

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF ACADEMIC LAWYERS OF MAHARSHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY, ROHTAK, HARYANA: A STUDY

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to explore the Information Seeking Behavior of Academic Lawyers of M. D. University, Rohtak. It also aimed to examine the factors affecting the respondent's use of different information sources. Questionnaire method was used to collect the required data on information seeking behavior of academic lawyers. The study found out the frequency of library visit, usage of different types of information sources, methods for finding information, usage of online legal databases and library services. Majority of the respondents visited the library daily for finding their required information. As expected, internet was found to be the most heavily used source of information. Majority of the respondents were seeking information for moot courts. Issue-return of books was the most demanding service of library by academic lawyers. However, law departmental library need to adopt new technology to satisfy the information needs of academic lawyers.

Keywords: Information, Information Seeking Behaviour, Academic Lawyers.

1.0 Introduction:

The twenty first century can best be described as an era of information and knowledge revolution. The beginning of the twenty first century has been called the information age because of the explosion of information output and information sources. Information is the basic requirement for every human activity and it is important as food, air and water. Information in itself has no value, its value lies in its communication and use. Information plays an important role in every aspect of human life and it is especially true in the context of fast pace of today's life. The whole world uses information more than ever before because the value of information in this era is dynamic and useful in different capacity in decision-making, policy formulation, personal development and problem solving. Information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. The value of information plays a crucial role in the social and economic development. Information is regarded as a collection of raw data, consisting of symbols, signs, signals and surrogates that can be compiled into messages (Text, audio, images or digital) for communication.

When a person realizes that he needs information, he knows that in all probabilities the information will not come to him on its own, therefore he has to go about seeking it. Information seeking behavior can be described as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating and development. Information seeking behavior is mainly concerned with who needs what kind of information and for what reasons. In changing information landscape, provision of right information to the right users at the right time has become more complex.

Legal education has a major role in development, national reconstruction and social change. It is a multi-purpose and multi-disciplined education. It aims at developing skilled human resources to strengthen the legal system. Information has become a critical factor in the field of legal education; that is why the legal academic community is more dependent on information than most other professionals.

2.0 About the University

Maharshi Dayanand University was established in 1976 in Rohtak, Haryana under the Act No. 25 of 1975 of the Haryana Legislative Assembly. It is accredited with an 'A' grade by NAAC. The university secured the recognition of the University Grants commission in February 1983. From its original objective of studies in the life sciences, the university has grown to 13 faculties, with 27 postgraduate departments and 77 academic programs on campus. The University campus, spread over an area of over 665.44 acres. Educational and research programmes are offered through its 36 departments.

The university library has a central library (the Vivekananda Library). The library is housed in a three-story building with an 84,000-square-foot area and a seating capacity of 800. The library is air-conditioned, with comfortable seating. All library functions (check-out, check-in, catalog and acquisition system) are automated, and information kiosks are present for accessing the online catalog and other library databases. The library has over 2,50,000 volumes of books and 50,000 bound volumes of journals. The library subscribes 540 Indian and foreign print journals. Online access is provided to 5300 e-journals through a user-generated content facility, over 200 open-access e-journals, Scopus, e-Emeralds Plus (a full-text database of management journals from Emerald Group Publishing) and Manupatra. The library also maintains a campus-wide, IP-based phone system and the university website. (www.mdurohtak.ac.in/library/lib_libraryprofile.html)

3.0 Review of Related Literature

Das and Jadab (2016) investigated the information seeking behavior of law students in digital environment at the University of Dhaka. The study explored the elements and factors affecting the use of electronic information resources by law students. Most of the students heavily relied on text books for getting their required information. Majority of the students were preferred electronic resources than print resources. Most of the students were used legal electronic information resources to satisfy their legal information needs. The study showed that there was a need for training programme on online legal searching and information literacy. Nirmal Singh and Mann (2015) studied the information seeking behaviour of lawyers of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana, Chandigarh and pointed out that under influence of information and communication technologies, the majority of respondents were using the internet and e-resources to access required information, although print format had not lost its ground. A good number of lawyers preferred to use both print as well as e-resources to find out required information. Majority of respondents need information for preparation of cases in hand and for this purpose they used bar library of the high court. The study further revealed that lawyers depend more on colleagues and less on librarians to seek information. Das and Jeoshnamayee (2014) investigated the various aspects related to information needs, information seeking behaviour and use of electronic resources by research scholars and faculties in the universities and research libraries in Odisha. The study reported that maximum number of respondents used university libraries, followed by research libraries. Respondents used their parent institution's libraries more than other libraries. Libraries helped users to fulfil their information needs through its services. Further study revealed that majority of respondents used internet efficiently and mostly users preferred electronic resources than text books and reference books. Ray and Baby (2011) studied the information seeking behaviour of the academics of University of Kerala in the changed library environment that information communication technology has an impact on information use pattern of the academics. Users preferred the digital resources to fulfil their information needs. Study also showed that library system of the University is well used during different stages of research, and they use the library for academic purpose. Hinson et al. (2007) pointed out the information seeking behaviour of lawyers in Ghana that the 78% of the lawyers were found agreed that the internet improves their productivity. 88% of respondents indicated that the internet is useful as a communication tool, while 76% of respondents considered the internet to be very important for getting information.

4.0 Objectives

The following were the main objectives of the study:

1. To know the frequency of library visit.
2. To understand the purpose of seeking information by academic lawyers.
3. To know the library services used by academic lawyers.

4. To identify the types of information sources used by the academic lawyers.
5. To study the methods adopted by the academic lawyers for finding information.
6. To know the online legal databases used by the academic lawyers.

5.0 Scope

The scope of the study was limited to the information seeking behavior of academic lawyers of Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak. In the study the users comprises LLB, LLM students, research scholars and faculty members.

6.0 Research Methodology

The present study was based on survey research. Questionnaire method was the central instrument for the data collection. The questions of the questionnaire were designed according to the objectives of the study. The total population of the study was around 1365 including the faculty members and students. There are approximately 1340 students and 25 faculty members in M. D. University, Rohtak. 100 questionnaires were personally distributed to students and faculty members. After lot of persuasion only 70 questionnaires were received back. The response rate was 70.0%.

7.0 Results and Discussions

TABLE NO. 1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX

Sex	n	Percent
Male	40	57.1%
Female	30	42.9%
Total	70	100%

Table no. 1 reveals the gender wise distribution of respondents. It was found that 57.1% of the respondents were male and 42.8% of the respondents were female.

TABLE NO. 2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age	n	Percent
Below25	25	35.8%
26-30	12	17.1%
31-35	23	32.8%
36-40	6	8.5%
Above 40	4	5.8%
Total	70	100%

Table no. 2 shows the distribution of respondents by age. Maximum percentage of the respondents (35.7%) was below 25 years. It was found from above table that 32.8% of the respondents were between 31 to 35 years, 17.1% were 26 to 30 years, 8.5% were 36 to 40 years and 5.7% were above 40 years.

TABLE NO. 3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY STATUS

Status	n	Percent
LLB	38	54.3%
LLM	17	24.3%
Research Scholar	5	7.2%
Faculty	10	14.2%
Total	70	100%

Table no. 3 reflects the status of respondents. The results show that maximum percentage of the respondents (54.2%) was LLB students followed by 24.2% of LLM students, 14.2% of research scholar and 7.1% of faculty members.

TABLE NO. 4 FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY VISIT

Frequency	n	Percent
Daily	35	50%
Weekly	25	35.7%
2-3 times in a Month	8	11.4%
Once in a Month	2	2.8%

Table no. 4 reflects how often academic lawyers of M. D. University, Rohtak visited the library. It was found that maximum percentage of the respondents (50%) visited the library daily followed by 35.7% of the respondents visited the library weekly. Further it was revealed that 11.4% of the respondents visited the library 2-3 times in a month whereas 2.8% of the respondents visited the library once in a month.

TABLE NO. 5 PURPOSES FOR INFORMATION SEEKING

Purposes	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Research work	38 (54.2%)	25 (35.7)	5 (7.1%)	2 (2.8%)
Class Notes	42 (60%)	18 (25.7%)	9 (12.8%)	1 (1.4%)
Latest Updates	30 (42.8%)	30 (42.8%)	8 (11.4%)	2 (2.8%)
Planning of New projects	48 (68.5%)	16 (22.8%)	4 (5.7%)	2 (2.8%)
Moot Courts	58 (82.8%)	6 (8.5%)	5 (7.1%)	1 (1.4%)

Academic lawyers were asked to indicate their purposes for seeking information. Table no. 5 shows that majority of the respondents (82.8%) sought information frequently for the purpose of moot courts followed by planning of new projects (68.5%), prepare class notes (60%) and research work (54.2%) respectively. Same percentage of the respondents (42.8%) sought information frequently and sometimes for getting latest updates.

TABLE NO. 6 USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

Library Services	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Issue-Return Service	62 (88.5%)	5 (7.1%)	2 (2.8%)	1 (1.4%)
Reference Service	20 (28.5%)	22 (31.4%)	21 (30%)	7 (10%)
OPAC Search	36 (51.4%)	24 (34.2%)	8 (11.4%)	2 (2.8%)
Photocopying	55 (78.5%)	8 (11.4%)	6 (8.5%)	1 (1.4%)
Internet Services	38 (54.2%)	23 (32.8%)	6 (8.5%)	3 (4.2%)

Table no. 6 reveals the library services used by the academic lawyers of M. D. University, Rohtak. Maximum percentage of the respondents (88.5%) visited the library for issue-return of books frequently followed by photocopy service (78.5%), internet service (54.2%) and OPAC search (51.4%). Reference service in the library was used sometimes by the maximum percentage of the respondents (31.4%).

TABLE NO. 7 USE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF INFORMATION SOURCES

Information Sources	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Books	60 (85.7%)	6 (8.5%)	3 (4.2%)	1 (1.4%)
Newspapers	58 (82.8%)	5 (7.1%)	5 (7.1%)	2 (2.8%)
Dictionaries	25 (35.7%)	30 (42.8%)	10 (14.2%)	5 (7.1%)
Encyclopedia	20 (28.5%)	35 (50%)	11 (15.7%)	4 (5.7%)
Law Journals	20 (28.5%)	40 (57.1%)	8 (11.4%)	2 (2.8%)
Internet	62 (88.5%)	6 (8.5%)	3 (4.2%)	1 (1.4%)
E-theses & Dissertations	30 (42.8%)	34 (48.5%)	4 (5.7%)	2 (2.8%)

Table no. 7 shows the usability of different types of information sources used by academic lawyers. The table reveals that majority of the respondents (88.5%) used internet frequently for finding their required information followed by books (85.7%) and newspaper (82.8%) respectively. Maximum percentage of the respondents (57.1%) used law journals sometimes followed by encyclopedia (50%), E-theses & dissertations (48.5%) and dictionaries (42.8%).

TABLE NO. 8 METHODS FOR FINDING INFORMATION

Methods	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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Web-OPAC	60 (85.7%)	5 (7.1%)	3 (4.2%)	2 (2.8%)
Consult Librarian	20 (28.5%)	35 (50%)	10 (14.2%)	5 (7.1%)
Discussion with colleagues/ classmates	50 (71.4%)	10 (14.2%)	6 (8.5%)	4 (5.7%)
Citations	25 (35.7%)	30 (42.8%)	12 (17.1%)	3 (4.2%)
Attend Seminars/Conferences	28 (40%)	32 (45.7%)	7 (10%)	3 (4.2%)

Table no. 8 reflects the methods adopted by academic lawyers of M.D. University, Rohtak for finding their required information. Majority of the respondents (85.7%) used the method of Web-OPAC frequently followed by discussions with colleagues/ classmates (71.4%). Further it was revealed that 50% of the respondents used the method of consult librarian sometimes for getting their required information followed by attend seminars/ conferences (45.7%) and citations (42.8%).

TABLE NO. 9 USE OF ONLINE DATABASES

Resources	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Manupatra	45 (64.2%)	15 (21.4%)	2 (2.8%)	8 (11.4%)
Westlaw	15 (21.4%)	11 (15.7%)	35 (50%)	9 (12.8%)
Legallypedia	10 (14.2%)	12 (17.15)	32 (45.7%)	16 (22.8%)
UGC-INFONET	25 (35.7%)	30(42.8%)	10 (14.2%)	5 (7.1%)
LexisNexis	20 (28.5%)	35 (50%)	4 (5.71%)	11 (15.7%)

Table no. 9 shows the online databases that were used by academic lawyers in their profession. Maximum percentage of the respondents (64.2%) used Manupatra online database frequently. LexisNexis database was used sometimes by the maximum percent of the respondents (50%) followed by UGC-INFONET (42.8%). Westlaw online database was used rarely by the maximum percent of the respondents (50%) followed by Legallypedia (45.7%).

8.0 Conclusion and Suggestions

The study investigated the information seeking behavior of academic lawyers of M. D. University, Rohtak. It was revealed that the majority of the respondents visited the library for seeking information because library is the centre of all types of information and knowledge. Majority of the respondents did not make much use of the entire online legal databases included in the study. It might be due to the lack of e-legal resources, lack of awareness about their availability and unfamiliarity with these e-resources. Therefore, law departmental library might like to review its electronic information resources. Library should develop its services and sources and adopt new technology. Library staff could use their time better by focusing on assisting users. It was found that among the seven types of information sources, Internet, books and newspaper were ranked first, second and third in importance followed by e-theses & dissertations, dictionaries and encyclopedia. Academic lawyers themselves should take a step forward in developing their own skills in adopting the new technology. Formal training should be provided to the students and faculty for using online resources.

9.0 References

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