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Assessment of Information Needs of Students Regarding Associated Academic Activities

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Abstract

Typically, associated academic activities are carried out outside the normal classrooms but they supplement academic curriculum and help in learning by doing. The objective behind the assessment of Information needs is identification of the right need. Due to the variation in information needs and seeking ways among different target groups of people, it is important to assess the information needs, to provide them need based information effectively. The present study was conducted to explore the information needs of Post Graduates students of University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. Descriptive and exploratory survey research design was used for the study and data were collected with the help of online survey questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed among 464 Post Graduate students of University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. They were selected from all the eight faculties of University of Rajasthan Jaipur randomly. Out of them 378 questionnaires were returned back with the response rate 81.46%. The result regarding major aspects (overall) of information needs revealed that majority of respondents needed information at very high extent regarding Career counseling and employment (60.84%), Competency development (54.23%). However, majority of respondents indicated very low intensity of information need about Co-curricular activities and Students union election. Data regarding various aspects wise showed that majority (78.84%) of students sought information to very high extent for campus/ job placement in the aspect of Career counseling and in Competency development aspect 76.19% required information on General awareness on digital gadgets to very high extent. Further findings of study showed that vote casting and election procedure were less interested areas of information. Results regarding co-curricular activities aspect depicted that majority (44.44%) of respondents required information on participation in conference, seminars and workshop. Findings of the study will be helpful for university administration to provide need based information to students for their amelioration.

Introduction

In present era, information is an important resource for development of a nation. Information is essential to accomplish the people's day to day work, for entertainment and for decision making etc. Economists, scientist, farmers, teachers and research scholars, doctors, engineers, librarians, policy makers, planners, etc. require information for their work. It is also vary essential to perform professional and personal tasks. No one can survive without information in present scenario, due to which information become inevitable need of human being. Information is also very important for students in their daily life for their academic activities (preparation of examinations, notes/assignments/project work, research work) as well as for associated academic activities. like updating their knowledge on current affairs, employment/job placement, competency development, presentations, and for participation in seminar/conferences etc.

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These activities are undertaken along with academic studies and helpful for students to develop problem-solving, reasoning, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, and collaborative abilities. Manjupath and Surendra (2018), Moly (2014) revealed that majority of the

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respondents explore information for the purpose of updating knowledge, preparing for competitive exams, career development, competency development, employment and to solve immediate practical problems etc.

As Students are the important segment of any educational institutions therefore it is a big responsibility of any educational institution/ university to provide need based information to their students. Therefore, there is a great need to study the information need and information need of students to provide need based information to the students effectively. Chodha and Gupta (2017) conducted a study on pattern and seeking behavior of students of National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar, India. Findings of the study revealed that to provide effective and useful resources and to increase satisfaction level and frequency visits of users in library then it is important to identify the information needs of students.

Objective of the Study

To assess the information needs of the Post graduate students regarding associated academic activities.

Reviews of Literature

Poongodi and Santhi (2017) explored the information needs of students. Descriptive research design and convenience sampling method was used for the study. Data were gathered from 115 UG and PG students through structured questionnaire. Results depicted that majority of students seek information for the purpose of project work and participation in seminar and workshop, preparation for class notes, general awareness and for reading purpose.

Lwara (2015) examined the information needs of students and found that academic information was the main information required by most of students (54.8%) followed by employment information (20%), information for personal development (12.3%) and global information was required by only 7.7 percent of respondents.

Upadhya and Tanu (2014) found that more than 90 percent respondents having information need to keep abreast with current development and for development of competence followed by to improve general knowledge and regarding presentation in workshop and seminars.

Methodology

The present study was conducted at University of Rajasthan, Jaipur district, Rahasthan. It was selected purposively as it is the largest (in terms of land area and number of students enrolled) and oldest (established on 8th January 1947) state and public University of Rajasthan. The population of the study consisted of the students studying in the PG degree courses in the academic session of 2019-2020, under all the eight faculties (Science, Arts, Commerce, Education, Fine Arts, Law, Social Science and Engineering and Technology) of University of Rajasthan Jaipur. Yamane (1967) formula was used for calculation of sample size. Calculated sample size was 464 students. Descriptive and exploratory survey research design was used to collect data through online survey questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed to 468 selected Post Graduate students of all nine faculties of University of Rajasthan Jaipur, randomly. Out of them 378 questionnaires were returned back with the 81.46 percent overall response rates.

Results and Disscussion

This section comprised of following two part :
1. Assessment of the Information needs of students (Overall)
2. Aspects wise Information needs

Assessment of the Information needs of students (Overall)

Information needs of postgraduate students (Overall) was assessed with varying intensity and presented below:

Table 1: Distribution of respondents on the basis of information needs (Overall) (n=378)

Nature of information	Intensity of information need									
	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Career counseling and employment	230	60.85	96	25.40	31	8.20	14	3.70	7	1.85
Students union election	38	10.05	66	17.46	38	10.05	43	11.37	193	51.05
Co-curricular activities	64	16.93	110	29.10	101	26.72	38	10.05	65	17.20
Competency development	205	54.23	99	26.20	45	11.90	29	7.67	0	0.00

Data presented in Table 1 depicted overall information need of postgraduate students on various major aspects. It obvious from the table that majority of respondents needed information very high to high extent regarding Career counseling and employment (60.85 % and 25.40 %) and Competency development (54.23% and 26.20%). However, majority of respondents indicated very low intensity of information need about Co-curricular activities and Students union election. The present findings are in close conformity with the findings of Rajesh et al. (2018) ,Chodha and Gupta (2017) Moly (2014).

Aspect wise information needs

In order to ascertain the intensity of information need about various purpose of information seeking, the respondents were asked to express the extent to which they needed information. The results pertaining to purpose wise information presented and discussed as below.

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Career Counseling and Employment Information Needs

It is evident from the Table 2 that information related to Career opportunities in their respective subject (100.00%), Guidance regarding Job competencies (77.78%), Campus /Job Placement (78.84%), Career counseling cell (76.72%), various competitive exams (61.37%) Entrepreneurship/Start up (53.70%) and Incubation center (51.59%). Results so arrived indicate the significance of information regarding job and employment opportunities for students. Similar results were also reported by Manjupath and Surendra (2018), Poongodi and Santhi (2017), Wijetunge (2016, 2015) Abdullahi et al. (2015).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on The Basis of Information Needs Regarding Career Counseling and Employment (n=378)

Nature of information	Intensity of information need									
	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Career counseling cell	290	76.72	58	15.34	30	7.94	0	0.00	0	0.00
Campus /Job Placement	298	78.84	45	11.90	35	9.26	0	0.00	0	0.00
Incubation center	195	51.59	63	16.67	48	12.70	38	10.05	34	8.99
Entrepreneurship/ Start up	203	53.70	102	26.99	38	10.05	22	5.82	13	3.44
Preparation of Various competitive exams	232	61.38	78	20.63	38	10.05	30	7.94	0	0.00
Guidance regarding Job competencies	294	77.78	66	17.46	18	4.76	0	0.00	0	0.00
Career opportunities in their respective subject	378	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00

Information needs regarding Student election

It is clear from Table 3 that majority of the respondents needed information to very low extent regarding student election. This might be due to the fact that all respondents were postgraduate students. They had gone through the student union election process in their graduation classes.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on The Basis of Information Needs Regarding Students Union Election (n=378)

Nature of information	Intensity of information need									
	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Eligibility criteria for participation in union election	37	9.79	45	11.90	41	10.85	88	23.28	167	44.18
Election procedure	46	12.17	83	21.96	38	10.05	25	6.61	186	49.21
Code of conduct	70	18.52	79	20.90	30	7.94	20	5.29	179	47.35
Rights and responsibilities of selected leaders	46	12.17	69	18.25	44	11.64	30	7.94	189	50.00
Casting of vote	9	2.38	10	2.65	39	10.31	127	33.60	193	51.06

Information needs regarding Co-curricular activities

It is evident from the Table 4 that majority of respondents showed moderate to very high intensity of information need regarding various co-curricular activities being carried out in their university. Results indicate that majority of respondents needed information regarding Debate and other competitions (55.82%) and Participation in workshop/ Conference/ Seminar etc (44.44%) to very high degree of intensity.

A big chunk of respondents was also required information about co-curricular activities including Ghomar (69.05%), Convocation (44.45%) and Youth festivals (38.89%). Nearly 30 percent of respondents were showed their interest in Games and Sports activities to moderate extent. Information about concerned faculty/coach Eligibility criteria of different activities activities of NSS/NCC was required to very low extent. Co-curricular activities help students to develop problem-solving, reasoning, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, and collaborative abilities. That was might be the reason due to which majority of respondents were inclined to get more information about co-curricular activities. The results are in conformity with the results of Silva and Chandrawamsa (2016), Upadhya and Tanu (2014).

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Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on The Basis of Information Needs Regarding Co-Curricular Activities
(n=378)

Nature of information	Intensity of information need									
	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Games and Sports activities	92	24.34	81	21.43	113	29.89	50	13.23	42	11.11
Participation in workshop/Conference/Seminar etc	168	44.44	67	17.73	55	14.55	41	10.85	47	12.43
Youth festivals	68	17.99	97	25.66	147	38.89	38	10.05	28	7.41
Ghomar (Inter University cultural event	48	12.70	38	10.05	261	69.05	31	8.20	0	0.00
Debate and other competitions	211	55.82	103	27.25	43	11.38	8	2.12	13	3.44
Convocation	45	11.90	50	13.23	168	44.45	69	18.25	46	12.17
Information about concerned faculty/coach	15	3.97	89	23.54	68	17.99	66	17.46	140	37.04
Eligibility criteria of different activities	78	20.63	109	28.84	30	7.94	20	5.29	141	37.30
Activities of NSS/NCC	42	11.11	73	19.31	111	29.37	22	5.82	130	34.39

Information needs regarding competency development

Competencies are the set of integrated knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes that students develop and apply for successful learning, living and working. It is evident from the Table 5 that majority of respondent's nodded information regarding General awareness on digital gadgets (76.19%), to update the subject knowledge and current affairs (58.20%), Communication skill (53.70), Computer efficiency (51.06%), Scientific writing (48.94) and Presentation skill (43.39) to very high degree of intensity. Competencies are critical for equipping students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they will need to successfully navigate their personal journeys in learning, living and working. Students are the artists, scientists, thinkers, innovators and leaders of the future. They will be tasked with solving the problems of today, while imagining and creating a new tomorrow. Competencies help students draw and build upon what they know, how they think and what they can do. In university, students develop and apply competencies through subject-area content and learning experiences. These findings were in agreement with Rajesh et al. (2018), Wijetunge (2016), Tariq and Waseem (2014), Upadhya and Tanu (2014).

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents on The Basis of Information Needs Regarding Competency Development
(n=378)

Nature of information	Intensity of information need									
	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Communication skill	203	53.70	135	35.72	40	10.58	0	0.00	0	0
Presentation skill	164	43.39	138	36.51	76	20.10	0	0.00	0	0
General awareness on digital gadgets	288	76.19	50	13.23	40	10.58	0	0.00	0	0
Update the subject knowledge & current affairs	220	58.20	88	23.28	70	18.5	0	0.00	0	0.00
Computer efficiency	193	51.06	96	25.39	50	13.23	39	10.32	0	0
Scientific writing	185	48.94	77	20.37	46	12.17	70	18.52	0	0

Conclusion

Present study concludes that majority of students required information regarding Career counseling and employment, Competency development to high extent. Further study presented that Co-curricular activities and student's union election were the less interested aspects of information needs among post graduate students of University. Effective information service largely depends on understanding of the information needs and information seeking behavipur of students. Results of the study will be helpful for university administration to provide needed information through suitable source for welfare of the students. It will improve the sources and services of university also.

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