# Information Seeking Behavior of Faculty Members of the Agriculture Universities in Gujarat

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**Abstract:**

*The present study investigates the information seeking behavior of the post graduate faculty members of the four Agricultural Universities named Anand Agriculture University (Anand), Junagadh Agrigulture Univeristy, (Junagadh), Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agriculture University (Dantiwada), Navsari Agriculture University (Navsari) in Gujarat. Data was collected through structured questionnaires. The study investigates the information seeking behavior of the faculty members and attempts to identify the resources used regularly to meet their informational needs, purpose of information seeking, use of information technology for seeking the information, problems faced by faculty members while seeking information.*

*The research concludes that the internet is the best source for updating the knowledge and for information seeking. The study found that their purpose of information seeking was to keep up with latest development in the field and evolving innovative ideas/ techniques. Textbooks are the important resources for teaching and research papers & e-journals are important resources for research. It was also founded from study that information scattered at too many sources and too many classes or administrative work was a problem frequently faced by the respondents. According to the study majority of the respondents were affected by changing patterns of new syllabus.*

**Keywords:** *Agricultural Universities, Information seeking behavior, Library users*

## 1. Introduction

The nature of information is not easy to describe. Today, information technology has developed rapidly and has had a huge impact on access to information and on information seeking behavior. Moreover enormous literature is being published in various forms that are print, non-print, e-forms etc. Librarian and library-staff have to know and examine the criteria of information seeking and information used by users for providing information services, designing new information systems, intervening in the operation of existing systems or planning in service programs. As a Working University Librarian, every day I have to come across several faculties, students, researchers of various departments and affiliated colleges. So the researcher knows that which type of information are required by faculty members or students and how to fulfill their required information. If librarian knows about the information seeking behavior of the faculty members, he can provide their demandable services and also collect the reference sources as well as information sources in the library.

## 2. Information Seeking Behavior

Library users seek information from different sources like books, journals, E-journals, electronic database, research papers, news papers, audiovisuals and various types of reference sources like atlas,

dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbook, yearbooks etc. in the library. Information seeking also demands a continuous process and it's a psychological phenomena. To fulfill professional responsibilities and to solve problems of the clients the library should have a comprehensive collection and as well as a competent librarian who can understand the need of his clients. Once the librarian can understand information seeking behavior of his clients he will be able to solve the problems. Here, the researcher wants to find out the various aspects of information seeking behavior of his /her user groups.

## 3. Agriculture Universities in Gujarat

Gujarat is a state situated in the western part of India. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are the neighboring states of Gujarat. Gandhinagar is the capital city of the state. Gujarat has four Agriculture Universities i.e. Anand Agriculture Universities, Anand; Junagadh Agriculture University, Junagadh; Navsari Agriculture University, Navsari and Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agriculture University, Sardarkrushinagar. In this study the researcher has kept limit to investigate the information seeking behavior of the faculty members of the Post Graduate Departments run by said Agriculture Universities.

## 4. Objectives

1. To examine information-seeking behavior of the faculty members of the Post-Graduate Departments of the Agriculture Universities in Gujarat.
2. To identify the university wise faculty members and their academic position.
3. To examine the frequency of library visits and time spent for information seeking by the faculty members.
4. To find out the kind of information sources or methods use for updating knowledge.
5. To find out the kind of information are used for teaching by the faculty members.
6. To find out the problems encountered by the respondents while seeking information.
7. To find out the method used to resolve information seeking problems.
8. To identify the effects of environments on information seeking.
9. To examine the library services and its use by the faculty members.

## 5. Research Method and Techniques used for the Research Study

The research is confined to the Agriculture Universities of Gujarat. The raw data were collected through questionnaires. The data were analyzed using MS-EXCEL

## 6. Literature Review

(**Adio, Gboyega and Adessoji Adeola Arinola**) In this present study, Survey research technique was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of three departments out of six departments namely Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension, department of Animal production & Health and department of Agronomy. After to investigate the study, the result found that most of agriculture students lack basic knowledge on how to use available resources and services in the library, especially card catalogue/OPAC which is the pointers to location of material in the library. The study also discovered lack of awareness on the part of the students as well as inadequate basic information retrieval skill on how to use the library independently. The study also find that Internet, reference by the librarian, textbooks & monographs, journal articles, reference sources, thesis and dissertation were identified as the major sources used by respondents for acquiring information. Internet was the most employed and the most effective sources.

After the study the researcher has suggested some important points which are worth to keep in mind. The researcher has suggested increasing e-resources, to create awareness on available services in the library, orientation on information search tools should be given to students, to provide internet facilities for full time.

**Alhassan, Jibril Attahiru (2012)** Researcher has study the use of information and communication technology in agricultural research in Nigerian Universities on the base of following three questions only.

1. What are the types of ICT facilities used by lecturers for agricultural research?
2. What are the benefits of ICT use for agricultural research by lecturers?
3. What are the constraints to ICT utilization for agricultural research by lecturers?

The population of this study is the faculties of twelve federal universities selected in Nigeria. The sample size was 471. Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that lecturers have embraced ICT and were using it for research. Some of the facilities used were computer, statistical packages, database packages, CD-ROM, the Internet, e-mail and online databases. Lecturers take benefits from the use of ICT for research which include opening new areas of research, better analysis and interpretation of data, current literature, and online publication of articles and easy transfer of research findings to editors for publication in journals. Academic staff faces some constraints on the utilization of ICT for agricultural research. Some of the respondents ware high cost of using commercial cyber café.

The researcher has given some suggestions based on the findings of the study: which are Universities should improve their ICT infrastructures and the larger part of its bandwidth should be given to the library to reduce the cost of using commercial cybercafés for academic staff. University libraries should subscribe outstanding databases which will be use to full fill the requirement of academic staff for their research activities.

**Kumar, Devendra. (2010)** This preliminary study was limited to the information-seeking behavior among agricultural scientists of the various teaching and research departments of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture and Technology, Meerut (Uttar Pradesh). Their preferences regarding various formats of information sources like formal, informal and electronic information sources have been explored through quantitative survey.

This study revealed that the majority of agricultural scientists seek current information for general awareness and new knowledge. For seeking information, respondents used internet, e-mail services and e journals as an electronic information sources. Respondents consult library staff to locate the information and retrospectives searching of indexing/abstracting tools. Most of the agricultural scientists visit the library only for the purpose of getting their desired information.

After the study the researcher has suggested some important points and library should organized agriculture related orientation programmes. The librarian should come forward to understand the actual need and exact field of interest that the agricultural scientists have their priority and to reform the library resources making the collection more purposeful and need base.

## 7. Data Analysis

**Table1: University Wise Distributions**

| Universities | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Anand Agricultural University | 98 | 26.34 |
| Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural University | 88 | 23.66 |
| Junagadh Agricultural University | 90 | 24.19 |
| Navsari Agricultural University | 96 | 25.81 |
| **Total** | **372** | **100** |

Table 1  shows that majority of the 26.34 % of respondents are from Anand Agricultural University, 23.66% respondents are from Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural University, 24.19% are from

Junagadh Agricultural University, and 25.81 % of the respondents are from Navsari Agricultural University.

**Table 2: Frequencies of Library Visits**

| Frequency | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Daily | 130 | 34.9 |
| 3 Times in a Week | 122 | 32.8 |
| Once in a Week | 72 | 19.4 |
| Twice in a Month | 29 | 7.8 |
| Once in a Month | 13 | 3.5 |
| Several Times a year | 6 | 1.6 |
| **Total** | **372** | **100** |

Table 2 shows that majority of 130 (34.9%) respondents have visited the library everyday for information needs. only 6 (1.6%) respondents have rarely visited the library. It shows that majority of the respondents are visiting library every day.

**Table 3: Time Spent Per Week in the Library**

| Time Spent | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 5 hours | 289 | 77.7 |
| 5 – 10 hours | 69 | 18.5 |
| 10-20 hours | 14 | 3.8 |
| More than 20 hours | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **372** | **100** |

Table 3 shows the time spent per week in the library by the faculty members of the Agriculture Universities in Gujarat. Out of 372 respondents 289 (77.7%) respondents spent less than 5 hours in a week. No one respondent spent their time in a library for more than 20 hours in a week.

**Table 4: Information Sources or Method used for Updating Knowledge**

*1 = Not at all Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Important, 4 = Very Important, 5 = Extremely Important*

| Sources / Methods | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Using Internet | 0 | 1 | 4.8 | 21.6 | 72.6 |
| Reading latest books | 2.2 | 7.5 | 20.3 | 24.2 | 45.8 |
| Reading Newspapers | 2.6 | 3.2 | 25.1 | 26.6 | 42.5 |
| Attending conferences, seminars and workshops | 2.2 | 10.2 | 27.6 | 23.6 | 36.4 |
| Scanning current issues of print and electronic journals | 1.2 | 14.2 | 24.2 | 25.4 | 35 |
| Through library current awareness services | 3.2 | 12.5 | 21.6 | 33.2 | 29.5 |
| Scanning recent issues of abstracting & indexing tools | 4.3 | 12.6 | 20.8 | 33.6 | 28.7 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 8.2 | 9 | 30.4 | 26 | 26.4 |
| Consulting experts in subject fields | 1.2 | 12.3 | 30.8 | 34.5 | 21.2 |
| Media : TV and Radio | 3.1 | 19.2 | 25.7 | 35.5 | 16.5 |
| Reading newsletters | 1 | 22.9 | 40.3 | 23.5 | 12.3 |

Table 4 shows that majority of the 72.6 % respondents ranked **extremely important** to the "Internet" for updating their knowledge. The table 5.36 shows that Internet is one of the best information sources for updating knowledge because most of the information is available on the internet and it is easily

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available on the internet

### Table 5: Sources of Information Seeking (In %)

| Sources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Internet | 0 | 5.5 | 12.5 | 30.2 | 51.8 |
| E-Journals / Periodicals | 5.1 | 12.5 | 14.1 | 18.2 | 50.1 |
| Review Articles | 3 | 6.3 | 12.3 | 30.1 | 48.3 |
| Journals / periodicals (in print) | 5.1 | 8 | 22.1 | 25.3 | 39.5 |
| Consult a knowledgeable person in the field | 10 | 16.3 | 26.2 | 22.5 | 25 |
| Library catalogue | 38.2 | 22.2 | 14.3 | 16.2 | 9.1 |
| Bibliographies | 42.2 | 33.2 | 7.2 | 9.1 | 8.3 |
| Discussion with the librarian | 60.2 | 22.2 | 9.2 | 3.1 | 5.3 |
| Trade Catalogues | 47.2 | 23.8 | 20.5 | 3.3 | 5.2 |
| Government Publications | 50.2 | 22.6 | 22.8 | 2.3 | 2.1 |

Table 5 shows that respondents were asked to mention their sources for information seeking. Ten sources were listed and respondents were asked to rank them using a five points Likert scale. As per the table 5 majority of the respondents were gave the **extremely important** to the "Internet" with 51.8 %. Majority of the respondents gave the rank of **not at all important** to the sources of "Discussion with the librarian" with 60.2%.

Table 5 shows that Internet and online journals is the best source for information seeking because in current information and communication technology environment, Internet plays a vital role for dissemination of information. We can say that internet is a digital library of information. Many journals/magazine, scholar's research papers, review articles, e-books are freely available online.

### Table 6: Library Services Provided to the Respondents

| Kind of Library Services | Yes(%) | No(%) |
|---|---|---|
| Bibliographic Service | 8 | 92 |
| Computer Database | 90 | 10 |
| Current Awareness Services | 32 | 68 |
| Indexing and Abstracting | 34 | 66 |
| Newspapers Clipping Services | 13 | 87 |
| Selective Dissemination of Information Services | 22 | 78 |
| Translation Services | 15 | 85 |
| Reprographic Services | 93 | 7 |
| Any Other | 47 | 53 |

As shown in the table 6, majority of 90% and 93% respondents indicated that the "Computer Database" and "Reprographic Services" were provided by the library. The study shows that majority of 92% respondents had indicated the "Bibliographic Service" were not provide by the library.

### Table 7: Use of Library Services

| Kind of Library Services | Frequently (%) | Some Time (%) | Never (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bibliographic Service | 2 | 12 | 86 |
| Computer Database | 67 | 24 | 9 |
| Current Awareness Services | 13 | 28 | 59 |
| Dissemination of Selective Information Services | 12 | 40 | 48 |

| Translation Services | 22 | 38 | 40 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reprographic Services | 92 | 4 | 4 |
| Any Other | 12 | 65 | 63 |

According to Table 7, majority of 92% respondents are using "Reprographic Services" and majority of 86% respondents never used the "Bibliographic Service" during information seeking.

### Table 8:  Importance of Information Resources for Teaching in the Classroom

*1 = Not at all Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Important, 4 = Very Important, 5 = Extremely Important*

| Information Resources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Textbooks | 0 | 10.2 | 22.3 | 20.3 | 47.2 |
| Print Journals | 2.8 | 6 | 22.3 | 26.5 | 42.4 |
| Thesis & Dissertations | 4 | 12.3 | 33.2 | 12 | 38.5 |
| Research Papers | 9 | 15.4 | 17.2 | 20 | 38.4 |
| Proceeding of Conference Proceeding | 11.2 | 15.6 | 16 | 24.3 | 32.9 |
| E-Journals | 4.3 | 15.3 | 25.6 | 26 | 28.8 |
| Reference Books | 8.6 | 8.8 | 23.1 | 29.7 | 29.8 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 4.1 | 23.5 | 24.9 | 25.9 | 21.6 |
| Discussion with library staff | 32.1 | 20.3 | 18.1 | 16.5 | 13 |
| Government Publications & Documents | 20.2 | 31.3 | 15.3 | 18.2 | 15 |

Table 8 shows that the majority of the respondents were highly ranked as an **Extremely Important** to the "Textbooks" with 47.2%, 29.7% respondents gave **Very important** to the **"**Reference Books". 25.6 % respondents preferred "E-Journals" as a **Important sources.** 31.3% respondents gave the **Somewhat important** to the "Government Publications & Documents". Majority of 32.1% respondents gave N**ot at all Important** to the "Discussion with library staff".

### Table 9: Problems Encountered by the Respondents While Seeking Information (In %)

*1 = Not at all Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Important, 4 = Very Important, 5 = Extremely Important*

| Problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information resources are very expensive | 0 | 7.9 | 18.2 | 26.3 | 47.6 |
| Lack of technical support | 1.4 | 8.8 | 18.6 | 25.6 | 45.6 |
| Information resources are very expensive or of too much information | 9.9 | 8.9 | 20 | 20.6 | 40.6 |
| Latest information is  not available | 3.3 | 6.6 | 28.6 | 21 | 40.5 |
| Required Material is not available | 0.8 | 7.7 | 18.8 | 32.5 | 40.2 |
| Lack of information about available sources | 0.5 | 2.5 | 26.6 | 31.2 | 39.2 |
| Lack of support from Library staff | 2.1 | 5.6 | 28.6 | 28.5 | 35.2 |
| Lack of time for searching | 4.1 | 4.6 | 27.5 | 30.5 | 33.3 |
| Per day too many periods of  administrative work | 2.2 | 8.8 | 22.9 | 36.2 | 29.9 |

Table 9 shows that respondents have ranked as an **extremely important** to face the problem while seeking information which is "Information resources are very expensive" with 47.6% respondents. As well as other so many problems are faced by faculty members who gave the rank which is shown in table 9.

**Table 10:  Method Used to Resolve Information Seeking Problems.**

*1 = Not at all Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Important, 4 = Very Important, 5 = extremely Important*

| Method use to resolve information seeking problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Use of Internet | 8 | 11.2 | 10.3 | 20.2 | 50.3 |
| Make efforts to learn internet search skills | 4.9 | 12.2 | 23.2 | 23.5 | 36.2 |
| Consult more and more sources | 2.9 | 16.5 | 12.2 | 33.2 | 35.2 |
| Use of more than one library | 0.3 | 12 | 22.2 | 31.2 | 34.3 |
| Take support from my colleagues | 1.8 | 5.5 | 33.2 | 26.3 | 33.2 |
| Learn how to use electronic resources | 4.1 | 19.2 | 21.5 | 23.2 | 32 |

The responses in this regard are presented in Table 10. It reveals that the methods adopted to resolve the information seeking activity and given extremely important by respondents are "Use of Internet" with 50.3% respondents.

**Table 11:  Effects of Environment on Information Seeking (In %)**

| Environmental Factors | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Changing Pattern of new syllabus | 55.2 | 44.8 |
| Changing information & Communication Technology environment | 44.3 | 55.7 |
| Information Overload | 45.3 | 54.7 |
| Cross questions raised by students | 39.7 | 60.3 |

Table 11 shows that majority of the 55.20% respondents are of opinion that the "Changing Pattern of new syllabus" is the current information technology environment affecting the information seeking behavior.

## 8. Conclusion

Information seeking behavior of faculty members is paramount to librarians because librarians have a role to play in helping faculty members to meet their information needs. This study is  sought to information seeking behavior of faculty members of Agriculture universities in Gujarat. The study reveals that internet is the best source for updating the knowledge and important source for information seeking. The study found that their purpose of information seeking was to keep up with latest development in the field and evolving innovative ideas/ technique. Textbooks are the important sources for teaching and e-journals are important sources for research. It was also found that information scattered at too many sources and administrative work was a problem frequently faced by the respondents. According to the study majority of the respondents were affected by changing patterns of new syllabus. There is a significant difference in the use of information sources for teaching among the faculty members belonging to different academic positions.

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