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Information Seeking Behavior of Library Users with Special Reference to Thapar University Patiala and Punjabi University Patiala (Pb.)

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Abstract

The concept of information seeking behavior emerged from the broad concept of user studies which covers a wide range of studies in Information Science and also has its influence in Computer Science and Communication Studies. The clearest definition in the literature is "Information is recorded experience that is used in decision making". The research areas of the study were information seeking behavior of library users of Thapar University, Patiala, India and Punjabi University, Patiala, India. Researcher created some objectives about the research areas at the beginning of study, i.e., the impact of electronic and print information sources available in the library, compared and analyzed the satisfaction level of library users for electronic and print information sources, studied the impact of advancement of information technology on library users during seeking information from their libraries. After that hypothesis was created for the study, i.e., online resources were available in both the libraries, housekeeping operations were performed through computer, CAS and SDI service provided by both the libraries to their users for seeking information. The knowledge was collected for the same thorough questionnaire which contain 26 questions and the size of samples (respondents) for both the Universities were 150 only.

Keyword: *Information Science, Computer Science, Communication Studies, library users*

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INTRODUCTION

According to Webster's dictionary the word 'information' is derived from Latin word 'informatio' which is derived from the verb 'informare', which means 'to give form to mind', 'instruct' and 'teach'.

The widely known Information Theory of Shannon and Weaver (1949) defined the term information as 'information is stimulus that reduces uncertainty and a purely quantitative measure of communicative exchanges'.

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

The concept of information seeking behavior emerged from the broad concept of user studies which covers a wide range of studies in Information Science and also has its influence in Computer Science and Communication Studies. The broad term 'Information Science' includes within its purview, the terms user studies and information seeking behavior.

There are many definitions, models and theories on the information behaviors and related concepts. To have an extended view, four concepts derived from the definitions of Wilson (2000) are given below:

i) **"Information Behavior"** can be described as behavior of human to sources and channels of information.
ii) **"Information Seeking Behavior"** is a purposeful attempt to seek for information and to satisfy the needs that arise out of a necessity to achieve an objective.
iii) **"Information Searching Behavior"** is the strategies followed and attitudes applied in attempting in an in-depth manner to seek for information.
iv) **"Information Use Behavior"** is the behavior which is involved as to how the information is sought. These behaviors are dealt with marking the information, adding it to the context to which it is sought, saving for further use, etc.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the impact of electronic and print information sources available in the library.
- To compare and analyze the satisfaction level of library users for electronic and print information sources.
- To analyze the use of library for seeking information by both the libraries users.
- To study the impact of advancement of information technology on information use of both the libraries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wijetunge **[**1] studied the information resources usage by the agriculture undergraduates of the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

A questionnaire-based survey of a sample population of 69 agriculture undergraduates revealed that they often depend on search engines, Wikipedia, classmates and lecturers for information. The study found that a few undergraduates never used e-resources or never took the help of friends and family, librarians, library collections or personal collections. The study recommended that the students be provided adequate training in information literacy. Also the number of computers available in the library and the faculty computer centre should be increased so that the students can easily access e-resources.

Jayadev [2] in his article 'Information Seeking Behavior of Law Students in the Changing Digital Environment' found that the information environment has greatly impacted on teaching, learning and research methods of higher education worldwide and India is no exception. The study mainly concentrated on frequency of visit to the library, purpose of information seeking, computer acquaintance, amount of time spent on information gathering activities, problem faced in information seeking, etc. The results of the study revealed that books are still most heavily used resources by the students. Majority of the students are familiar with using offline and online legal databases.

Information literacy is recognized as an important aspect of medical education. Lata [3] analyzed the information literacy skills of the faculty and students of Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma University of Health Sciences (PBDSUHS), Rohtak, India. The study was based on the data collected through questionnaires. It was found that all the respondents were able to specify their information needs and were aware of the different kinds of information sources and online databases. It was found that the faculty members were more able to make use of the retrieved information than the students. A significant number of respondents overestimated their skills by rating themselves very high and high in accessing information in electronic format while they were unfamiliar with basic search technique used for searching information in an online database.

Sahu [4] in his article 'Information Needs of Library Users of Selective Metallurgical Institutions in Jharkhand', highlighted the R&D information needs of scientists, engineers, managers and researchers in the field of metallurgy working in selective metallurgical institutions of Jharkhand, India. The study revealed that the R&D groups of these organizations used a variety of formal and informal information sources effectively in meeting their research information needs. Apart from literature search, the teams attended meetings, discussions, seminars, workshops and conferences as the major informal sources of acquiring knowledge, sharing experiences with their colleagues and experts and to establish professional contacts for exchange of knowledge.

Information is an essential commodity for study, teaching and research. Libraries in engineering institutions play a crucial role in fulfilling the information needs of users. Lewis and Mallaiah [5] in their article 'Use of information resources in engineering college libraries of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts: A comparative study' studied the use of information resources by the students, faculty members and research scholars in the engineering college libraries of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts during August 2013 [6]. Questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. The responses on awareness

and satisfaction level on various library resources were gathered using Likert's 5 point scale [7]. The analysis showed that respondents do experience inadequacy of information resources in their college libraries Table 3.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study the researcher has used primary, secondary and tertiary sources of information. The raw data were collected through questionnaire and personal discussion with the respondents [8]. The raw data were analyzed in the form of tables and pie charts and the secondary data were consulted from library annual reports, books, periodicals and other official records [9]. Suitable statistical techniques were also implemented according to obtained data Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 1: *If You Are Faculty Please Indicate Your Designation.*

Options	Thapar University		Punjabi University	
	Data collection	Percentage	Data collection	Percentage
Professor	5	6.66	9	12
Associate Professor	7	9.33	5	6.41
Assistant Professor	11	14.67	12	16
Student	52	69.34	49	65.59
Total	**75**	**100**	**75**	**100**

Table 2: *Which Department or Stream You are Working/Study.*

Options	Thapar University		Punjabi University	
	Data collection	Percentage	Data collection	Percentage
Engineering	50	66.64	14	18.67
Science	10	13.33	24	32
Social Sciences	7	9.33	30	40
Any Other	8	10.7	7	9.33
Total	**75**	**100**	**75**	**100**

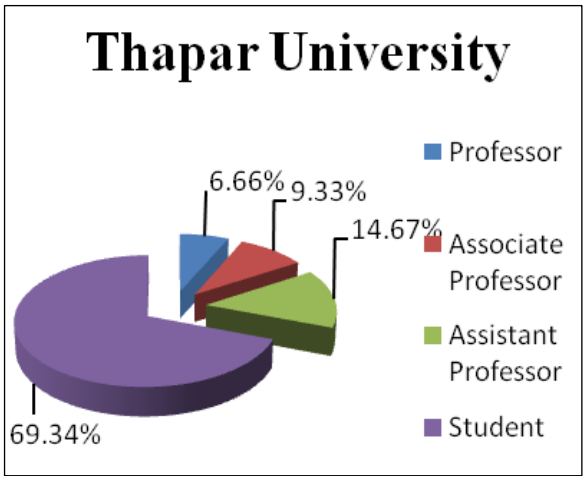

Fig. 1: *Category of Respondents and the Data Sample Collected from Thapar University (6.66% Professors, 9.33% Associate Professors, 14.67% Assistant Professors and 69.34% Students).*

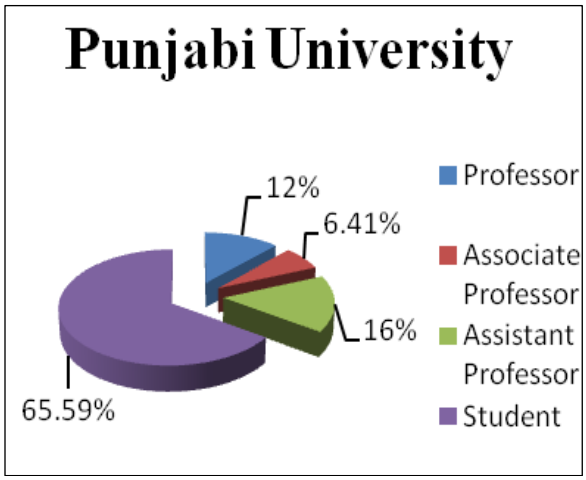

Fig. 2: *Category of Respondents and the Data Sample Collected from Punjabi University (Under 12% Professors, 6.41% Associate Professors, 16% Assistant Professors and 65.59% Students).*

Table 3: *Purpose of Using Library.*

Options	Thapar University		Punjabi University	
	Data collection	**Percentage**	**Data collection**	**Percentage**
Consulting current magazine/ Journals	21	28	22	29.33
Passing the leisure time	10	13.34	12	16
Preparation of examination	26	34.66	20	26.67
Making notes	18	24	21	28
Total	**75**	**100**	**75**	**100**

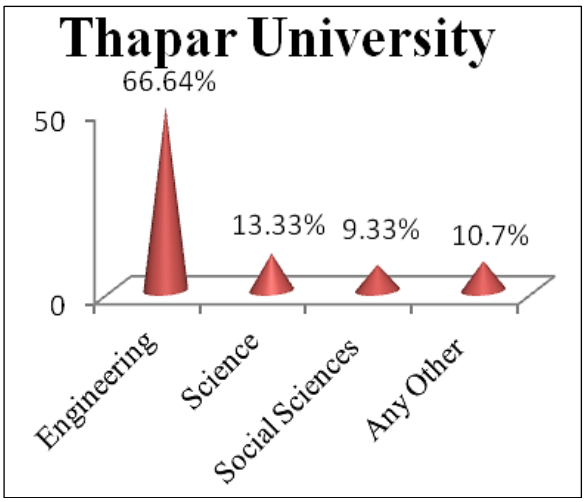

Fig. 3: *Department or Stream you are Working/Study and the Data Sample Collected from Thapar University (Engineering 66.64%, Science 13.33%, Social Sciences 9.33% and Any Other 10.7%).*

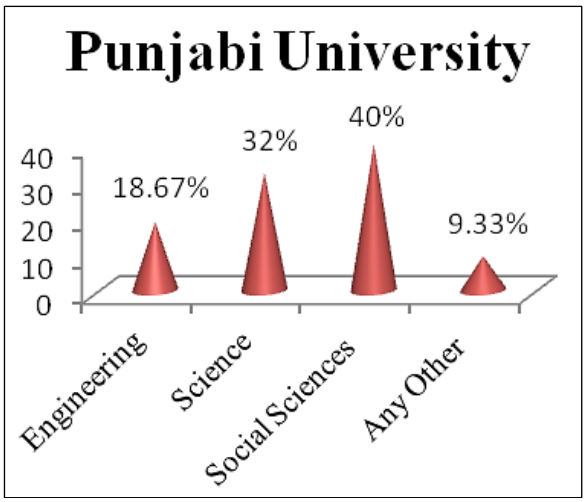

Fig. 4: *Department or Stream you are Working/Study and the Data Sample Collected from Punjabi University (Engineering 18.67%, Science 32%, Social Sciences 40% and Any Other 9.33%).*

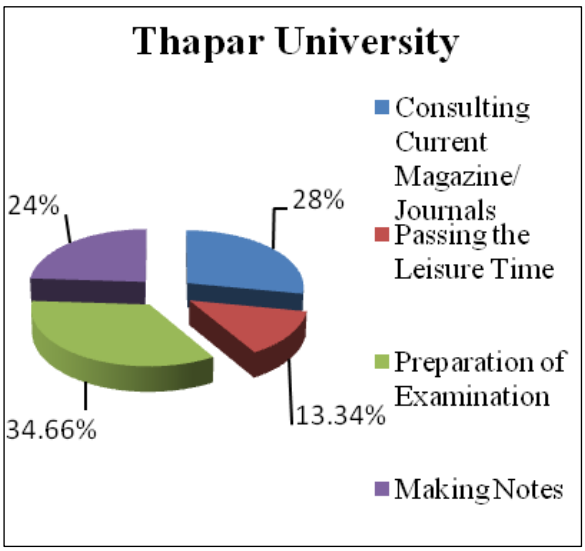

Fig. 5: *Purpose of Using Library and the Data Sample Collected from Thapar University (Consulting Current Magazine/ Journals 28%, Passing the Leisure Time 13.34%, Preparation of Examination 34.66% and Making Notes 24%).*

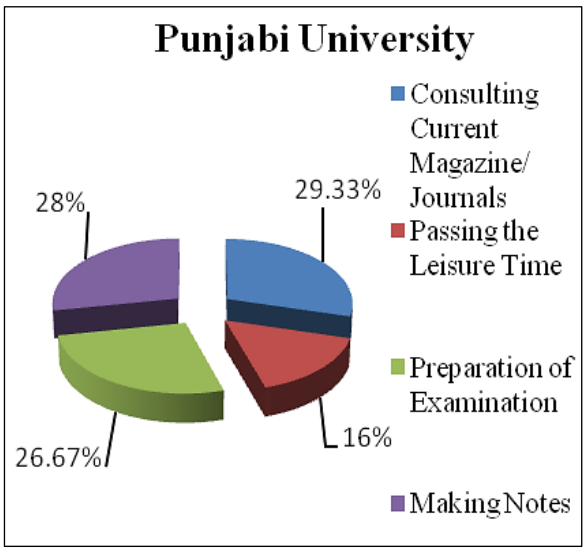

Fig. 6: *Purpose of Using Library and the Data Sample Collected from Punjabi University (Consulting Current Magazine/ Journals 29.33%, Passing the Leisure Time 16%, Preparation of Examination 26.67% and Making Notes 28%).*

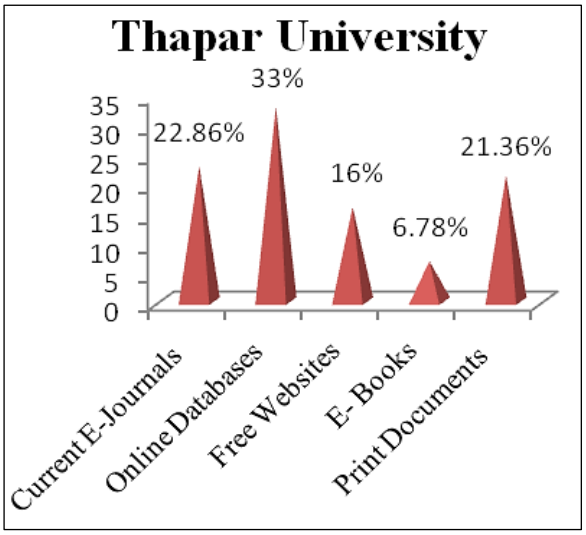

Fig. 7: *Library Sources Used by Respondents for Seeking Information and the Data Sample Collected from Thapar University (22.86% respondents use Current E-Journals, 33% respondents use Online Databases, 16% respondents use Free Websites, 6.78% respondents use E- Books and 21.36% respondents use Print Documents).*

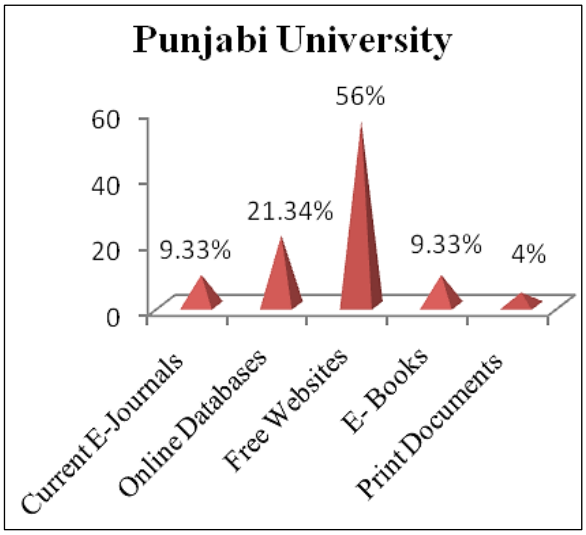

Fig. 8: *Library Sources Used by Respondents for Seeking Information and the Data Sample Collected from Punjabi University (9.33% respondents use Current E-Journals, 21.34% respondents use Online Databases, 56% respondents use Free Websites, 9.33% respondents use E-Books and 4% respondents use Print Documents).*

Table 4: *From Where You Seek Information?*

Options	Thapar University		Punjabi University	
	Data collection	**Percentage**	**Data collection**	**Percentage**
Current E-journals	17	22.86	7	9.33
Online databases	25	33	16	21.34
Free websites	12	16	42	56
E- books	5	6.78	7	9.33
Print documents	16	21.36	3	4
Total	**75**	**100**	**75**	**100**

Table 5: *Are You Satisfied with Your Institute's Library Services?*

Options	Thapar University		Punjabi University	
	Data Collection	**Percentage**	**Data Collection**	**Percentage**
Fully satisfied	26	34.66	41	54.66
Partial satisfied	42	56	22	29.34
Unsatisfied	7	9.34	12	16
Total	**75**	**100**	**75**	**100**

Table 6: *Are You Comfortable with Electronic/ Print Information Resources Provided by Your Library?*

Options	Thapar University		Punjabi University	
	Data collection	**Percentage**	**Data collection**	**Percentage**
Yes	37	49.33	64	85.33
No	38	50.67	11	14.67
Total	**75**	**100**	**75**	**100**

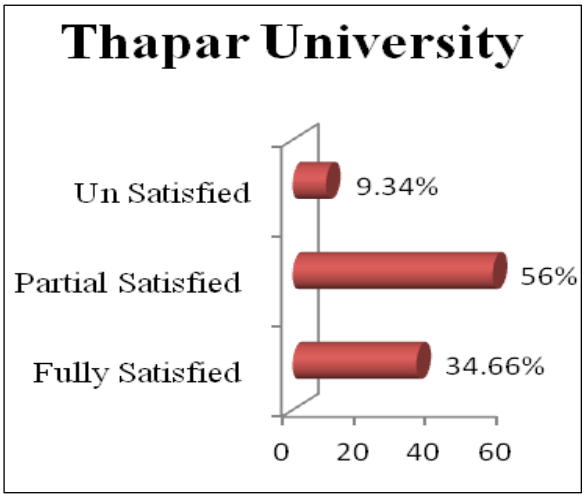

Fig. 9: *Satisfaction Level with Their Institute Library Services and the Results from Thapar University (34.66% Respondents Fully Satisfied, 56% Respondents Partial Satisfied and 9.34% Respondents Unsatisfied).*

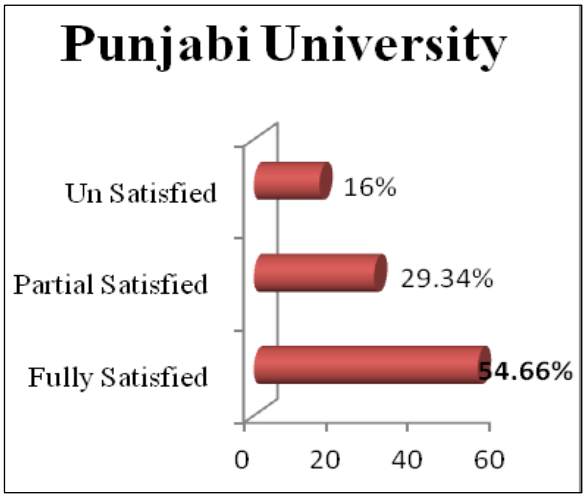

Fig. 10: *Satisfaction Level with Their Institute Library Services and the Results from Punjabi University (54.66% Respondents Fully Satisfied, 29.34% Respondents Partial Satisfied, and 16% Respondents Unsatisfied).*

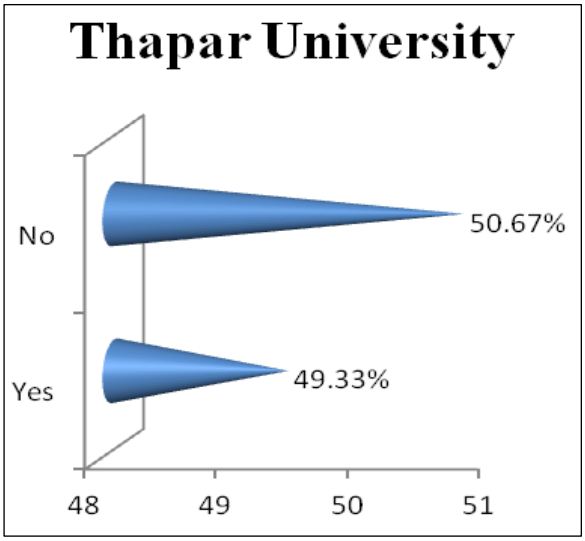

Fig. 11: *Satisfied Level with Electronic/ Print Information Resources Provided by the Libraries and the Data Sample Collected from Thapar University (49.33% Respondents were Satisfied with Electronic/ Print Information Resources Provided by the Library and 50.67% were not Satisfied).*

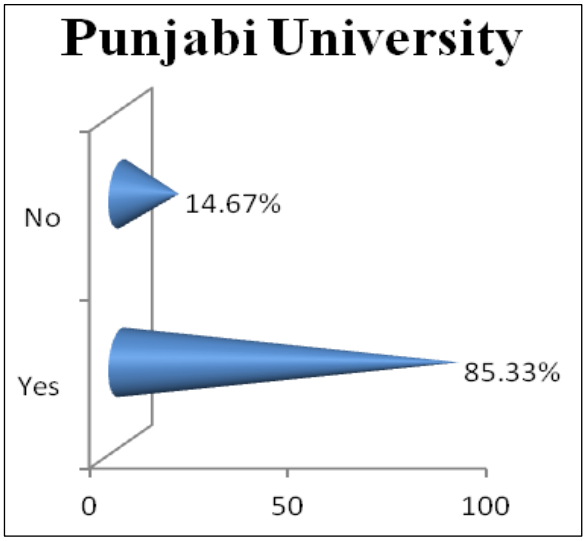

Fig. 12: *Satisfied Level with Electronic/ Print Information Resources Provided by the Libraries and the Data Sample Collected from Punjabi University (85.33% respondents were satisfied with Electronic/ Print Information Resources provided by the Library and 14.67% respondents were not Satisfied).*

Table 7: *What Other Impact has the Use of Electronic / Print Resource had on Your Work/Studies?*

Options	Thapar University		Punjabi University	
	Data collection	Percentage	Data collection	Percentage
Improved the quality of work (results)	32	42.66	40	53.33
Inspired new thinking/ideas	19	25.34	27	36
Shifted (narrowed/broadened) the focus of work	7	9.33	2	2.67
Reduced working time	12	16	3	4
Reduced the amount of browsing of resources in libraries	5	6.67	3	4
Total	**75**	**100**	**75**	**100**

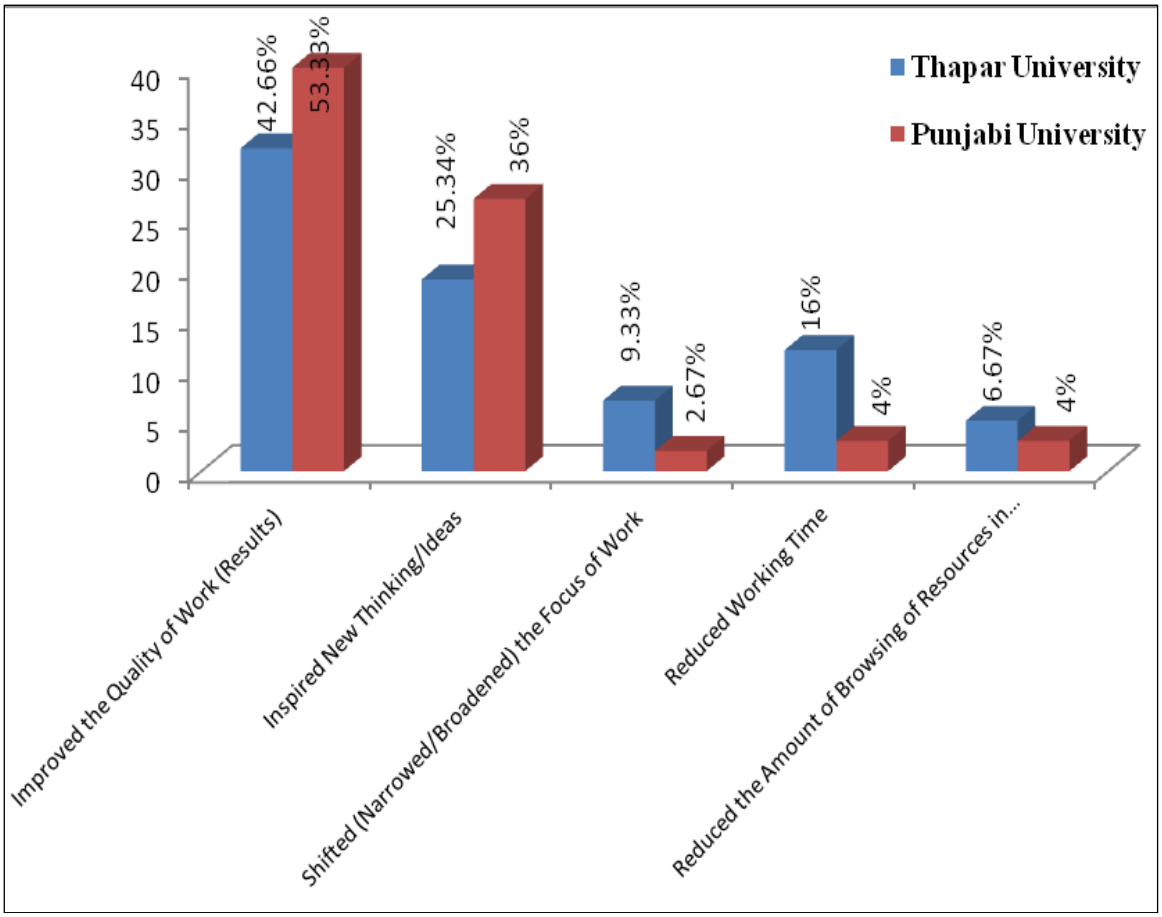

Fig. 13: *Impact of the Use of Electronic / Print Resource on Respondents' Work/Studies and the Results from Both the Universities.*

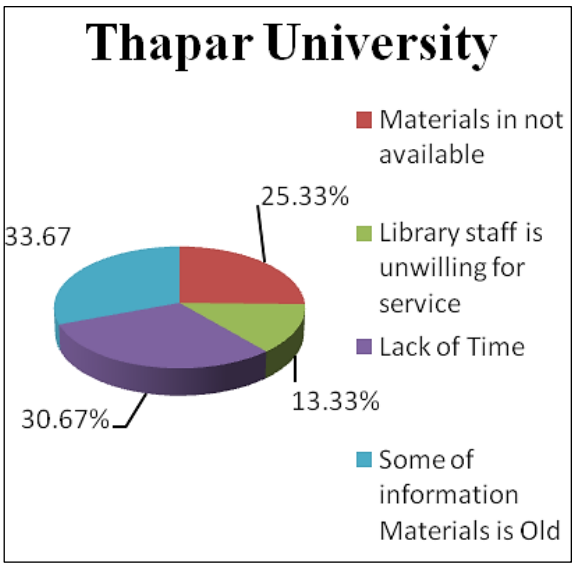

Fig. 14: *Problems Found While Seeking Information and the Results from Thapar University (25.33% Said that Materials were Not Available, 13.33% Respondents Said that Library Staff was Unwilling for Service, 30.67% Said Lack of Time and 33.67% Reported that Some of Information Materials were Old).*

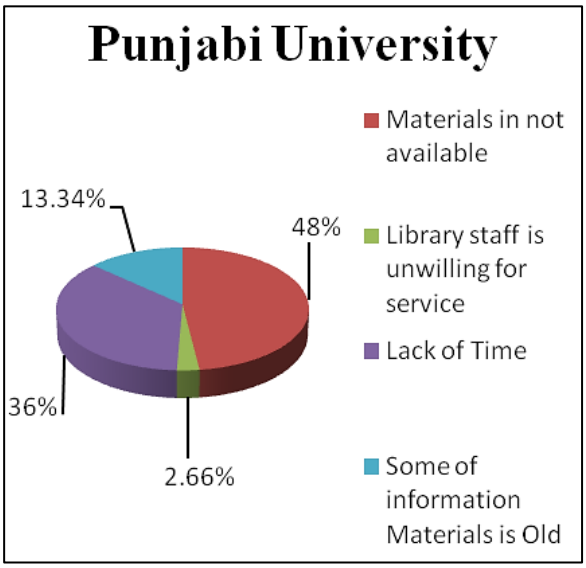

Fig. 15: *Problems Found While the Users Seeking Information and the Results from Punjabi University (48% Respondents Said that Materials were not Available, 2.66% said that Library Staff was Unwilling for Service, 36% Said Lack of Time and 13.34% Reported that Some of Information Materials were Old).*

Table 8: *Which Problems Do You Face While Seeking Information*?

Options	Thapar University		Punjabi University	
	Data collection	Percentage	Data collection	Percentage
Materials are not available	19	25.33	36	48
Library staff is unwilling for service	10	13.33	2	2.66
Lack of time	23	30.67	27	36
Some of information materials are old	23	30.67	10	13.34
Total	**75**	**100**	**75**	**100**

Figure 13 shows that 42.66% respondents from Thapar University reported improvement in the quality of work (Results), 25.34% respondents said that electronic/print resources has inspired new thinking/ideas, 9.33% respondents said that it has shifted (narrowed/broadened) the focus of work, 16% respondents reported reduced working time and 6.67% respondents said that it has reduced the amount of browsing of resources in libraries [10].

Also Figure 13 shows that 53.33% respondents from Punjabi University found an improvement in the quality of work (Results), 36% respondents said that use of electronic/print resources has inspired new thinking/ideas, 2.67% respondents said that it has shifted (narrowed/broadened) the focus of work, 4% respondents reported reduced working time and 4% respondents said that it has reduced the amount of browsing of resources in libraries [11].

FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

Following observations were made by the researcher on information seeking behavior pattern in the Thapar University, Patiala, India and Punjabi University, Patiala, India [12]. Based on findings, the focus of the study has been laid on information seeking behavior pattern among all the library users in India [13].

Background Information

Out of total 150 respondents, 88 (58.66%) were male and 62 (41.33%) were female. Among 150 respondents, 14 (9.33%) were Professor, 12 (8%) were Associate Professor, 23 (15.33%) were Assistant Professor and 101 (67.33%) were students (Table 1) [14].

Out of total 150 respondents, 64 (42.66%) were from Engineering department, 34 (22.66%) were from Science department, 37 (24.66%) were from Social Sciences department and 15 (10%) were from other departments (Table 2) [15].

Following findings/suggestions were derived out of the study conducted by the researcher given below:

1. ***Impact of Computer-Based Services and Electronic and Print Information Sources Available in Libraries on Users Works/Study***

Internet is therefore described as the backbone of the information superhighway. The survey indicated that the majority of respondents use computer-based services available in library for seeking information.

- *From Where You Seek Information*

It is clear that, more number of hours were spend on information gathering activities such as browsing e-journals on internet, searching for related websites, E-mail alerts, and correspondence. This shows that the online activity is more than the traditional activities [16].

After analyzing the collected samples, it was found that 54 (36%) respondents seek information from free websites, 41 (27.33%) from online databases, 24 (16%) from current E-journals, 19 (12.66%) from print documents and 12 (8%) from E-books (Table 4).

Above percentage showed that the trend of use of electronic resources is more than the print. Therefore university libraries have to make an effort to develop more and more electronic resources. They should also provide free internet services to the users to make them acquaint with the online resources [17]**.**

2. Problems Faced in Information-Seeking

It was observed from the data that information scattered in too many sources and too much information on internet as well as print documents is the problem often faced by users [18]. The users sometimes face problems such as needed information is not available in library, incomplete information in print sources, do not know how to use online catalogue, do not know how to use electronic resources as well as print document sources, lack of information skills to search etc [19].

The survey found that the majority respondents of both the universities, i.e., 67 (44.66%) were fully satisfied, 64 (42.66%) were partial satisfied and 19 (12.66%) respondents were unsatisfied with library services provided to library users by libraries (Table 5) [20].

After the analysis of collected data from both the Universities, it was found that users face problems while they seek information [21]. About 55 (36.66%) respondents said that materials were not available in the library, 50 (33.33%) respondents agreed that while they want to seek information but experience shortage of time, 33 (22%) respondents said that information materials were old in the library and 12 (8%) respondents said that library staff was unwilling for while they want to seek information (Table 8) [22].

These problems indicated that users don't know how to use the information resources effectively. They need information search skills. It was also indicated that libraries should develop the state of the art infrastructure in all respects or they should upgrade existing information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure [23].

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the finding the focus of the study has been laid on information seeking behavior pattern among the library users of Thapar University, Patiala, India and Punjabi University, Patiala (Pb), India [24].

Following suggestions/recommendations were derived from the study for other Universities:

Methods Adopted to Resolve the Information Seeking Problems

Users often prefer an individual, independent work, use of search engines on internet, consult more and more sources to overcome the information-seeking problems. To overcome the problems users also sometime adopt different methods such as visiting more than one library, take support of their colleagues, make efforts to learn internet search skills and learn how to use electronic and print resources [25]. The above views alert librarians that, there is an urgent need of library support services and online information search skills. It indicated that, orientation is the need of the hour on type of library resources available in print and electronic form [26]. It is timely suggested for librarians that they should give orientation to users on types of resources available on internet and training on information search strategy [27].

Changing ICT environment has affected the information seeking behavior for majority of the users. It is clear that the information-seeking behavior was affected by the changing ICT environment. Library awareness service is essential in this regard. Library should start information literacy programmes [28]. It is important for the library to spread awareness among users time to time about different forms and types of sources developed by the library.

After observation the study libraries suggested to adopt the following methods for resolving these problems:

1. ***Current Awareness Services*** **(CAS)** should be provided by Library for the users with latest techniques, due to innovation of information and Communication.
   CAS helps the user in the following ways:
   - Keeps well informed
   - Helps the user in scanning the literature
   - Saves time
   - Promotes and supports library Service
2. ***Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI):*** SDI service also should be provided by the library for the users with latest techniques [29].
3. ***Library Orientation:*** Library Orientation Programme should be conducted for the

benefits of the clients/users from the libraries time to time.

4. ***Information Consolidation and Repackaging Service:*** Information consolidation and repackaging service should be provided by the libraries for their users because information consolidation and repackaging process to repackage the analysis of consolidated information in that form is more suitable and usable for library users. Repackaging of information in digital form or electronic form such as CD, DVD and Floppy etc [30].

Marketing of Library Products

Information consolidation and repackaging service should be provided by the libraries for their users because marketing of library products can help librarians in achieving their objectives of improving access to their clients and reaching financial self-sufficiency and improved satisfaction of the users.

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