the users about the services is to be sought.

11 OBJECTIVES OF USER STUDY

- To identify the level and kind of users needs.
- To find out the shortcomings of library systems and services.
- To enhance the quality of library services.
- To find out the problems or limitations which discourage the use of library sources and services.
- To find out the future information needs.
- To design and develop need based and user based library services and sources.

12 DEFINITION OF INFORMATION NEEDS

Information need is defined as a state or process started when one perceives that there is a gap between the information and knowledge available to solve a problem and the actual solution of the problem (Miranda S.V.)¹. Information need is often understood in information science as evolving from a vague awareness of something missing and as culminating in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning (Kuhlthau, 1993)². Information need is described as an anomalous state of knowledge (Belkin, *et. al*, 1982)³ or a gap in individual's knowledge in sense-making situations (Drevin & Nilan 1986)⁴. Wilson (1997) points out that there must be an attendant motive

when a person experiences an information need ⁵.

13 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Determine the kind of information sources used by the faculty members for their information seeking activities.
- Study the purpose of information search by the faculty members.
- Find out frequency of visit to the library.
- Find out how much time they spent in the library for their information seeking activities
- Find out awareness about the different types of services.
- Identify the constraints/barriers encountered by the faculty members in using/searching information.

14 SCOPE

The study is focused on the information needs of the faculty members in the field of Hindi discipline from 15 colleges of University of Delhi. The questionnaires were distributed among 150 faculty members. The responses from 96 faculty members were received.

15 METHODOLOGY

This study was confined to the information needs of faculty members in the area of Hindi in colleges of Delhi University. For the purpose of the study, the survey method was used. Questionnaire and personal interview methods were used for data collection. A questionnaire was prepared after comprehensive literature search and discussion with subject experts. The primary function of a survey is to collect information that can be analyzed to produce results. A structured questionnaire was prepared, keeping in mind the objectives of the study. It was followed by interview with some of the faculty members and librarians. The interviews were conducted with some faculty members to receive their opinions about the information sources and services from the library. A random sampling technique was adopted to select faculty members. The questionnaires were completed by personal visits with users. The collected data was analyzed and presented in tabular form.

2 DATA ANALYSIS

21 Qualifications/Professional Qualifications

Table 1 shows that 96 (100%) of faculty members were post graduates as it is the minimum qualification for the post of assistant professor. The

faculty members holding M Phil degree are 45(47.9%) and 90(93.75%) faculty members are Ph.D. degree holders. It shows that majority of faculty members in the subject of Hindi are having Ph.D. degree.

TABLE 1
Qualifications/Professional N=96

<i>Qualifications</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
M. Phil	46	47.9
Ph. D	90	93.75

22 GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION

The Table 2 shows the gender difference between the FM studied. It shows that out of the total 96 (100%) faculty members 54 (56.25%) are female and 42 (43.75%) faculty members are male. It shows that majority of the faculty members of Hindi discipline are female.

Table 2
Gender wise Distribution N=96

<i>Gender</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	42	43.75
Female	54	56.25
Total	96	100

23 DESIGNATION -WISE DISTRIBUTION OF FACULTY MEMBERS

Table 3 shows that out of 96 faculty members 55(57.2%) faculty members consisted of Assistant Professors ,while the rest of the respondents 41(42.7%) consisted of Associate Professors category. The result shows that majority of the faculty members in the area of Hindi belongs to Assistant Professor category.

TABLE 3
Designation-Wise Distribution of Faculty Members (N=96)

<i>Designation</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Assistant Prof.	55	57.2
Associate Prof.	41	42.7
Total	96	100

24 PURPOSE OF INFORMATION SEARCH FROM THE LIBRARY

The purpose of users' visit to the library was ascertained to find out whether they come to the library for research requirements, for preparing class lecture or for general reading. The study of purpose of visit to library is important to assess the use of the library. It will help the library to find out the type of documents and services needed in the library. This was enabling the library to develop need-based collection in the library. The table 4 revealed that 87(90.62%) of faculty members visited the library for the purpose of preparing their lecture, while 81(84.37%) for seminar/

workshop presentation, followed by 66(68.75%) for writing books/articles, and 63(65.62%) visit the library for gaining general awareness/knowledge.

It shows that highest percentage of faculty members seek information from the library for preparing their lectures, followed by for teaching the students and for seminar/workshop presentation. The use of library for the recreational purpose is found to be low.

25 INFORMATION SOURCES USED BY FACULTY MEMBERS

Users were asked to mention about the use of different types of sources of information for their information seeking activities. The table 5 shows that 93(96.87) of users use text books for their information seeking activities. It shows that majority of the faculty members depends on textbooks as their

TABLE 4
Purpose of Information Search (N=96)

Purpose of Information Search	Yes	%	No	%
For doing Research work	42	43.75	54	56.25
For Seminar/ workshop presentation	81	84.37	15	15.62
For writing books/ article	66	68.75	30	31.25
For Class Lectures	87	90.62	09	09.37
For Recreational purpose	18	18.75	78	81.25
Reference and information services	39	40.62	57	59.37
For General Awareness/knowledge	63	65.62	33	34.37
For Updating knowledge	42	43.75	54	56.25

main information source for meeting their information needs. Internet is useful to 75 (78.12%) faculty members .The findings show that 72(75%) users needed information from the Newspapers/magazines. Journal contains latest research findings, and the faculty members use them to update their knowledge in the area of Hindi. Journals/periodicals and Thesis/ Dissertations are also very popular among faculty members in comparison to other resources. The use of back issues of journals is found to be low. Table 5 revealed that text books, newspapers/magazines, internet, journals/ periodicals are the major sources needed and consulted by faculty members in the area of Hindi for their information needs. It can be concluded that faculty members of Hindi gathered information from variety of sources.

TABLE 5
Use of Information Sources (N=96)

Information Sources	Yes	%	No	%
Internet	75	78.12	21	21.87
CD-ROMs	30	31.25	66	68.75
Text books	93	96.87	03	03.12
Journals/periodicals	69	71.87	27	28.11
Reference books (e.g. encyclopedia, yearbook, etc.)	27	28.12	69	71.87
Newspapers /magazines	72	75.00	24	25.00
Back issue of journals	21	21.87	75	78.12
Conference /Seminar papers	33	34.37	66	68.75
Thesis/Dissertations	51	53.12	45	46.87

26 TIME SPENT

A question was asked about how much time on an average they spent in the library for their information seeking activities each time they visit. The result of table 6 shows that out of 96 faculty members 36(37.5%) of faculty members spent 3 to 6 hours/week in the library, while 30(31.25%) of

TABLE 6
Time Spent (N=96)

Time Spent	No	%
0 to 2 hours/week	30	31.25
3 to 6 hours/week	36	37.5
7to 10 hours/week	09	9.37

faculty members spent less than two hours/week, followed by 21(21.87%) of faculty members spending over 10 hours/week for utilizing the library sources and services. The result shows that most of the faculty members visit the library and they utilize the library for maximum of 3 to 6 hours/week. By providing latest sources of information related to their subject area, better and peaceful environment can encourage them to spend more time in the library. This will result in improvement in the quality of lecture they prepare for teaching the students.

27 FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE LIBRARY

The frequency of the visits to the library is one index to judge the utilization of the library resources. A question was asked about the frequency (i.e. how often) of visit to their respective college libraries. Table 7 shows that maximum number of 30(31.25) faculty members visit

the library daily, followed by 15(15.62%) of faculty members visiting 2 times a week, 09(9.37%) faculty members visit once in a week and 6(6.25%) of faculty members visit the library occasionally. It has been found that maximum number of users make use of library daily for their information seeking activities.

TABLE 7
Frequency of Visit to Library (N=96)

Frequency	No	%
Daily	30	31.25
2 times a week	15	15.62
Once in a week	09	9.37
Once in a fortnight	03	3.12
Once in a month	03	3.12
Occasionally	06	6.25

28 AWARENESS ABOUT LIBRARY SERVICES

The basic function of a library is to provide effective and efficient services to its users. Users' awareness about the library services is prerequisite for proper utilization of the library and its resources. Therefore, the responses of the users in this regard have been analyzed and presented in Table 8. It shows that 90(93.75%) of faculty members were aware of circulation (issue/return) service. As far as awareness of internet service is concerned 81(84.37%) were aware of this service and 78(81.25%) faculty members were aware of reservation services followed by 72(75%) faculty members were aware of Xerox/Photocopying service.

The awareness about CAS/SDI service and chat based Reference service is found to be low. The result shows that faculty members of Hindi are aware of various types of services provided by their respective libraries. They are more aware of circulation, internet, reservation, Xerox/photocopy services as compared to other services provided by their respective libraries.

29 USEFULNESS OF LIBRARY SERVICES

The user visits the library to fulfill the information needs by consulting the various documents available in the library. The faculty members were asked to indicate the usefulness of library services. Table 9 shows that 90(93.75%) of faculty members find circulation (issue/return) service is useful, 81(84.37%) find internet services is useful and 75(78.12%) faculty members find reservation service is useful to them followed by 72(75%) faculty members finding Xerox/Photocopying service useful to them. The usefulness of CAS/SDI service and chat based reference is found to be low.

The result exhibits that majority of the faculty members felt the usefulness of circulation (issue/return) service, internet service and reservation service.

TABLE 8
Awareness about Library Service (N=96)

Services	Yes	%	No	%
E-Mail	63	65.62	33	34.37
Online enquiry	57	59.37	39	40.62
Chat based reference	09	9.37	87	90.62
Internet service	81	84.37	15	15.62
Inter-Library loan	03	3.12	93	96.87
Xerox/Photocopying service	72	75.00	24	25.00
CAS/SDI service	15	15.62	81	84.37
OPAC search	42	43.75	54	56.25
Circulation (issue/return)	90	93.75	06	06.25
Newspaper clipping services	51	53.12	45	46.87
Reservation services	78	81.25	18	18.75
Reference service	69	71.87	27	28.12

TABLE 9
Usefulness of Library Services (N=96)

Usefulness	Yes	%	No	%
E-Mail	63	65.62	33	34.37
Online enquiry	48	50	48	50
Chat based reference	06	6.25	90	93.75
Internet service	81	84.37	15	15.62
Inter-Library Loan	03	3.12	93	96.87
Xerox/Photocopying service	72	75	24	25.00
CAS/SDI service	12	12.5	84	87.5
OPAC search	42	43.75	54	56.25
Circulation (issue/return)	90	93.75	06	6.25
Newspaper clipping services	30	31.25	66	68.75
Reservation services	75	78.12	21	21.87
Reference service	69	71.87	27	28.12
Bibliographical service	39	40.62	57	59.37

291 Assistance Provided By Library Staff

Library staff can play an important role in assisting and guiding the faculty members for their information/document search. Respondents were asked whether they feel the need of any assistance in their search for information/document from the library staff. Table 10 shows data about different types of assistances provided by the library staff to the faculty members. It shows that majority of the faculty members 51(53.12%) felt that library staff is very helpful. They expressed satisfaction about the assistance provided by the library staff in search of information/documents. It is followed by 30(31.25%) of faculty members felt that library staff is helpful and 9(9.37%) of faculty members felt that library staff is not helpful.

TABLE 10

*Assistance Provided By Library Staff
(N=96)*

Result shows that library staff either provides assistance/guidance in the use of sources and services or provides the piece of information / documents required by them.

Assistance	No	%
Helpful	30	31.25
Very Helpful	51	53.12
Not Helpful	09	9.37
Indifferent	02	2.08

292 Barriers/Problems

Users face many problems/difficulties while seeking required information from the library. Table 11 shows that seeking the required information by faculty members of Hindi in various colleges of Delhi University is not free from problems. The opinion regarding various difficulties faced by the faculty members in accessing the required information/documents shows that 78(81.25%) of faculty members found difficulty regarding not knowing how to use the catalogue, 39(40.62%) of faculty members found lack of knowledge in using the Library resources/services. Beside this 36(37.5%) faculty members found that facility for copying is not sufficient followed by 33(34.37%) found information is too vast. The difficulty related to lack of the reading material required by them is faced by 30(31.25%) of faculty members. Another 21(21.87%) respondents revealed that searching instructions are complicated, 15(15.62%) revealed that library staff is unwilling for service/help and 06(6.25%) felt library timing is not suitable to them.

The result shows that faculty members face many problems/difficulties while searching of information required by them. The most felt difficulties are:

TABLE 11
Barriers/Problems (N=96)

Barriers/Problems	Yes	%	No	%
The reading material is not available	30	31.25	66	68.75
Facility for copying is not sufficient	36	37.5	60	62.5
Library staff are unwilling for service/help	15	15.62	81	84.37
Incomplete information materials	12	12.5	84	87.5
Do not know how to use the catalogue	78	81.25	18	18.75
Lack of knowledge in using the Library resource/ services	39	40.62	57	59.37
Information is too vast	33	34.37	63	65.62
Lack of training facilities	27	28.12	69	71.87
Lack of time	18	18.75	78	81.25
Library time is not suitable	06	6.25	90	93.75
Searching instruction is complicated	21	21.87	75	78.12
Information is scattered in too many sources	15	15.62	81	84.37

- do not know how to use the catalogue,
- lack of knowledge in using the library resources/services, and
- facility of copying is not sufficient.

3 SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

It was requested to the users to give their suggestions for improvements of library facilities/ services. Accordingly, some of the useful suggestions and recommendations are given below:

- College libraries should also provide internet facilities to the faculty members of Hindi. The library must provide adequate ICT facilities such as Internet, laser printers, scanners, etc. to offer various services in the library. More computer systems with fast internet connectivity should be provided in the college libraries for faculty members of Hindi.
- More journals related to their field should be subscribed by college libraries so that user can get the current information. There are very few periodicals subscribed by college libraries in the area of Hindi Literature.
- Library staff should be more communicative, friendly and helpful.

Therefore, in this case the college libraries should employ well qualified staff who can fully understand the user's needs. The training to library staff should be provided in ICT in general and computers based library operations in particular.

- (d) User Education : User education programme should be conducted from time to time to educate the faculty members about the use of e-resources and services. The library should organize more awareness programmes and seminars to educate the faculty members on seeking information to enhance the use of library resources and services.
- (e) Librarians and library staff should also assist users in learning the use of OPAC, search engines, e-mail, and CD-ROM search techniques, and inform them of the web sites available through the various networks. Hence, it is suggested that orientation or training for faculty members at different levels should be started by college authorities.
- (f) Reading material should be arranged properly on shelves so that users can save their valuable time.
- (g) Access to every document in a library should be possible through OPAC to faculty members for easy search.
- (h) The college libraries should also acquire more reference sources such as encyclopedias, dictionaries to satisfy the needs of the faculty members of Hindi.
- (i) More funds should be allocated to acquire e-resources in the area of Hindi.
- (g) More books from other related areas of Hindi apart from the suggested in syllabus should be acquired.
- (h) New computer based services should be introduced and steps should be taken to make faculty members aware about these services.
- (i) Question papers of previous years should be bound and made available to the students
- (j) Libraries should arrange more multiple copies of documents in Hindi Literature. More copies of latest editions should be acquired.
- (k) It is recommended that college libraries of Delhi University should promote their activities through notice board, bulletin board, and

library web sites. Library web sites can cover information about library services, its activities, collections, etc.

- (l) Students' participation must be increased in the collection development.

4 CONCLUSION

Adequate knowledge about the information needs of the users is very important for developing library collection. The effectiveness and efficiency of any library and successful operation of any library depends to a large extent on the choice of library collections. The choice of the collection should meet the need and requirements of the end users. Librarians must be aware of how the faculty members seek information.

The study of use of college libraries by Hindi faculty members of Delhi University has thrown some light on their information needs as well as their information seeking behaviour. The analysis of quantitative data revealed that most of the faculty members of Hindi department use their library daily, which is beneficial to the library and for the college that the book fund is being utilized judiciously.

This study clearly revealed that majority of the faculty members generally depend upon the textbooks and Internet services for their information needs. One of the problem that the faculty members faced is that they do not know how to use the catalogue or OPAC. The library should have enough collection and should have qualified efficient library staff that will be able to help the users in getting what they want. They should provide internet facilities which can help them in getting the required and up-dated information within very short time. Therefore, the higher authorities who look after the colleges should take initiative seriously in bringing up good libraries for the betterment of their institutions.

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