

**INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN SOME SELECT COLLEGE LIBRARIES OF KARBI ANGLONG AND BISWANATH DISTRICTS OF ASSAM: A STUDY**

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**Abstract:** Libraries in a college are designed and built with the primary objective of meeting the information needs of the students of their parent Institution. In an institution like college, libraries are constructed with a view to help the students for their all-round development. It can help the students in acquiring knowledge for building their character, thinking, and for passing the examinations. It can also help the students to know the unknown things, to make the person strong through acquiring required knowledge and to help in fulfilling their aim in life. So, libraries can play an important role in students' life by supplying any type of knowledge they want through different techniques and ways.

A library is said to be the heart of the institution. Now-a-days, without a suitable well-organized library, the college is not recognized by the concerned university. In every inspection of a college, the library is inspected by the inspection committee and after satisfied they will recommend for recognition of that particular college. Now, in a college, we know that there are different types of students coming to the libraries seeking different types of information. That means they need different types of information to fulfill their needs. Here, this study is undertaken to investigate the different types of information seeking behaviour of the students by taking some five college libraries of Assam. The overall purpose of this study is to find out the different types of information seeking behaviour of the students and to determine awareness of the students about the library service available to them.

**Key Words:** *Information seeking Behaviours, Library resources, E-resources.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Information is very much essential in every one's life. In today's information based society, information plays an important role in fulfilling their needs. Students' reading in a college/institution is also not lagging behind in this area. They need different types of information to fulfil their needs. The process of information acquiring, using and implementing information are known as information seeking behaviour. In the case of students, it is even more important as because students' life is the most important stage of life to become good human being and to build every one's characters or to fulfil every body's aim in life. To make a golden future, information in undergraduate level plays an

important role. They need up-to-date information to take good decision in their life. Libraries in a college can play the significant role by providing up-to-date information to the students at the right time and in right ways. In a broader sense, the term Information seeking behaviour involves, “a set of actions taken by individuals or groups to show their information needs, seek information, check & select the information to fulfil their requirements of 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, analogue tools and computer based information system.

The library may be the most widely used source of information available to undergraduate students in a college like institution. Librarian must be aware of the kind of information being sought by the students and how it can be obtained. Because of the rapidly increasing cost of purchasing and archiving print journal and electronic media, the library has the duty to provide and maintain efficient services. Technological advancement and new innovations have changed today’s libraries from store house to gateways of information. ICT has completely changed the scenario of traditional libraries and meaning of storage, preservation and dissemination.

## 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 that 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 a result, university libraries are functioning at a sub-optimal level or their effectiveness is not at the required level.<sup>3</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 student's 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 OF THE STUDY**

- To find out information seeking behavior of students of under graduate level in some selected college libraries of Assam.
- To find out the awareness and use of library resources by the students in under graduate level.
- To find out information sources of consulted by the users mostly in under graduate level.
- To find out awareness of the library services to the students in under graduate level.
- To know the main purpose of information seeking behavior.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Regarding scope of our study we have taken five college libraries of Assam, selected three from karbi along district of Assam and two from Biswanath district of Assam randomly.

## **TARGET GROUP**

The target populations in our study are students of the selected college libraries of Assam. A survey method was used for data collection. A total of 150 questionnaires with some important questionnaire on the information seeking behavior of the students were distributed randomly to respondents. Out of 150, 110 filled in questionnaires were returned by the students with the overall response rate 73%. 10 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete information. The data gained from the responses were analyzed to understand the students' information-seeking behavior, information needs and the extent to which these needs have been fulfilled by the college library system and its services.

## NAME OF THE LIBRARY SELECTED FOR OUR STUDY

We have taken five college libraries of Assam for our study. Three from Karbi- Anglong district and two from Biswanath district of Assam. The name of which are stated as follows-

Thong Nokbe College Library (TNCL), Thong Nokbe College, Dokmoka, Karbi Anglong, Assam

Rukasen College Library (RCL), Rukasen College Bakalia, Karbi Anglong, Assam

Howraghat College Library (HCL), Howraghat College, Howraghat, Karbi Anglong

Lakhminath Bezboruah Central Library (LBCL), Kalabari College, Biswanath, Assam.

Sootea College Library (SCL), Sootea college, Biswanath, Assam.

## 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 students visit the library some times in a month, followed by weekly, while 37% come to library daily. It indicates that library is being used by students mostly sometimes in a month.

**Table-1 Frequency of Library Visit**

Frequency of Library visit	Respondents (out of 100 students)					Total Students from five colleges	%
	TNCL	RCL	HCL	LBCL	SCL		
1) Daily	39	33	28	45	39	184	37%
3) Weekly	56	36	41	55	45	233	47%
5) Monthly	26	34	47	36	34	177	36%
6) Some times in a month	50	55	66	43	27	241	48%
7) Yearly	6	19	23	12	14	74	15%
8) Sometimes in a year	17	33	09	11	20	90	18%

## 2. Purpose of Library Visit:

Purpose of library visit is one of the important elements to be discussed here in our study. Why students are coming to the library? What is the purpose of their library visiting? The answer will be obtained from the following table-

**Table 2:- Purpose of Library Visit in percentage**

Purpose of Library Visit	Respondents(out of 100 students)					Total Students from 5 colleges	%
	TNCL	RCL	HCL	LBCL	SCL		
1)To borrow Books	81	68	88	78	75	390	78%
2) To read News paper & Journals	77	59	78	33	35	282	56%
3)To read for Updating their Knowledge	38	56	47	56	42	239	48%
4) To read for preparing Exam	20	18	23	52	49	162	32%
5)To read taking part in competitive Exam	18	21	09	25	22	95	19%
6) To use E-resources. available in the libraries	00	00	00	00	00	00	00

In response of purpose of library visit table 2 indicates that, for borrowing books, reading news paper and journals and to read for updating their Knowledge are the three main purposes of the users to visit the library. 78% students comes for borrowing books 56% students come to read news paper and journals and 48% come for updating their knowledge as available from the collected data.

## 3. Methods of Information Seeking:

In response of method of information seeking, table 3 indicates that books available in the library and help from the teachers/colleague are the most reliable sources for their seeking information.

**Table 3: Method of Information Seeking**

Purpose	Respondents (out of 100 students)					Total Students from 5 colleges	%
	TNCL	RCL	HCL	LBCL	SCL		
1) From Books available in the library	32	39	29	52	48	200	40%
2) From Teacher/colleague	65	53	46	48	44	256	51%
3) from E-resources available	12	7	19	07	05	50	10%

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

Table 4 indicates that borrowing facility, Question paper, are being utilized majority of students while reference services are used marginally by the students. The findings show that there is a necessity to create awareness of use of reference books and journals among users.

**Table 4:- Use of the Library Facility and Services**

Source	Respondents(out of 100 students)					Total Students from five colleges	%
	TNCL	RCL	HCL	LBCL	SCL		
1) Borrowing Facility	71	43	67	71	69	321	64%
2) Reference Services	29	27	20	18	25	119	24%
3) Ref. Book and Journals	38	21	18	33	26	136	27%
4) News paper reading	27	45	21	15	18	126	25%
5) Question paper	48	56	36	20	18	178	36%

#### 5. Purpose of Seeking Information:

Table 5 indicates in response of purpose of seeking information. Result is that to keep up-to-date and preparing for the exam are the two main purposes of seeking information by the students. To prepare for home assignments and to prepare for writing article are the purposes of seeking information by the students respectively but which have less priority.

**Table 5:- Purpose of Seeking Information**

Purpose Respondents(out of 100 students)	Total Students from five colleges					%	
	TNCL	RCL	HCL	LBCL	SCL		
1) To keep up-to-date	26	27	34	43	33	163	32%
2) To prepare for the exam	71	69	54	77	69	340	68%
3) To prepare writing an article	18	11	08	20	19	76	15%
4) To prepare for home assignments	21	18	09	22	25	95	19%

### 6. Problem Faced in Library Using:

Table 6 indicates in response of problem faced during library visit 47% students found that library has lack of information materials according their need, 39% students don't know how to access e- resources, 24% students don't know that how to search a document or other materials in library, 28% students face the problem that library opening hours are not sufficient, and 5% students 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.

**Table 6:- Problem Faced in Library Using:**

Purpose	Respondents(out of 100 students)					Total Students from 5 colleges	%
	TNCL	RCL	HCL	LBCL	SCL		
1) Lack of latest information materials	58	65	44	32	38	237	47%
2) Don't know how to use e-resources	56	37	37	28	36	194	39%
3) Lack of knowledge how to use library	21	26	33	15	25	120	24%
4) Lack of time	27	31	48	10	26	142	28%
5) Library staff not supportive	09	04	03	03	04	23	5%

### 7) RATE YOUR LIBRARY

Table 7 shows that students are mostly satisfy with library services, reference section, reading room facility, borrowing facility, staff behavior and reprography facility. Students are less

satisfied with collection of books, e-resources lab, availability of print journals and e-resources. Students are less satisfied with shelving of the books, there is a need to do remedial steps in this regard.

**Table 7:- Rate your library**

Sources and services	Respondents(out of 100 students)				
	TNCL	RCL	HCL	LBCL	SCL
1) Collection of Books	3	3	3	3	3
2) Reference section	2	3	2	3	2
3) Reading Room	3	2	3	3	2
4) journal collection	3	3	2	2	2
5) Shelving of the Books	4	3	3	4	3
6) Behavior of the Library staffs	4	4	4	4	4
7) Borrowing facility	4	3	3	3	4
8) Reprography	3	3	3	3	2

- Inadequate 1
- Not up to the mark 2
- To be improved 3
- Good 4
- Very Good 5

## FINDINGS

The study has revealed the fact that students as well as library of select Colleges of Karbi Anglong and Biswanath District of Assam are in a position not very appreciable. Students are reluctant to come to the library and even if they come they are casual and occasional and the main purpose is to borrow books. Majority of the students come to library for only sometimes in a month. Seeking information from e-resources is very less in the study area. Students' visit to the library is basically exam oriented. The study also revealed that library staffs are dormant and students are lacking in knowledge of the very purpose of library.

## RECOMMENDATION

In order to further develop the use of the library and information seeking behavior of the undergraduate students of the study area the following recommendations are found to be favourable:-

The select libraries of the study area need attract students to the library through orientation programmes, conduct seminars, workshops and find other means to build students as good information seekers.

Develop good collections of books as well as e-resources.

Encourage and teach students how to seek information from online e-resources apart from printed books.

Library staffs needs to be service oriented and some sort of short term orientation or workshop to be conducted.



## CONCLUSION:

Thus, the study reveals the current state of the library of the select colleges of the Karbi Anglong and Biswanath districts of Assam and concludes with possible solutions to the problems. The selected colleges for the purpose of study have their own problems and are situated in the difficult terrain. Specifically, the colleges of Karbi Anglong districts have to face difficult terrain as well as other local problems such as poor road connectivity, frequent power cuts etc. In spite of all that students are learning to access and seek information and concludes that by following the above recommendations though not exhaustive, information seeking behaviour of the students of the study area can be developed at best.

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