A Study on User Information Seeking Behavior: With reference to The College of Horticluture, Chinalataripi Campus- Dr. YSR Horticultural University-Andhra Pradesh

Vullamparthi Subodh[1], Dr. B. R. Doraswamy Naick[2]
[1] *Junior Library Assistant College of Horticulture, Anantharajupeta Dr YSR HorticulturalUniversity Annamayya District Andhra Pradesh*
[2]*Professor & HOD Department of Library and Information Science JNTU- Kakinada*
doi.org/10.64643/IJIRTV12I8-190466-459

***Abstract*—This study investigates the information seeking behavior of users at Dr. YSR Horticultural University, Andhra Pradesh. A structured questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents, representing students, research scholars, faculty, and non-teaching staff. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to examine user distribution, preferred sources, barriers, satisfaction, and faculty–specific behavior. Results revealed that undergraduate students formed the largest user group, while information seeking was dominated by internet and general web tools. Significant associations were found between user category and preferred information source ($\chi^2 = 33.80$, $p < .01$). Major barriers included slow internet, lack of time, and difficulty using databases. Faculty demonstrated significantly higher database usage than other users. Overall satisfaction was moderate, with students reporting lower levels than faculty and researchers. The findings highlight the need to strengthen ICT infrastructure, promote database awareness, and institutionalize information-literacy training.**

***Index Terms*—Information Seeking Behavior, Academic Libraries, Digital Resources, Information Literacy, Horticultural University, User Behavior, Library Services.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Information has become a strategic resource for teaching, research, and decision-making in higher education. Academic libraries therefore play a central role in providing access to reliable knowledge, supporting learning environments, and facilitating scholarly communication. In specialized institutions such as horticultural universities, users require timely and accurate information related to scientific research, extension activities, and technological advancements. Understanding how users locate, evaluate, and utilize information is essential for designing effective, user-centred library services.

Information seeking behavior refers to the set of actions individuals undertake when they perceive an information need and attempt to satisfy it. These actions include identifying appropriate sources, searching for information, evaluating credibility, and applying retrieved knowledge in academic or professional tasks. The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed information behavior. While libraries continue to provide traditional print collections, users often access information through search engines, databases, institutional repositories, and other digital platforms. However, increased access also creates challenges such as information overload, varying digital competencies, and unequal awareness of scholarly tools.

In universities, different user groups display distinct information behaviors. Students may rely heavily on quick online searches, while research scholars and faculty members tend to require specialized, peer-reviewed resources. Barriers such as poor connectivity, lack of training, and unfamiliarity with databases can restrict effective access to academic

information. Consequently, studying information seeking behavior provides insights that can guide improvements in library infrastructure, training programs, and resource development.

Dr. YSR Horticultural University serves a heterogeneous academic community, including undergraduate and postgraduate students, research scholars, faculty, and non-teaching staff. Despite the availability of both print and digital resources, informal observations suggested variations in usage patterns, awareness levels, and satisfaction. However, limited empirical work has examined these aspects within the context of horticultural education.

The present study was undertaken to analyse information seeking behavior among users of the College of Horticulture, Chinalataripi Campus of Dr.YSR Horticultural University. Specifically, the study focused on user distribution, preferred information sources, barriers, satisfaction, and differences between faculty and non-faculty users. The statistical results revealed several important patterns: undergraduate students constituted the largest group of users; internet-based searching dominated user behavior; barriers were primarily technology-related; and satisfaction levels differed across groups. Importantly, significant relationships were found between user category and preferred information source, and faculty members demonstrated higher reliance on scholarly databases compared to other users.

These findings underscore the importance of strengthening ICT infrastructure, expanding awareness of digital resources, and implementing structured information-literacy initiatives. By examining user behavior in a systematic manner, the study contributes evidence that can support planning, resource allocation, and service enhancement in academic libraries serving agricultural and horticultural communities.

1.1 Need for the study

The study seeks to understand how different categories of users search for, access, and utilize information resources in both physical and digital library environments. It aims to identify gaps between the information resources made available by libraries and the actual patterns of their usage by users. The research also examines various barriers—technological, organizational, or user-related—that affect effective information access and retrieval. Further, it evaluates the level of user satisfaction with existing library and digital services. Finally, the study offers practical and actionable recommendations to enhance information support systems and improve overall service effectiveness.

1.2 Objectives

The Objectives of the study are as following:

1. To analyse the information-seeking behaviour of users at Dr. YSR Horticultural University.
2. To examine the preferred information sources among different user categories.
3. To identify the major barriers affecting access to and retrieval of information.
4. To assess the level of user satisfaction with library and information services.
5. To compare the information-seeking behaviour of faculty and non-faculty users using a dedicated analytical tool.

1.3 Limitations of the study

Although the study provides meaningful insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged:

1. Sampling limitation: The sample size was restricted to 100 respondents within the college of Horticulture, Chinalataripi Campus of Dr. YSR Horticultural University and may not fully represent the entire university population.
2. Convenience sampling: Respondents were selected based on accessibility, which may introduce response bias.
3. Self-reported data: Results rely on users' perceptions, which may not always reflect actual usage behavior.
4. Single-institution focus: Findings are specific to Dr. YSR Horticultural University and cannot be widely generalized without caution.
5. Limited variables: Only selected behavioral and technological factors were examined; other influences may exist.

II. EARLIER STUDIES

The INFLIBNET chapter explains concepts of library use and user studies, focusing on data-driven evaluation of services. It presents methods such as surveys, observation, and interviews to measure satisfaction and effectiveness, supporting evidence-

based planning for collections and services. The LIS Edu Network article summarizes fundamental concepts of information needs and seeking, along with key theoretical models. It explains how factors such as motivation, context, access, and skills shape user behavior, particularly in academic environments, and highlights the relevance of guided information literacy initiatives. Studies in Library Philosophy and Practice emphasize academic users' growing dependence on digital resources. They show that search strategies, awareness levels, and institutional support significantly affect effective information use. The research stresses continual training and improved technological infrastructure within academic libraries. The amoghvarta study presents a comprehensive overview of evolving information-seeking patterns in libraries. It notes the shift toward user-centric digital services, continuous feedback mechanisms, and integration of technology. The study reinforces libraries' roles as proactive facilitators of information access and learning.

Kuhlthau (1991) proposed the Information Search Process model, showing that users move through stages of uncertainty, exploration, and formulation. The study emphasizes emotional and cognitive aspects, underscoring the need for guidance and structured support during searching, especially for students and novice users.

Kumar (2004) examined user behavior in academic libraries and found different expectations among students and faculty. The study revealed increasing reliance on reference services and highlighted the importance of user orientation, training, and better resource organization to improve access and satisfaction.

Davies (2007) reviewed doctors' information-seeking practices and found strong dependence on colleagues and trusted medical journals. Time pressure, inadequate search skills, and limited access hindered broader information use. The review suggested enhanced training and better-designed clinical information systems to support decision-making.

Babariya (2009) studied engineering faculty information needs and identified strong dependence on journals, conference papers, and digital resources. Limited awareness of electronic databases and inadequate ICT infrastructure emerged as major barriers. The study recommended systematic training programs and improved access to online resources.

The IJRG study (2016) discussed changing information-seeking trends in libraries. It highlighted the shift from traditional print to electronic resources and emphasized that user attitudes, technological awareness, and training significantly influence search effectiveness. The paper advocated regular user education and continuous evaluation of services.

Carvalho and Mandrekar (2021) examined pandemic-era information behavior and found that libraries rapidly transitioned to online services. Remote access tools, virtual reference support, and digital collections became central. The pandemic accelerated users' digital adoption and reshaped expectations for flexible, technology-driven services.

Humbhi et al. (2022) explored undergraduate students in remote areas and reported reliance on mobile internet and informal sources. However, awareness of scholarly databases remained low. The study highlighted infrastructure limitations and recommended information literacy training and improved connectivity to support equitable access.

Mane (2025) investigated library science students' information needs in the digital era. Students preferred online resources but faced challenges evaluating credibility and navigating databases. The study recommended embedding structured information literacy training into academic curricula to enhance effective research behavior.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 100 respondents, selected using convenient sampling. The sample comprised:

User Category	Number of Respondents
UG Students	44
PG Students	24
Research Scholars	12
Faculty	15
Non-Teaching Staff	5
Total	100

The questionnaire covered demographic data, preferred sources, barriers, satisfaction, and faculty-specific information behavior items measured on a Likert scale.

Data were analyzed using:

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequencies and percentages were employed to summarize demographic and categorical variables. Measures such as mean and standard deviation were used to understand central tendency and variability. To examine associations between variables, the chi-square test was applied. An independent samples t-test was used to compare faculty and non-faculty groups using a dedicated analytical tool. Where necessary, Spearman's rank correlation was employed to determine the relationship between relevant variables.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 User Distribution

User Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
UG Students	44	44
PG Students	24	24
Faculty	15	15
Research Scholars	12	12
Non-Teaching Staff	5	5
Total	100	100

Test	χ^2	df	p-value
Goodness-of-Fit	45.3	4	< .001

Interpretation

The chi-square goodness-of-fit test shows a statistically significant deviation from an equal distribution of users across categories, $\chi^2(4) = 45.30$, $p < .001$. This indicates that library usage is not evenly distributed. The majority of users are UG students (44%), followed by PG students (24%), showing that the library primarily serves the student community, with comparatively lower engagement from faculty, research scholars, and non-teaching staff.

4.2 Cross-Tab Analysis

Category	Internet	Library	Databases	Mixed	Total
UG Students	23	7	5	9	44
PG Students	13	9	2	0	24
Research Scholars	3	1	5	3	12
Faculty	0	3	6	6	15
Non-Teaching	2	1	0	2	5
Total	41	21	18	20	100

Interpretation

The analysis shows that undergraduate students rely predominantly on internet-based sources for their information needs. Postgraduate students demonstrate a more balanced pattern, using both the internet and library resources. Research scholars and faculty members display a strong preference for academic databases, reflecting their need for specialized and peer-reviewed information. Non-teaching staff, on the other hand, tend to access information mainly through the internet or a combination of mixed sources whenever required.

4.3 Preferred Information Sources

Information Source	Predominant Users	Overall Trend
Internet/Google	UG & PG students	Highest usage
Academic Databases	Faculty & Research Scholars	Selective, specialized use
General Web Search Tools	Mainly students	Still heavily relied upon

Test	χ^2	df	p-value

Test of Association	33.8	12	< .01

Interpretation

The chi-square test indicates a significant association between user category and preferred information source, $\chi^2 = 33.80$, $p < .01$.

Faculty and research scholars tend to rely more on academic databases, whereas students predominantly use Internet search engines and Google. This suggests that information-seeking behaviour varies meaningfully across user groups, reflecting differences in academic needs and information literacy levels.

4.4 Barriers to Information Access

Barrier	Frequency	Percentage
Slow Internet	32	32.00%
Lack of Time	23	23.00%
Database Difficulty	20	20.00%
Lack of Awareness	19	19.00%
Limited Library Hours	6	6.00%

Statistic	Value
χ^2	37.79
p-value	0.0016

Interpretation:

The results indicate that users encountered several major barriers while seeking information. Slow internet connectivity emerged as the most common problem, reported by 32 percent of respondents. Lack of time was the second major barrier, affecting 23 percent of users. Difficulty in using databases was experienced by 20 percent of respondents, while 19 percent reported lack of awareness about available information resources. Only 6 percent indicated that limited library working hours posed a problem. The association between user category and type of barrier was found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2 = 37.79$, $p < 0.01$, indicating that different groups of users experience different kinds of barriers in accessing information.

4.5 Satisfaction Levels

Category	Mean Satisfaction
UG Students	3.07
PG Students	3.71
Research Scholars	4.08
Faculty	4.07
Non-Teaching Staff	3.6
Overall Mean	3.52

The overall satisfaction score among users was 3.52 on a five-point scale, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction with library services. The highest satisfaction levels were reported by research scholars (mean = 4.08) and faculty members (mean = 4.07), reflecting their comparatively positive experience with available resources and services. In contrast, undergraduate students recorded the lowest satisfaction score (mean = 3.07), suggesting unmet expectations or challenges in accessing information effectively. Overall, users expressed appreciation for library staff support and the physical infrastructure provided; however, they also indicated a clear need for stronger digital services and enhanced online resource accessibility.

4.6 Faculty Information Behavior Tool (FIBS)

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Database Usage	Faculty	3.93	0.88	4.19	0.0004	Significant Faculty use databases more
	Non-Faculty	2.86	0.94			
Information Seeking Behavior	Faculty	3.67	0.90	0.93	0.364	Not significant Similar behavior
	Non-Faculty	3.42	0.91			
ICT Confidence	Faculty	3.53	1.18	−0.24	0.814	Not significant Comparable confidence
	Non-Faculty	3.61	1.06			

The comparison between faculty and non-faculty users revealed distinct patterns in information behavior. Faculty members demonstrated significantly higher use of academic databases ($p < 0.01$), indicating stronger engagement with scholarly and peer-reviewed resources. However, no significant differences were observed between the two groups in terms of overall ICT confidence. These findings suggest that while faculty depend more heavily on scholarly databases, other user groups may require additional awareness and guidance to make fuller use of licensed academic resources.

V. FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of user responses, the study identified clear patterns in information-seeking behavior, resource usage, and service preferences among different user groups. The findings highlight key gaps between available resources and actual utilization, along with barriers affecting access and retrieval. Overall, the results provide valuable insights into user satisfaction levels and areas requiring improvement in library and digital information services.

- ❖ Students constitute the primary user group.
  - o Undergraduate students accounted for the largest proportion of library users, indicating that the library functions predominantly as a student-support system.
- ❖ Internet use dominates information behavior.
  - o Most users preferred internet and search engines over traditional library resources and specialized databases.
- ❖ Faculty and research scholars rely more on scholarly databases
  - o Statistical results confirmed significant variation in preferred sources across user categories, especially higher database usage among faculty and researchers.
- ❖ Barriers are primarily technology-related.
  - o Slow internet connectivity, lack of time, and difficulty using databases were the most frequently reported challenges.
- ❖ Awareness gaps restrict effective resource utilization.
  - o Many users were unaware of institutional repositories, subscribed e-journals, and advanced search tools.
- ❖ Satisfaction levels differ among user groups.
  - o Research scholars and faculty members reported higher satisfaction, while undergraduate students expressed comparatively lower satisfaction.
- ❖ Training needs are evident.
  - o Users facing database difficulty and lack of awareness indicated the need for systematic information-literacy and digital-skills programs.
- ❖ Faculty Information Behavior shows unique patterns.
  - o Faculty members demonstrated significantly higher engagement with academic databases but similar ICT confidence levels compared to other users.
- ❖ Libraries remain important, but digital support must improve.
  - o Users valued library staff support and physical facilities; however, digital infrastructure and e-resource promotion require further strengthening.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the major findings of the study, it is evident that user behavior, access barriers, and varying satisfaction levels require focused and practical interventions. The following suggestions are proposed to enhance effective utilization of library resources and improve overall information support services. These recommendations aim to address user diversity, technological challenges, and awareness gaps, Strengthen ICT infrastructure and campus internet connectivity.

- ❖ Since students, particularly undergraduates, form the largest user group, libraries should strengthen student-centric services and learning support initiatives.
- ❖ To balance the dominance of internet use, libraries should actively promote scholarly databases and curated digital resources through orientation and outreach programmes.
- ❖ Technology-related barriers can be reduced by improving internet infrastructure and simplifying database access interfaces.
- ❖ Regular awareness programmes should be conducted to familiarize users with institutional

repositories, subscribed e-journals, and advanced search tools.

- ❖ Targeted information literacy and digital skills training should be organized, especially for undergraduate students and non-faculty users.
- ❖ Faculty and research scholars' advanced information behaviour can be leveraged through customized research support and database training sessions.
- ❖ Libraries should enhance digital service delivery while maintaining strong staff support and well-maintained physical facilities to ensure balanced service development.

VII. FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Future research can meaningfully extend the present study by broadening its scope, depth, and methodological approach. Comparative studies across multiple agricultural and horticultural universities would help identify institutional similarities and differences in information behaviour, enabling the formulation of region-specific or discipline-oriented library strategies. Longitudinal studies could track changes in user information behaviour over time, especially in response to technological advancements, policy reforms, or shifts toward digital learning environments.

Further, qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, and observations can provide richer insights into users' perceptions, motivations, and challenges that may not be fully captured through quantitative surveys. Evaluating the impact of information-literacy and digital-skills training programmes would help assess their effectiveness in improving users' research competence and academic performance. Additionally, examining budget allocation patterns, licensing models, and institutional policies can reveal structural factors influencing e-resource usage. Finally, exploring AI-assisted search tools and digital learning platforms would offer valuable insights into emerging technologies shaping the future of academic research and library services.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that users at Dr. YSR Horticultural University actively seek information but rely predominantly on internet-based tools rather than structured academic databases. Significant behavioral differences exist among user groups, particularly between students and faculty. Improving digital infrastructure, increasing awareness of available resources, and institutionalizing information literacy initiatives will significantly enhance academic performance and research productivity. The study contributes valuable evidence for strengthening user-centered library services in specialized agricultural institutions.

REFERENCES

[1] Babariya, N. A. (2009). Information seeking behavior: Study of teaching staff of R. K. College of Engineering & Technology (MLIS dissertation). Indira Gandhi National Open University.

[2] Carvalho e Rodrigues, M., & Mandrekar, B. (2021). Role of the libraries in providing information and changing information-seeking behavior of students and faculties during the pandemic: A study. Library Philosophy and Practice.

[3] https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/6350

[4] Davies, K. (2007). The information-seeking behavior of doctors: A review of the evidence. Health Information and Libraries Journal, 24(2), 78–94.

[5] Editor. (2016). Information seeking behavior (IJRG16 C10 144).

[6] Humbhi, S., Tareen, S. A., & Humbhi, A. (2022). Information needs and information-seeking behavior of undergraduate students: A remote area perspective. Library Philosophy & Practice, 1–23.

[7] INFLIBNET. (n.d.). Library use and user studies.

[8] https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/lisp15/chapter/library-use-and-user-studies/

[9] Kuhlthau, C. C. (1991). Inside the search process: Information seeking from the user's perspective. Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 42(5), 361–371.

[10] Kumar, P. S. G. (2004). Information seeking behavior of library users (pp. 60–68). Delhi, India: B. R. Publishing.

[11] LIS Edu Network. (n.d.). Information seeking.

[12] https://www.lisedunetwork.com/information-seeking/
[13] Library Philosophy & Practice. (n.d.). Library use and user studies.
[14] Mane, V. S. (2025). Information need and information-seeking behaviour of library science students in the modern era. ResearchGate.
[15] AMOGHVARTA. (n.d.). Information seeking behavior in libraries: A comprehensive study. Amoghvarta Journal, 5(1).