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Information Seeking Behavior among Horticultural Scientists in Dr. YSR Horticultural University, Venkatramangudem.

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Abstract **- The paper focuses on the study of Information seeking behavior among Horticultural Scientists in Horticultural University, Venkatramangudem, India. Their preferences regarding various formats of information sources (Print and electronic information sources) have been explored through quantitative survey. This study employed a structured questionnaire which was distributed to scientists in various teaching and research departments of the Horticultural University, Venkatramangudem, selected for the study.**
Keywords: **Horticultural Scientists, Information seeking behavior, Horticultural University Venkatramangudem.**

I.INTRODUCTION

Teaching, Learning and Research are the basic academic activities of an educational institution. These activities are based on current information. Therefore, for those involved in the academic activities, information is a pre-requisite. In this process of acquiring information, it becomes imperative for the users to identify the information needed, search for the information in the appropriate resources, evaluate and select the information to meet the information need. Scholars, students and faculties actively seek current information from various media available in libraries, for example, Encyclopedias, journals and more currently, electronic media. Thus, information seeking is a process in which humans engage in order to advance and potentially alter there state of knowledge. It is also an important cognitive function related to learning and problem solving, sometimes thought of as a "higher cognitive process" (Gary,1995). Therefore, it becomes necessary for the libraries to identify the needs of its user and to provide relevant information resources and services, that would befit needs of the user. Only then, the services provided would be successful. The same view is expressed by Zhang (1998) when he says that a thorough understanding of user information needs and information seeking behavior is fundamental to the provision of successful information services.

Information seeking behavior is an area of active interest among Librarians and Information Scientists. It results from the recognition of some need perceived by the user, who as a consequence makes use of formal system such as libraries, information centers, on-line services in order to satisfy the perceived need. The librarian should be aware of what kind of information is being sought and how it can be obtained. Due to the rapid increase in the cost of purchasing and archiving printed scholarly journals and electronic media, the library has the responsibility to provide and maintain efficient services.

II.REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anwar and Eisenchitz (2000) found that information needs and information seeking behaviour of Malaysian agricultural scientists have revealed that, research scientists spend 16% of their office time reading the literature. Dulle et al. (2001) conducted a survey to assess the information needs and requirements of the agricultural research workers in Tanzania. The finding of the study indicates that resources in the libraries and information centres are inadequate and does not meet the needs of agricultural workers. The study further suggested that the agricultural information services rendered by the libraries and information centres should be improved up to the level of the agricultural scientists' need. Oladele (2006) conducted a study on 'information seeking and utilization among agricultural researchers in Nigeria'. The study demonstrates the level of awareness and use of agricultural information sources among researchers in Nigeria. The empirical findings have shown the deprivation of researchers not having enough information to take a wise decision as against the researchers being over loaded with information, which implies a situation where researchers have too much information and are unable to pick out the right bits. The policy implication of the findings have stated that to improve the performance of agricultural researchers, the provision of information sources as well as the facilities to enhance their use, is very important in research institutes. Specific training needs of the researchers to seek for appropriate information from different sources should also be identified as a skill-gap. Singh and Satija (2007) discuss the findings of various strategy procedures adopted by agricultural scientists in meeting their information requirements. The agricultural scientists were asked to rank the information sources on the basis of priority, in the order I, II and III. The survey result shows that agricultural scientists have expressed great dependence in meeting their information requirements in their institutional library/ information center. The library/information center is the most preferred source (72.05%) for the respondents, for all

categories of agricultural scientists. On the other hand, for accessing information, agricultural scientists highly depend on library collections, followed by personal collections of their supervisors and colleagues.

III.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Purpose of seeking Information
2. Type of Information sought
3. Use of various formal and electronic sources of information
4. Satisfaction about Library Resources and Services.

IV.METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, a structured questionnaire was designed and distributed among horticultural scientists working in Dr. YSR Horticultural University, Venkatramangudem, Andrapradesh, India. There are 98 horticultural scientists in the university, out of them 60(61.23%) have been covered. The scientists were selected for the study by using the random sampling method. The data analysis and interpretation is based on the response of 60 Horticultural Scientists belonging to the various teaching and research departments of Dr. YSR Horticultural University, Venkatramangudem, Andrapradesh, India.

TABLE I SIZE OF THE SAMPLE

Total number of Horticultural scientists working	No. of Horticultural scientists covered in the study	Percentage
98	60	61.22%

V.ANALYSIS OF DATA

TABLE II FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE LIBRARY

Frequency	No. of Horticultural scientists	Percentage
Daily	9	15%
Once in a week	21	35%
Fortnightly	24	40%
Occasionally	6	10%
Total	60	100%

Table II indicates that majority of the scientists, i.e. 40 percent visit the library fortnightly, followed by 35 percent of them visiting once in a week. Those who visit the library everyday is a meager 15 percent and 10 percent avail the library facility occasionally for the need of information.

TABLE III PURPOSE OF SEEKING INFORMATION

Purpose	No. of Horticultural scientists	Percentage
Awareness of current knowledge	53	88.33
To prepare for classroom lecture	47	78.33
Professional interest	42	70
Research work	36	60
To meet the need of promotional opportunities	30	50
Publishing book/article	27	45
Participating in the seminar/ conference	21	35

Table III reflects the purpose of seeking information. It can be observed from the table that a majority of 88.33 percent of the scientists seek information to create awareness of latest knowledge. This is followed by nearly three-fourths of them to prepare for the classroom lecture (78.33%) and to meet professional interest (70%). It is also observed from the table that around 60 percent of the scientists seek information for research purpose and around 45 percent for the purpose of publication of books or articles.

TABLE IV TYPE OF INFORMATION SOUGHT

Type of information used	No.of Horticultural scientists	Percentage
Current information	51	85
R&D information	48	80
Factual information	36	60
Statistical information	30	50
Conceptual information	24	40
Retrospective information	15	25
Socio-economic information	6	10

Table IV shows that current information is the major type of information sought by 85 percent of the users. This is followed by 80 percent of the scientists seeking R & D information and 60 percent by factual information. The types of information sought is in consonance with the purpose for which information is sought. Thus the major purposes for which information is sought by more than 60 percent of the respondents according to the previous table (Table no.2) is for becoming aware of current knowledge (88.33%), prepare for class room lecture (78.33%), professional interest (70.0%) and research work (60.0%). To meet all these purposes, current , R & D and Factual information is necessary.

TABLE V USE OF FORMAL INFORMATION RESOURCES

Formal information resources	No. of Horticultural scientists	Percentage
Journals	60	100
Textbooks/monographs	38	63.33
These/dissertation	34	56.67
Indexing/Abstracting journals	27	45
Conference & Seminar proceedings	21	35
Yearbook / handbook	19	31.67
Patents	12	20
Encyclopedia/dictionary	5	8.33

Table V indicates the resources used by the scientists to meet their different information needs. In consonance with the previous two tables (Tables 2 & 3), journals are the major resources used by all the scientists. Journals provide latest information. This is followed by 63.33 percent of the scientists using textbooks and monographs and 56.67 percent using Theses and dissertations. Secondary sources like Indexing and abstracting journals are also used by 45 percent of the scientists.

TABLE VI USE OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCE

E-resources	No.of Horticultural scientists	Percentage
Internet	60	100
E-mail	60	100
E-journal	48	80
Online database	15	25
E-book	7	11.67

According to Table VI Internet and E-mail are the two electronic resources used by all the scientists. Again, Internet provides access to current and global information, for which the scientists use the information resources. E-

mail is also used as a medium to provide alerting service and offer awareness of latest information to the scientists. The other major used electronic resource is e-journals by 80 percent of the scientists.

TABLE VII SATISFACTION ABOUT LIBRARY RESOURCES

Satisfaction	No. of Horticultural scientists	Percentage
Fully satisfied	12	20
Partially satisfied	33	55
Least satisfied	6	10
Not satisfied	9	15
Total	60	100

It is seen from the above table that only one-fifth of the users (20.0%) are fully satisfied and around half of the users (55.0%) are partially satisfied. This is a clear indication that although the users have been using the information resources, the information resources may not be meeting the information needs of the users. The collection should be need-based, as mentioned in the introductory part of this article. The libraries should identify the needs of the users and build appropriate collection, since the success of the collection depends on the satisfaction of the users.

VI.CONCLUSION

In the background of the above discussion, the library should cater to build collection on the basis of the needs of the users. The libraries should also create awareness about the information resources available in the library.

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