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3.1 Objective of Study

The main objective of this study is to systematically examine the information need and information-seeking behaviour of researchers in the field of Tibetan Studies. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the types of information sources used by researchers to meet their information needs.
2. To identify the use and adequacy of channels of information sources that vary with the role of researcher.
3. To identify how researchers generate their scholarly ideas for their research work.
4. To identify the difficulties that researchers experience in obtaining required information to keep up to date with advancement in their field of study.
5. To examine the inter personal communication among researchers.
6. To identify the reasons for seeking information by researchers.
7. To identify the frequency of visit to the library by the researchers in the field of Tibetan studies.
8. To identify the role of the library and information centres in providing information to the researcher & problems faced by the researcher.
9. To examine the frequency of use of sources by researchers.

The above objectives aim to yield empirical results on the information seeking, use of information and the role of the library as information resource provider to researchers in the field of Tibetan Studies.

3.2 Methodology

Questionnaire and schedules are important tools of social research commonly used in survey of subjects. The data is collected from self-reports of respondents regarding their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, motivations, plans, and activities. The questionnaire involves a situation in which the respondents himself fills in the answers to questions included in the instrument. This instrument may be mailed or handed over personally to the respondents by the research workers. The schedule, on the other hand involves a face to face situation in which the research worker playing the role of an interviewer asks the respondents all the questions included in the instrument and also records the answers.

A preliminary background study is absolutely essential for formulating an effective and reliable questionnaire or schedule. For this purpose all the available published sources, especially records and reports are studied carefully. Comparable studies conducted elsewhere are also helpful. Where documentary are inadequate, an exploratory study of the community or group by direct fieldwork would be most fruitful.

Since this study was designed to investigate the information needs and information seeking behaviour of researchers in the field of Tibetan studies/Buddhist studies, it made use of questionnaire to collect data pertinent to the topic of research. In addition, interview of researchers on very limited basis has been carried out.

Indeed, a survey method is a device for collecting data or factual information on certain decided characteristics or items of a universe of population. Fowler [1] defines survey as "data collection and measurement processes". According to Campbell and Katona [2] many research problems require the systematic collection of data from population or samples of population through the use of questionnaire and personal interviews. The

studies are normally called survey, especially when they are concerned with large or widely dispersed groups of people. When they deal with only a fraction of a total population (or universe), a fraction representative of the total, they are called simply "surveys".

A wide variety of application of survey research methodology that focuses on factual material i.e. people's behaviour or situation are reported in the literature. Using the survey methods, numerous fact about a certain population can be obtained only by asking sample of people about themselves[3].

This study relied upon the survey method to provide descriptive data concerning the information seeking behaviour and information needs of researchers in the field of Tibetan studies, and use of source types within information channels by them.

There are various reasons that led to choose survey method for data collection. These reasons are given as under:

1. Standardised measurement that is consistent across all respondents ensures that one has comparable information about everyone involved in the survey. Without such measurement, analysing distributions or patterns of associations are not meaningful.
2. Although, recorded data can be used for some research purposes, the main reason for making surveys or to collect information which is available from one or other sources.
3. Analysis requirements may dictate a special-purpose survey. Even, if there is information about some set of events, it may not be paired with other characteristics needed to carry out a desired analysis.

Vondran [4] has referred to "instrumental information-seeking behaviour which consists of an individual activities in obtaining useful, specific and unknown message content in response to an information need.

The findings of the study made by the author establishes that this behaviour can be conveniently distinguished in two ways:

- (a) Information preference analysed in the past by examination of bibliographic citations.
- (b) Information search behaviour, or the measuring of the broad aspects of information-seeking and the perception of information need; this aspect of behavioural phenomena was most frequently measured by questionnaire and/ or interviews as tools of research.

3.3 Sample of Study

The questionnaire as a survey instrument was administered to a population comprising Ph.D. scholars, Research Assistants, teachers, and scholars involved in research activities in the field of Tibetan/Buddhist Studies in India. Out of 350 respondents only 208 answered the questionnaire, making the response rate 59.42 percent.

The distribution of the researchers who responded by filling out the questionnaire was as follows:

- Ph.D. Scholars
- Teachers (Lecturers/ Readers/ Professors)
- Research Assistants, etc.

The data collection of this study started in May 2001 and ended in February 2002.

The sample of study included researchers engaged in research pursuit at the following organizations concerning Tibetan studies.

- 1) Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi
- 2) Central Buddhist Institute, Leh (J & K)
- 3) Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharmasala (H P)
- 4) Tibet House, New Delhi

- 5) Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, (Sikkim)
- 6) Nav Nalanda Mahavihar, Patna

3.4 Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire refer to act of standardized questions arranged in a definite order to which responses are sought from all the individuals constituting the sample with a view to obtaining comparable results. Questions are presented with exactly the same wording and in exactly the same order to all the respondents. Both the tools involve responses of subjects to pre-arranged questions. These instruments are carefully designed within a conceptual frame of reference and comprise a set of strategically arranged questions aimed at testing certain well formulated hypothesis or obtaining data for well defined areas of enquiry.

The main instrument for data collection used in this study is questionnaire (as given in Appendix...). Questionnaire was a result of extensive analysis of literature, review of the objectives of the study and frequent discussion with Dr. UN Singh and Dr HN Prasad, the supervisor and co-supervisor of the research work. In designing this questionnaire help was also taken from the previous studies by Victor Resenberg in 1980 [5], D.N. Ocholla [6] and P. Prataplingam [7].

The questionnaire used in this study to survey information needs and information seeking behaviour of researchers in the field of Tibetan studies, consists of 40 questions. Among them twenty eight are of close type questions which required tick mark of the appropriate responses provided for each part of each query. Because of the adoption of this method, the work of data processing became easier to have the statistical analysis for this study. Only two questions at the serial number 39 & 40 are of open type in order to provide respondents with an opportunity to add any information not covered in earlier questions and give their views that might be relevant to the study.

The questionnaire was designed using a liker-type scale for many variables in order to determine the extent to which respondents hold certain perspective.

3.5 Limitation of the study

The data was collected through the use of questionnaire as survey instrument. The questionnaires were circulated among the researchers of Tibetan studies located at Varanasi, Patna, New Delhi, Dharmashala, Gangtok and Leh. It did not include the researchers of other than Tibetan study.

This study was limited to the investigation of information seeking behaviour and use of sources of information in the field of Tibetan studies, which includes Language, Literature, Religion, Philosophy, Arts and Tibetan Medicine.

Study does not extend its parameters to include the creation of a theoretical model for the development of future in-house information systems, though its objective is to provide descriptive data about the information needs and information seeking behaviour of researchers in the field of Tibetan studies that could be used by information system designers. The data provided by this study will only be helpful for the information systems designers to plan for designing in-house information systems for researchers of Tibetan study and improve the present services and resources.

3.6 Constraints of the study

Quite a number of constraints were faced during the process of the investigation of the research topic. Some of them are as under:

1. The respondents, in regard, did not want to disclose their information needs and information seeking behaviour to the researchers.

2. Some of the respondents were very reluctant to accept and fill out the questionnaire. They had to be persuaded and reminded time and again for doing the same.
3. Quite a number of them did not return the questionnaire in time—others did not return at all.
4. Sample of population chosen for study, were scattered geographically, and it was time consuming and tedious job to distribute and collect the questionnaire.
5. The present study is a pioneering work in itself. So far no other work has been carried out by any scholar to investigate into the information seeking behaviour and information needs of researchers in the field of Tibetan studies. This posed certain problems in the planning and execution of the study.

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