



## Information seeking behaviour of Faculty members and research scholar of Agricultural University Libraries in Bangladesh

Md. Enamul Haque<sup>1</sup>, Md. Azizur Rahman<sup>2</sup> and Md Ajimuddin SK<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Library Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup>Department of LIS, University of Kalyani, Nadia, WB, India  
bdenam@yahoo.com

Available online at: [www.isca.in](http://www.isca.in), [www.isca.me](http://www.isca.me)

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### Abstract

*The present study will provide the results of information seeking behaviour of the faculty members and research scholars of Agricultural Universities in Bangladesh. Data has been collected for the study by using a set of questionnaire from three Agricultural Universities in Bangladesh. Results shows that most of respondents (Mean 3.06 and rank 1) stated their method of seeking information by discussion of library catalogue and consulting the experts in the field of related disciplines (rank-2), librarians / library staff (rank-3). Secondly most of the respondents seek information for current information, research and writing articles. Sixty four percent faculty member access more documents was references from priodicals and text books. All of the faculty members and research scholars read and write library materials in English and Bengali. Most of the respondents faced problems while they seeking information i.e. inadequate library resources and inadequate physical facilities etc.*

**Keywords:** Information, seeking behavior, Bangladesh Agricultural University.

### Introduction

Information is a valuable resources for the development of a society as well as the country. So the modern society always depends on the effective and efficient use of information. Agricultural information is one of the powerful media which have made a great impact on social change and development particularly in agriculture society like Bangladesh. Agriculture is the main stay of Bangladesh. As such the role of agricultural education in this country is a prime accelerator for the economic development. So, the present study is related with information seeking behavior by faculty members and research scholars of Agricultural Universities in Bangladesh.

Karl Jaspers<sup>1</sup> describes the university as “a community of scholars and students engaged in the tasks of seeking truth. The development of a country depends largely on its research output. Universities are the highest academic institutions in a country, which produce intelligent, trained manpower, scientists and research scholars and help to broaden the boundary of knowledge. The quality of education and research depends to a great extent on a quality library. Libraries are the centres of learning and the treasure houses of knowledge. The university library is the focal point for those who seek information on diverse subjects, for those who wish to improve and update their knowledge and education for the purpose of teaching, research and other related works.

The basic need for information is considered as a fundamental need like other basic human needs. Information seekers seek

information on the basis of their requirements. So information seeking behavior is purposive in nature and which fulfill the particular goal of individuals. The information seeking behavior of the user as well as their information needs i.e. the information which are being sought may vary according to the age, sex, education, profession etc. So, the function of the libraries and the information seeking behaviour of the users are to be correlated very carefully.

**Related Studies:** In the past there are so many works have been done on the information seeking behavior of the faculty members. So for the present study some research papers have been consulted as review of literature. Some of which are as follows:

Patitungkho, K. and Deshpande, N.J. (2005), in their paper describes a study conducted among a sample of 303 faculty members of Rajabhat Universities in Bangkok. They use questionnaire method to know the information seeking behaviour, kind of information they use, what purposes they seek and what technology they use. They also want to know which language they prefer to read. Finally, they find out what type of problems they face to seek information. The results from their survey out of 137, 53% respondents stated their method of seeking information by consulting of knowledgeable person in the field. Out of 213 respondents 82% seek information for preparing lectures, 44% users used books, reference books and text books. The users also use internet (Google, Yahoo etc.), CD-ROM search, E-mail, Scanner, Fax machine, Telephone etc. for their needs. Seventy four percent (74%) of respondents use

Thais 24% use English language for reading materials. The problems they face in seeking information are incomplete information, lack of information, lack of time etc. Their suggestions are to acquire printed and electronic journals in both Thai and English language. They also suggest to use speedy internet, introducing reference books, audio visual materials, indexing and abstracting journals etc. to improve their library facilities and services.

Suriya, Sangeetha and Nambi<sup>3</sup> carried out a research work on “Information seeking behaviour of Faculty Members from Government Arts Colleges in Cuddalore District”. The purpose of their study was to investigate, how faculty members seek information from the library. It mentions that most of the library several times a week to meet their information needs. Regarding the type of search made by the respondents the majority of the respondents 91 (56.87%) made their search by subject.

Fidzani, in his study he shows that the information seeking behavior of the students of universities of Bostwana. For data collection a set of questionnaires were distributed among the 144 students of education, humanities, science and social

sciences departments. The findings indicated that they need help in the use of library resources to satisfy their need. They mostly use journals, reference books and textbooks for their course work and research and least consulted sources are printed abstracts and indexes. So this study is very much helpful for creating awareness about the available library resources and services.

**Goals of the Study:** At present there are four Agricultural Universities in Bangladesh, out of four only three Agricultural Universities has been taken in consideration for the study. They are (i) Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) (ii) Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU) and (iii) Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMRAU). So the objectives of the present study are as follows. i. To identify the information seeking behaviour of the faculty members and research scholars, ii. To identify what kind of information they use for seeking information, iii. To study the purpose of information seeking by users, iv. To explore the use of information technology, v. To identify the language of reading materials; and vi. To identify the problems of the users while they seeking information.

**Table-1**  
**Response from Faculty Members and Research Scholars**

Faculty	Total no of Teachers	Total no of Research scholars	No. of question distribution	No. of response received	Percentage responses
<b>BAU</b>					
Fac. of Vet. Sc.	103	025	089	072	80.89
Fac. of Agril. Sc.	208	150	317	269	84.85
Fac. of Animal Husb.	058	015	055	048	87.27
Fac. of Agril. Econ.	065	013	065	057	87.69
Fac. of Agril. Engg.	071	030	085	072	86.76
Fac. of Fisheries	056	021	068	059	86.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>84.85</b>
<b>SAU</b>					
Fac. of Agril. Sc.	122	-	100	095	95.00
Fac. of Agril. Buss.	012	-	010	006	60.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>91.82</b>
<b>BSMRAU</b>					
Fac. of Agril. Sc.	068	120	160	116	72.5
Fac. of Animal Sc.	002	-	002	02	100
Fac. of Fisheries	002	-	002	02	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>072</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>73.17</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>83.65</b>

**Need for the study:** Faculties contribute to the attainment of the broad objectives of the university study-teaching- research and community service. Faculties help the students and disseminate their knowledge through research and publication. Hence, the research problem under the present study is concerned with information seeking behaviour by faculty members and research scholars of agricultural sector in Bangladesh.

With the development of Information and Communication Technology there is a huge positive impact on information seeking behavior and access to information. The work has direct relevancy to the present study. So Library and information science professionals always need to know about the information seeking criteria, information need of the users, designing and development of new information systems on the basis of the users requirement and planning for the existing system and services. So it is hoped that the present study will be of great use to the library personnel, the university authorities, the planners and educationists and also to the government. Therefore, this project will create positive impact in advance studies and the researchers in agriculture and allied disciplines.

**Methodology**

The present study makes an attempt to investigate the information needs and information seeking behaviour of user considering full time faculty members and research scholars of three university libraries with regards to information needs; information seeking behaviour; use of information sources and

use of libraries and extent to which the agricultural library is able to fulfil the information needs of various categories of agriculturists.

A set of structured questionnaire was distributed personally for data collection through e-mail among the agricultural scientists of three agricultural Universities in Bangladesh. Total of 954 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 798 questionnaires were received back (83.65%). The respondents are the faculty members and research scholars of Veterinary Science, Agriculture, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Business, Animal Husbandry, Rural Sociology, Rural Industries, and Fisheries Faculty (Table-1).

**Analysis:** The collected data were analysed by using MS-Excel for the actual result for description of frequencies, percentage, means, WI scale and Ranks etc. Four-point scale and seventeen-point scale were developed.

**Results and Discussion**

**Method of information seeking:** To find out information seeking behaviour adopted by the users, they were asked to rank ten sources of information which they generally use to solve their day-to-day needs while working on articles or research work. Table-2 depicts the order of references they give to various sources of information. The order of preference was arrived at by calculating weighted index on a four point scale, the top most preference getting the 1<sup>st</sup> rank and last preferred source the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Table-2**  
**Method of Information Seeking (Three Universities)**

Purpose	Respondents											
	Prof.		Assoc. Prof.		Asst. Prof.		Lecturer		Research Scholar		Mean	Rank
	WI	Rank	WI	Rank	WI	Rank	WI	Rank	WI	Rank		
Library catalogue and other bibliographical tools	3.17	1	2.91	1	2.95	1	2.81	1	3.44	1	3.06	1
Librarian / Library staff of you library	2.54	6	2.77	4	2.77	3	2.61	2	2.79	3	2.70	3
Librarian / Library staff of other library (s)	2.48	8	2.40	7	2.45	8	2.21	6	2.60	6	2.43	6
Experts in the field of related disciplines	2.78	4	2.90	2	2.85	2	2.43	4	2.86	2	2.76	2
Information / Documentation Centers	2.86	2	2.89	3	2.62	5	2.45	3	2.63	5	2.69	4
Colleagues	2.82	3	2.67	5	2.61	6	2.26	9	2.67	4	2.61	5
Mass media	2.56	5	2.43	6	2.38	9	2.13	7	2.29	10	2.36	7
Enquiry over telephone	2.50	7	2.33	8	2.46	7	2.12	8	2.38	8	2.35	8
Direct purchasing	2.32	9	2.28	10	2.71	4	1.93	9	2.33	9	2.31	9
Archives and Records Centers	2.31	10	2.29	9	2.31	10	1.81	10	2.43	7	2.23	10

**Table-3**

**Purpose of seeking information (Three Universities)**

Purpose	Respondents											
	Prof.		Assoc. Prof.		Asst. Prof.		Lecturer		Research Scholar		Mean	Rank
	WI	Rank	WI	Rank	WI	Rank	WI	Rank	WI	Rank		
Current information	15.72	1	12.02	1	11.05	1	11.56	1	15.45	2	13.16	1
Research	14.27	2	10.79	11	9.48	5	10.00	2	15.61	1	12.03	2
Writing articles	11.95	4	10.92	10	9.53	4	9.53	4	12.91	5	10.97	3
Locating the problem specific for research purpose	10.27	12	11.85	3	8.88	8	9.14	6	13.34	4	10.70	4
Statistical data	10.30	11	11.87	2	10.11	3	8.94	8	12.21	6	10.69	5
On-line access to world agril. inf.	10.95	7	11.09	8	7.65	14	9.71	3	13.57	3	10.59	6
Preparing Class notes	13.46	3	10.45	13	8.51	10	8.67	9	11.59	8	10.54	7
Searching specific items	10.61	10	11.42	6	10.31	2	8.12	12	10.56	12	10.20	8
Searching the library catalogue	10.73	8	11.55	4	8.58	9	9.40	©	10.06	13	10.06	9
Only reference of the article	11.42	6	11.22	7	7.00	16	8.63	10	10.70	11	9.79	10
Information about soil	9.42	13	10.55	12	9.20	6	7.61	14	12.08	7	9.77	11
Searching indexing and abstracting journals	10.68	9	9.67	15	9.14	7	8.02	13	11.02	10	9.71	12
Retrospective information	11.80	5	8.52	16	8.33	11	7.30	15	11.44	9	9.48	13
Information about climate	8.71	16	11.00	9	7.92	13	8.62	11	9.75	14	9.20	14
Framing the hypothesis	8.91	15	10.34	14	8.05	12	9.13	7	8.40	17	8.97	15
Preparing subject bibliography	9.24	14	11.43	5	7.52	15	6.98	16	8.43	16	8.72	16
Others	6.33	17	8.40	17	6.15	17	6.36	17	8.57	15	7.16	17

Note: WI is calculated on a 17 point scale.

According to their preference the first three are discussion of library catalogue and other bibliographical tools, discussion of experts in the field of related disciplines and librarian / library staff of your libraries respectively.

In order to find out how the teachers and research scholars use their required information. These responses are tabulated and rank order of the various purposes is shown in the Table – 3. The rank order is derived on the basis of weighted index calculated on a 17 point scale, the most preference getting the first rank and least preferred source the last. Table – 3 shows that the respondent use the library for current information followed by research, writing articles, locating the problems specific for research purpose and statistical data etc. Thus, information so obtained from the library is heavily used for the purpose of current information (rank – 1), research (rank – 2),

writing articles (rank – 3), locating the problems specific for research purpose (rank – 4), statistical data (rank – 5) online access to world agricultural information (rank – 6), preparing class notes (rank – 7), while it is less used for the purpose of fraing the hypothesis, preparing subject bibliographies and other purposes (Table – 3).

**Type of information:** Faculty members and research scholars were asked what kind of source information they used to seek information (Table – 4). On the basis of their response periodicals / journals are the mostly used sources for them (64.05% and rank 1). Near fifty eight percent of respondents use text books (57.92%), followed by Telephone / e-mail (56.49%), reference books (56.21%), TV / Radio programmes (51.64%), Dissertation / Thesis (51.50%) to Handbooks (15.50%) respectively.

**Table-4**

Use of information sources for specific information, by Rank

Sources	Respondents		Rank
	No.	%	
Periodicals / Journals	449	64.05	1
Books (Tex)	406	57.92	2
Telephone / e-mail	396	56.49	3
Books (reference)	394	56.21	4
T.V / Radio Programmes	362	51.64	5
Dissertation / Thesis	361	51.50	6
Library Catalogue	340	48.50	7
Maps / Atlases	280	39.94	8
Government Publications	259	36.95	9
Conversation with professional	258	36.80	10
Archival source	218	31.10	11
Computerized database	207	29.83	12
FAO publications	171	24.39	13
Census publications	167	23.82	14
Interview with field workers	155	22.11	15
Indexing / abstracting journals	146	20.83	16
Trade fairs / exhibition	143	20.40	17
Conference proceedings	126	17.94	18
Newspaper clipping files	116	16.55	19
Bibliographies	114	16.26	20
Handbooks	109	15.50	21

**Language use:** In Bangladesh, English language is the second popular and official language. After Bengali and English, Arabic is the third most popular language in Bangladesh. Arabic is used for only the religious purpose. Other languages are not used or popular in Bangladeshi peoples. Faculty members have to learn other languages (except Bengali and English) when they visit foreign countries for the purpose of their professional training or to earn research degree.

Among the faculty members of BAU are able to write 31 (6.46%) in Arabic, 20 (4.17%) in Japanese, 8 (1.17%) in Malaysian, 8 (1.67%) in Urdu, 7 (1.46%) in German, 6 (1.25%) respectively.

The faculty members of SAU are able to write 12 (11.88%) in Arabic, 6 (5.94%) in Hindi, 1 (0.99%) in Japanese and Korean languages respectively.

Among the faculty member of BSMRAU are able to write 4 (3.33%) in Japanese, 3 (2.50%) in Arabic, 2 (1.67%) in German and 1 (0.80%) in Hungarian language respectively.

Table-5 shows that out of 798 respondents 100% users are able to read and write Bengali and English. Their library collections were almost the same languages.

**Table-5**  
**Language of Writing**

University	Language	Respondents					Total	%
		Prof.	Assoc. Prof.	Asst. Prof.	Lecturer	Research Scholar		
BAU	Bengali	170	30	80	20	180	480	100
	English	170	30	80	20	180	480	100
	Hindi	04	-	-	01	-	05	1.04
	Arabic	23	03	04	01	-	31	6.46
	Korean	-	04	01	-	-	05	1.04
	German	07	-	-	-	-	07	1.46
	Romanian	01	-	-	-	-	01	0.21
	Japanese	14	05	01	-	-	20	4.17
	Malaysian	01	01	01	05	-	08	1.67
	Urdu	08	-	-	-	-	08	1.67
	Russian	05	-	-	01	-	06	1.25
	Dutch	01	-	-	-	-	01	0.21
SAU	Bengali	34	18	17	32	-	101	100
	English	34	18	17	32	-	101	100
	Hindi	03	01	01	01	-	06	5.94
	Arabic	07	03	01	01	-	12	11.88
	Korean	-	01	-	-	-	01	0.99
	Japanese	01	-	-	-	-	01	0.99
BSMRAU	Bengali	07	11	13	13	76	120	100
	English	07	11	13	13	76	120	100
	Arabic	01	-	01	01	-	03	2.5
	German	01	01	-	-	-	02	1.67
	Japanese	01	02	01	-	-	04	3.33
	Hungarian	-	-	01	-	-	01	0.8

The respondents were requested to notice briefly what kind of problems / difficulties they faced. Table – 6 shows that most of faculty members out of 798, 687 persons faced inadequate library resources, secondly they faced inadequate of physical facilities (684), working hours of the library are not sufficient, lack of modern communication gadgets, the library catalogue are not up-to-date respectively and ranked 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Discussion:** They feels problems while they get incomplete information, lack of resources etc. They faced problems while they seeking information are unavailable periodicals, inadequate

library resources, lack of text books and e-mail facilities. To better informed about the available collection, orientation programs are necessary. Hence, it is suggested that the training programme for user education should be started very soon. The training programs should cover i. Introduction to library; ii. Library services and facility iii. Methods and tools for searching resources; iv. How to use the electronic resources etc. Library and information professionals should use information and communication technology to give the better library services as well as to satisfy the information need of the faculty members, research scholars and students.

**Table-6**  
**Problems with seeking information (Three Universities)**

Kind of difficulty	Level of difficulties								Total	Rank
	No difficulties		Very little difficulties		Considerable difficulties		Extreme difficulties			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Lack of time to look for or read information	252	35.95	307	43.79	073	10.41	21	3.00	653	8
Inadequate library resources	070	9.99	286	40.80	248	35.38	82	11.70	687	1
Information scattered in many sources	084	11.98	344	49.07	178	25.39	33	4.71	639	15
Library staff is not highly expert to locate information	119	16.98	384	54.78	120	17.12	40	5.71	663	6
Information not readily available	087	12.41	304	43.37	199	28.39	55	7.85	645	12
Lack of modern communication gadgets	059	8.42	070	9.99	213	30.39	327	46.65	669	4
Inadequate library services	079	11.27	349	49.79	162	23.11	43	6.13	633	16
Lack of reprographic facilities	064	9.13	077	10.98	311	44.37	152	21.68	604	19
Not aware of the availability of library material	234	33.38	244	43.81	103	14.69	27	3.85	608	18
The library materials are disorganized	138	19.69	367	52.35	113	16.12	34	4.85	652	9
The library catalogue are not up-to-date	373	53.21	162	23.11	078	11.13	51	7.28	664	5
Working hours of the library are not sufficient	437	62.34	124	17.69	078	11.13	40	5.71	679	3
Inadequate of physical facilities	294	41.94	185	26.39	145	20.68	60	8.56	684	2
Lack of transportation facilities from the library to the destinations	317	45.22	132	18.83	116	16.55	58	8.27	623	17
Short of trained library staff to provide service	098	13.98	379	54.07	123	17.55	48	6.85	647	11
Language barrier for speedy library services	497	70.61	074	10.56	045	6.42	28	3.99	642	14
Lack of knowledge to use the information	385	54.92	181	25.82	060	8.56	26	3.71	652	9
Inadequate budget for collecting library materials	064	9.13	043	6.13	182	25.96	369	52.64	658	7
Library staff is disinterested to help the users' to use the library resources	161	22.97	395	56.35	062	8.84	26	3.71	644	13
Lack of users education programme	086	12.27	130	18.54	320	45.65	112	15.98	648	10

**Conclusions**

The study indicates that the agricultural scientists are much diversified in the information they seek, the sources they access and the use they make of the information. The success of a library and information centre always depends on the good collection. The books and other materials will be selected on the basis of the requirement of the users need. So the library and information professionals should aware about the information need seeking behavior of the users.

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