Information Seeking Behaviour of Users of Dr B.R. Ambedkar NIT Central Library

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of collections and services at Dr B.R. Ambedkar NIT Central Library, Jalandhar. Well-structured 196 questionnaires were distributed among NIT Central Library users during the academic session 2010-11, to find out information seeking behaviour of the users. Out of them, 178 filled questionnaires were received, and 170 (95.51 %) were found fit for analysis. This study demonstrates and elaborates various aspects of the use of collections and services, purpose of visit to the library by the user, adequacy of library hours, infrastructure facilities and use of internet information resources. The paper also identifies the levels of use of various services provided, access of online database services, database search techniques, and users' awareness about different types of library network. It highlights satisfaction with overall functioning of the library. Suggestions have been given to make the collections and services more beneficial for the academic community of the technical institutes.

Keywords: NIT Central Library, internet, information seeking behaviour, library services

1. INTRODUCTION

Dr B.R. Ambedkar National Institute of Technology (NIT) Jalandhar, is one of the 30 institutes of technology to promote regional diversity and multi-cultural understanding in India. The National Institutes of Technology (NITs), are engineering, science, technology and management school system in India comprising 30 autonomous universities located in one each major state/territory of India. A parliamentary legislation in 2002 brought them under the direct purview of India's federal government. In 2007, through legislation, the Indian government declared these schools as Institutes of National importance at par with the Indian Institutes of Technology. Dr B.R. Ambedkar NIT was established in the year 1987 as Regional Engineering College and was given the status of National Institute of Technology (Deemed University) by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi.

Library of NIT is housed in a three storied building situated in the midst of all departments and hostels and is easily accessible to all/everyone in the campus. The total carpet area of Library is 1540 sq.ft. All students, faculty members and staff of the institute are entitled to make use of the library facilities. Industrial establishments/corporate houses can also avail of the library services on taking institutional/corporate membership of the library.

Library consultation facilities are also available to faculty and students of outside institutes/organisation on request. The library uses Libsys software package which is an integrated multi-user library management system that supports all in-house operations of the library. The Libsys consists of modules on acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serials, article indexing, and OPAC. Retrospective conversion of bibliographic records has been completed and more than 1,03,500 bibliographic records of books available in the library can now be accessed through the Libsys OPAC. The database of books available in the library is being updated on day to day basis with details of recently acquired books. Records of all the library patrons have also been created in the Libsys package. The checking and updating activities are in progress. Libsys package has been successfully implemented.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

- Know the usefulness of collections and services of the library

- Study the various types of collections and services that are being used by faculty members and students in the library

- Identify the infrastructure facilities that are being provided by the library

- Know the access of online database and database search techniques that are being used by users
- Identify the use of internet information resources
- Know the provisions of online search facilities provided by the library
- Identify the users' awareness about different types of library networks and their use for exchange of informations
- Suggest measure to make library services more effective and efficient.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of literature happens to be an important segment of the concerned topic. In this study an attempt has been made to cover few works which have been undertaken in India and abroad. Hussain & Kumar[1] carried out a survey the use, collection and services of IIRS library. The major findings of the study were:

- A majority of the users (41.25 %) of the IIRS library use the library services daily.
- Majority of the respondents mainly used the library to borrow books and other materials (81.25 %).
- Most of the respondents preferred print collection. (36.50 %) were using electronic collection, of them (68.75 %) were using CD-ROM, further 86.25 % respondents used library networks for current periodicals.

Naushad Ali[2] focused the purpose of study that the use of electronic information services (EIS) among the users of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi library. The study found that Boolean logic and truncation are the most often used search facilities by IIT users. Lack of printing facilities, terminals and trained staff are the major reasons that would discourage users from accessing the EIS. Rajeev & Amritpal[3] in their study found the following:

- Majority of the respondents has more than two year experience of using the internet and use the internet services daily
- Most frequently used places for accessing internet is the college (90 %) and followed by home (23.3 %)
- E-mail service is the most preferred service by all the internet users.

All the respondents face the problem of insufficient time slot allotted to per user in the college for internet use. Singh[4] analysed the emergence of IIT Kanpur. She discussed the methodology used for data collection, acquisition of periodicals and other documentary collection at IIT Kanpur. Majority of the

users rated library collection, services and attitude of library staff was good. However, the users were not satisfied with the photocopying services.

Unomah[5] carried out a study about student utilisation of academic libraries in Nigeria. The important findings of the study were:

- Most of the students found their lecture notes sufficient and felt there was no need to read textbooks. On borrowing, 68 % had no books on loan.
- On use of leisure time, most of the faculty members do not promote student use of the library that is, 76 % of the students said their lectures did not give them reading lists. The students were not equally given any guidance by faculty as to the use of the library and resource materials.

4. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire and personal interview methods were used for data collection. There were approximately 1000 users available in NIT. 196 questionnaires were administered and 178 filled in questionnaires were obtained from the faculty members and students. Out of 178 questionnaires, only 170 (95.51 %) questionnaires were selected for analysis of data and 8 (4.49 %) questionnaires were rejected because of incomplete response from the respondents. Data collected from the questionnaries were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentage.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

There are large numbers of users and they range from undergraduates (UG) to faculty members. A sample from all categories of users was taken to find out their opinion about the services provided by the library. 52.36 % of the total population under study consists of undergraduates, 20 % postgraduates (PG), 14.12 % of those working research scholars, 13.52 % of those are using faculty members. The size of the sample chosen for study is quite large so that the formalities of finding can be facilitated (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample size

Type of users	No. of users (%)
Undergraduate (UG)	89 (52.36 %)
Postgraduate (PG)	34 (20 %)
Research scholars	20 (14.12 %)
Faculty members	23 (13.52 %)

5.1 Visits to Library

The frequency of the visits to the library is one index to judge the utilisation of the library resources. If the users frequently visit the library, it can be said that they are using the library more in comparison to those users who rarely visit the library.

Table 2 shows that 30 % of the users visit the library 'almost daily', while 26.48 % visit it once in a month. 20 % visit the library two to three times in a week, followed by 14.70 % visiting once in 15 days. Only a small percentage of users, that is, 08.82 % visit occasionally. Thus, it clearly shows that 30 % of the users are regular visitors of the library, while the remaining users are not regular visitors of the library.

Table 2. Frequency of visit to the library

S. No.	Frequency	No. of response	Percentage
1.	Daily	51	30.00
2.	Two to three times in a week	34	20.00
3.	Once in a 15 days	25	14.70
4.	Once in a month	45	26.48
5.	Occasionally	15	8.82
	Total	**170**	**100.00**

5.2 Purpose of Visit to the Library by Users

The purpose of user's visit to the library was ascertained to find out whether they come to satisfy their information needs for research requirements or for general reading. Figure 1 shows that majority of the users 51 (30 %) visit the library for professional purpose, while 47 (27.64 %) for preparation of competitive examination. Followed by 39 (22.94 %) visiting library for academic purpose, while 34 (20 %) visit library for other purpose. Further followed by 27 (15.88 %) users visit for recreational purpose, whereas only 17 (10 %) users to use reference and information services.
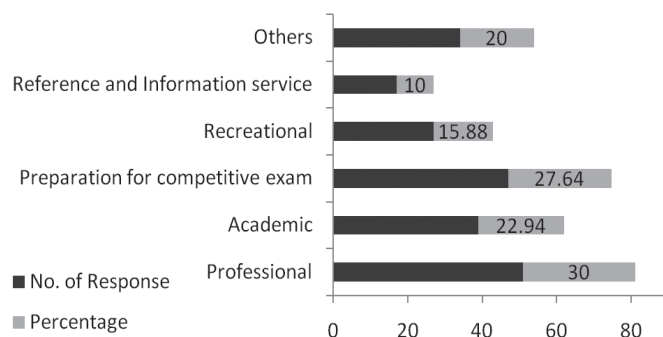

Figure 1. Purpose of visit to library.

5.3 Library Hours

Adequate library hours facilitate the use of the resources of the library. The users were asked to indicate if the library hours were adequate for study and research. The response has been tabulated. The library is kept open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on the five working days that is, from Monday to Friday, on weekends and holidays functions from 10:00 a.m to 6:00 p.m. The library remains entirely closed on Republic Day, Independence Day, Dussehra, Diwali, Holi and Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday every year.

The analysis shows that users of all categories are satisfied with library hours while very little percentage users are not satisfied and are demanding that library should be kept open for 18hrs throughout the year. While PG and Research Scholars are completely satisfied with library hours (Table 3).

Table 3. Adequacy of library hours

S. No.	Adequacy	No. of responses	Percentage
1.	Yes	136	80.00
2.	No	34	20.00
	Total	**170**	**100.00**

5.4 Infrastructural Facilities

Users' satisfactions with infrastructure facilities are important because reader's dissatisfaction means that the service provided by the library is not upto the standard. In order to promote the use of books it is advisable to have a functional building with provision for pleasant, natural and electrical light, soothing interior, good-looking furniture, comfortable chairs and other such facilities. They increase the use of books. Table 4 reveals that 136 (80 %) users are satisfied with infrastructure facilities available of the library as furniture's, while 119 (70 %) users are satisfied with lighting facilities. Followed by 102 (60 %) users are satisfied with ventilation, while 90 (52.94 %) of the users are satisfied with drinking water and cleanliness similarly.

Table 4. Infrastructure facilities

S. No.	Infrastructure facilities	Yes response (%)	No response (%)
1.	Furniture	136 (80)	34 (20)
2.	Lighting	119 (70)	52 (30)
3.	Ventilation	102 (60)	68 (40)
4.	Drinking Water	90 (52)	80 (47)
5.	Cleanliness	90 (52)	80 (47)
6.	Toilet	85 (50)	85 (50)

5.5 Use of Documents

Users were asked to indicate about the document need felt by them for provision of different library services. It indicates that 51 (30 %) users were using general books, while 50 (29.41 %) users were using CD-ROM databases. Followed by 43 (25.29 %) were using reference books while 34 (20 %) were using technical report as well as compact disks. Further followed by 25 (14.70 %) users who used video cassettes, 20 (11.76 %) used others documents, and 17 (10 %) users used bound volumes of journals as well as microfilm/microfiche (Fig. 2). E-journals and e-articles are used by a large majority of respondents, followed by other information resources.
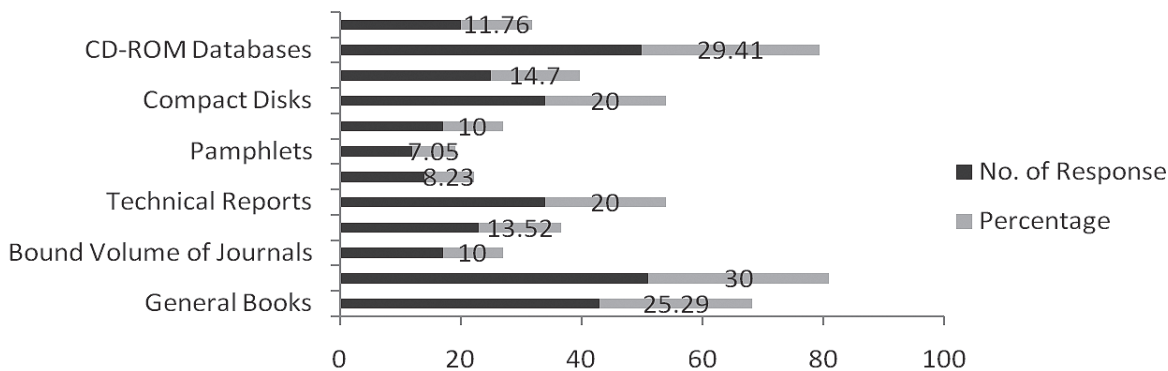
Figure 2. Use of documents.

5.6 Users' Awareness about Library Services

The basic function of the NIT library is to provide services to its clientele efficiently and effectively. Users' awareness about the library services is prerequisite for proper utilisation of the library and its resources. Therefore, the responses of the users in this regard have been analysed and have been presented in Table 5. 102 (60 %) used CD-ROM-based search service and majority of users 119 (70 %) used online search service and 15 (8.83 %) users used online download service. It was observed (Fig. 3) that, a majority of users were accessing online databases in the library in person 79 (46.47 %), and through staff 54 (31.77 %). Users which were told through friends were 25 (14.70 %) followed by others 12 (7.06 %). Table 6 indicates that database search techniques are used by only about 26 % or less of respondents. The focus of the study is services provided by the library especially 'reader services' with a view to find out the type, nature extent, etc. of services. Questions have been asked to elicit information through the questionnaire.

5.7 Satisfactions with Overall Functions of Library

It is important to find out the image of the library in general. It includes all aspects such as buildings, physical facilities, services, collections, etc. Maximum users 65 (38.23 %) rated the library as 'good', while 60 (35.29 %) rated the library as
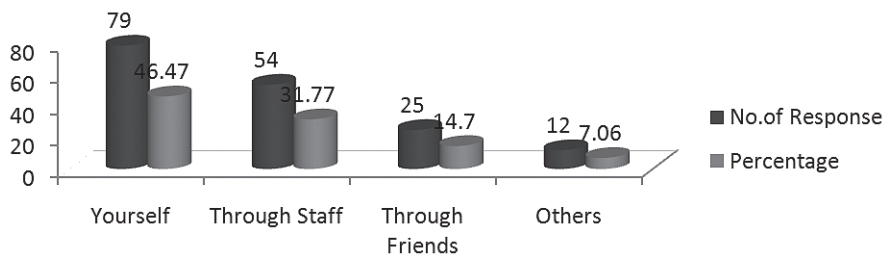
Table 5. Library services uses

S. No.	Services	No. of users (%)
1.	CD-ROM-based service	102 (60 %)
2.	Video service	51 (30 %)
3.	Xerox service	153 (90 %)
4.	Reference service	85 (50 %)
5.	Inter-library loan service	34 (20 %)
6.	Bindery service	32 (18.82 %)
7.	OPAC/WebOPAC service	22 (12.94 %)
8.	Online search service	119 (70 %)
9.	Online download service	18 (8.83 %)

Figure 3. Access of online database services.

Table 6. Database search techniques

S. No.	Search techniques	No. of response	Percentage
1.	Controlled Vocabulary or Subject searching	45	26.47
2.	Keyword searching	34	20
3.	Boolean searching	23	13.53
4.	Truncation and Wild Cards	22	12.95
5.	Field searching	21	12.35
6.	Proximity locators	15	8.82
7.	Relevance searching	10	5.88
	Total	**170**	**100**

'excellent' and 30 (17.64 %) as 'fair' followed by 15 (8.83 %) users who have rated overall functions of the library under 'poor' category.

5.8 Library Network

A system of computers interconnected by telephone wires or other means in order to share information is known as network or exchange of library information is known as library network. Table 7 has illustrated that 90 (53 %) majority of the users do not use the library networks, followed by 80 (47 %) of the users used library network. The data analysis in Table 8 reveals that 17 (10 %) users use e-mail services, 12 (7.05 %) users use others library network that is, DELNET, INFLIBNET, NICNET, etc., followed by 11 (6.47 %) users who accessed national databases, whereas 9 (5.29 %) users used union list of periodicals and final 8 (4.70 %) users use for fax.

Table 7. User's awareness about library network

S. No.	Awareness	No. of responses	Percentage
1.	Yes	80	47
2.	No	90	53

Table 8. User's awareness about different types of library facilities

S. No.	Facilities	No. of responses	Percentage
1.	Union catalogue of books	06	3.52
2.	Union list of periodicals	09	5.29
3.	Access to national database	11	6.47
4.	e-Mail	17	10
5.	Fax	08	4.70
6.	Others	12	7.05

6. SUGGESTIONS

It was requested to the users to give suggestions for improvements or any problems they faced while using the library facilities or services. Accordingly, users' suggestions are listed as:

• To make an arrangement to endow with nascent information to the users.

• Access to every document in a library should be possible through OPACs.

• Library should arrange more multiple copies of documents in all fields. Books of latest edition should be acquired. Library should also acquire more reference sources to satisfy the needs of the users.

• It is also recommended that there should be no restriction for photocopying from an assortment of encyclopaedias, because it is beyond financial reach of scholars/researchers.

• There should be no curb as to the quantity or volume of the Xerox.

• In order to promote the use of books it is advised to have a functional building with provision for pleasant, natural and electrical light, soothing interior, good looking furniture, comfortable chairs and other such facilities.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The choice of resources should meet the needs and requirements of the end users. Based on the study that most of the students use the library daily, which is beneficial to the library and for the organisation that the fund is utilised effectively. Mostly users use library for professional development, which indirectly helps the society by way of publishing. However, most of the users use books, CD-ROMs etc. This indicates that they are interested in increasing their overall knowledge. For searching, they use controlled vocabulary, which indicates that they have been educated by the library professionals for use of online databases. They are very much satisfied with the facilities and the services provided by the library. It has been observed that the faculty members, research scholars, PGs and UGs students in tend together information and make an attempt to keep themselves abreast to latest information. The present study does not fully authenticate that.

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