CHAPTER- 8

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY
Chapter – 8

Conclusions, Implications and Areas of further Study

The last chapter presents a summary of the findings, a generalized profile of information seeking behaviour of social scientists in Marathwada. It also discusses recommendations and implications and the area of further research.
CHAPTER-8

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY

0 INTRODUCTION:

This study on the information seeking behaviour of social scientists in Marathwada was carried out on 270 respondents belonging to two non agricultural universities and their affiliated colleges located in different parts of Marathwada region. Information from the respondents was collected using a structured questionnaire designed for this purpose. This was followed by an independent semi-structured interview schedule on a sample of respondents. The data collected from the respondents through the questionnaire was tabulated and analysed. Some statistical techniques weighted index and one way analysis of variance etc. were used in the analysis. Based on the analysis of responses, consolidated tables have been prepared and presented in the succeeding sections and subsections of the chapters.

295
8.1 CONCLUSIONS:

The present study has raised some key issues and arrived at certain conclusions. The conclusions are the outcome of the analysis of information seeking behaviour of the social scientists, focusing mainly on four areas namely, user characteristics, methods of seeking information, use of sources of information and use of libraries. In addition findings related to the hypothesis, implications and areas for further study are discussed. At the end of this chapter Profile of social scientists in Marathwada is also provided.

8.1.1 User characteristics:

As regards to the User characteristics, it is found that (40.75%) social scientists in Marathwada belonged to the age group of 41-50 who predominated the social science academic community compared to other age groups. The trend of age factor again revealed that middle-aged persons between 31-50 years were more in the social science
academic community than that of younger and older people. From this stand, it is evident that working social science academic community in Marathwada consisted of experienced and scholars.

The study indicates that out of the social scientists in Marathwada, (78.88%) were male. Hence male outnumbered the female. However, In the process of information seeking gender is the neglected factor.

In terms of their subject specialization, largest number of social scientists in Marathwada were from History, Political Science, Economics and Sociology and the percentage of the social scientists in other subjects was very less.

In terms of status social scientists were from all strata of the academic community as Professors, Readers, Lecturers and Research students but majority was of the lecturers who were the emerging group in the academic field.
The educational qualification of the social scientists was a matter of consideration in the study. Although professional qualifications ranging from Master of Arts to M.Phil., Ph.D. and specialization in the subjects. Other additional qualifications have no bearing on their particular subject and were only additional. However, higher the qualifications form a better community of academic social scientists, because they need a considerable degree of intellect and academic background for the effective performance of their responsibilities.

The study has reflected the fact that the highest known languages were English, Hindi and Marathi. English remains the primary language for information search by social scientists in Marathwada. Though substantial literature is being produced here in regional languages, reflecting the problems and aspiration of the people in Marathwada, it is inadequate for further study and research. Other Indian languages except Hindi,
Marathi do not establish any correlation between the knowledge of language and seeking of information.

Study found that language barriers did not affect the conduct of their study because social scientists scanned more and more material written in English language or in Marathi language and did not scan world literature written in foreign languages other than English.

When the purposes of seeking information was analysed, the study found that the major purposes were updating of information, undertaking research and writing an articles or books. It is heartening to note that social scientists are interested in updating their knowledge for maintaining professional competence and improving themselves. Since all universities and colleges are teaching institutions, majority of the social scientists were involved in research & writing.

The need for information arised when there is a feeling of uncertainty and apprehension or lack of
knowledge and understanding. Majority of the social scientists felt that information gathering is a continuous process and not a one time affair.

Thorough study of the topics taken for Ph.D. and M.Phil. and projects in hand, it is found that there are the few examples which have the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. It is revealed that the research output in social science in Marathwada still have a considerable reliance on traditional topics.

8.1.2 Methods of Information Seeking:

Methods of information seeking include act of finding accessing and acquiring information. The study reveals that social scientists preferred variety of information sources, formal and informal.

Library was the most preferred channel in the information search process.
When formal and informal sources clubbed together, were examined, it is found that, their is low level dependence on abstracting/indexing sources, review articles etc. This shows the apathy of social scientists towards tertiary sources.

The study exposed the fact that respondents did not believe in the capabilities of library staff to provide required information. Hence they gave low priority to library staff, in the process of information search.

When the methods used to find out information sources in the library was studied, it is found that the first preference is given to consult library catalogue followed by subject bibliography.

Accidental discovery quite often occurred and it certainly formed a part of information seeking process.

It is significant to note that social scientists expressed that searching process is as important as information itself, so delegation of information gathering work was
not normally adopted. This indicates information consciousness of the social scientists. Perhaps they were aware of the benefits that occur to them when they are involved in information collection on their own.

In regards to dependence of social scientists on sources for accessing information it is revealed that library collection emerged as the most important channel for accessing sources of information.

When the method of obtaining reading material is ascertained, it is found that fieldtrips, conferences/seminars were considered as an important & favourite methods for acquiring first hand information by the social scientists.

When the purposes of field trips were studied, it is revealed that purposes for undertaking field trips generally depend on the topic of the study & on the specialization of the subject. It may be varied from discipline to discipline.
However it is revealed that the common purpose of field trips is to get specific information and collection of data.

Personal notes and photocopies are the most preferred means of storing data.

In regards to the necessity of foreign trips, social scientists did not feel its necessity.

Conferences/Seminars/ Lectures were also popular channels of information.

It is surprising to note that the concept of 'invisible college' was not familiar to them. Though indirectly they took the benefit of it, social scientists never utilized this source consciously.

The findings in regard to keeping up-to-date with the advances in their subject field, revealed that social scientists used formal as well as informal methods. Most popular method was through journals.
In regards to their difficulties in the process of keeping up-to-date, it is revealed that inadequate library resources and scattering of information in many sources were the major hurdles in the process of keeping up-to-date.

8.1.3 USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES:

Frequency of use of information sources is a matter of great importance for the social scientists. Which has been studied here. It is found that social scientists used a variety of sources of information. This includes documentary as well as non-documentary sources.

Among the other various sources of information, the books are found to be more relevant for social science study as compared to periodicals and other kinds of documentary sources. Social scientists have shown their preference particularly for periodicals; reference tools, dissertation; theses; conference proceedings in that order.
As far as periodical literature is concerned, it has been observed that majority of the social scientists limit their choice to a few selected periodicals in their special subject seldom exceeding five in number.

The reasons for low priority accorded by the social scientists to sources like pamphlets/monographs; Government publications; institutional papers; private papers is understandable. These are usually consulted and used by particular class of social scientists.

The study, further has shown that the audio-visual material consisting of microforms, cassette, recordings, visual etc. has failed to find favour with the large majority of social scientists.

The study indicates that the digital media has only a limited impact on the academic community. Use of computer database/internet was very low. It revealed the fact that majority of the social scientists in Marathwada were computer illiterate
It has been made clear that social scientists are still very print oriented. The varied information needs could not be satisfied with one type of source only. Important points to be noted about social scientists in Marathwada is, their substantial dependence on secondary rather than on primary information sources, low level dependence on tertiary sources shows the apathy of social scientists towards such useful sources as indexing and abstracting services, reviewing periodicals etc.

Over all study of the use of varied types of information sources revealed that use of information sources depends on the attitude of seekers, information needs and purpose of use. Moreover working conditions, the subject of the study and the nature of the information sought have the impact on the use of information.

In identifying the constraints that the social scientists encountered in the process of information seeking, the study reflected that the 'economic' and 'administrative' constraints were the most prominent barriers in information search. It is surprising that the social
constraints have been ranked at the bottom as of least significant. These findings are contradictory to the culture of the rural and interior areas in Marathwada. Generally the social scientists who depend for their information on field data, have to collect the information from the people who lead nomadic or semi-nomadic life, who are illiterate and do not understand the significance of survey, who observe pardha and will not open their mouth before strangers, certainly have to face varied type of the problems. More ever, in Marathwada social problems like poverty, illiteracy, castism, pardha system, are not only the topics of the study but also the hindrance in collecting information.

8.1.4 USE OF THE LIBRARIES:

The study of the use of libraries, both in Marathwada and out side Marathwada has thrown light on information seeking behaviour of social scientists understudy. As no single library can satisfy the varied information needs, the social scientists used number of libraries other than the
libraries of their own institutions. Moreover in addition to university libraries in Marathwada they had to visit other university libraries not only in Maharashtra but other national level libraries in the country. The quantitative data at the broad level about various libraries, their collections and services has revealed that location, availability and accessibility of information sources, services generated and attitude of the library staff are important criteria in making the use of any library.

The utilization of resources of the library and its services mainly depend on the awareness of its services among the users/community. The awareness had its impact on the utilisation of its resources. The study of awareness of services among the social scientists reveals that in-spite of advance services made available by some of the reputed universities, majority of the social scientists continued to depend mainly on issue of books, reprography and reference services of directional/locational type. The
number of user services like Inter Library Loan, SDI, Abstracting services were continued to be low.

Adequacy of collection determines the frequency of use of a particular library, social scientists in addition to their own institutional library have to use university libraries other than Marathwada, confirmed the fact that varied information needs and area of specialization remains the dominant factor in judging the adequacy of collection in regard to a particular library. Use of different university libraries is a indicator of cooperation, and maintaining close, cordial and effective relations among them.

The study has disclosed the fact that users were, by and large, indifferent to book selection in their libraries. Readers ought to be involved in the process of book selection.

The lower level of use of the popular library services can be attributed mainly to their poor publicity among the
readers for whom library services are exist. This means that there is a need to create awareness amongst users. This would require a strong user education programme.

Majority of the respondents have expressed their willingness to pay for services rendered by other libraries and Network.

The respondents have provided useful suggestions for the improvement in library collection and library services etc. Specially university library authorities in Marathwada should take these suggestions into consideration so that library collection and services are organized to meet their information needs at the optimum level.

8.2 FINDINGS RELATED TO THE HYPOTHESES:

The findings directly related to each of the three hypothesis listed in Chapter-1 are presented in this section.
**Hypothesis -1:** 'The social scientists use both formal and informal methods of information seeking. However informal methods like 'field trips' and 'conferences' are gaining importance among the social scientists'.

Table 5.1 clearly indicates the use of both formal and informal methods of information seeking by the social scientists. The first five ranks given by the social scientists include both the methods namely visit to library, discussion with expert, Supervisor, consulting bibliography, discussion with colleagues.

It is further ascertained that library is not the only centre around which information seeking process of the social scientists revolved. Majority of them consider Conferences/Seminars as a useful source of information figure 5.10. Field trips are also used as an important method of acquiring information by the social scientists. Figure 5.5 shows that (52%) of the respondents indicates that field trips are used as an important method of acquiring information.
When the purpose of field trips is ascertained, it finds that (66.66%) and closely followed (65.59%) of the respondents undertake field trips to get specific information and collection of data respectively. Thus findings support the second hypothesis and the hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis-2:** 'Social science study and research in Marathwada is mainly based on the information sources in book form'.

The major type of information sources used by the social scientists identified are in book form. Table 6.1 indicates that the highest rank goes to books and periodicals stand second, followed by references tools, dissertation/theses, conference proceedings etc. in descending order. Use of non print information sources as internet/audio-video sources, maps occupied low ranks with least priority. It makes clear that the social scientists in Marathwada are still print oriented. The study also
indicates that the digital media has only a limited impact on the social science community. This again confirms that the information sources in book form are in a heavy use by social scientists and non print sources are used very rarely. Therefore the second hypothesis is confirmed.

**Hypothesis 3**: 'A social scientist does not depend on one library alone. They use number of libraries to fulfill their study and research work'.

As one library cannot cater to their diverse information needs, the social scientists carry out their study and research using a number of libraries. Table 7.1 and 7.2 shows that the social scientists make use of a number of libraries apart from their institutional ones. These libraries include different university libraries at regional, state and national level. This is due to the reason that their own institutional library or University libraries in Marathwada are not enough to meet their information needs. Social Scientists have to use the libraries other
than Marathwada. Hence the hypothesis number three is confirmed.

**Hypothesis 4:** 'Study and research output in Marathwada has adopted an interdisciplinary approach but there is still considerable reliance on traditional topics'.

Thorough the study of the topics undertaken for Ph.D. and M.Phil. and projects, it is found that out of 270 only 3 research students are presently getting involved in interdisciplinary studies. The topics of research are 'Social history of Marathwada', 'Educational psychology of working women in Maharashtra', 'Socio-economic history of Muslims in Marathwada'. But it can be noted that these are the few (only three) examples of the topics mentioned above. Hence the hypothesis number four is confirmed.

**8.3. IMPLICATIONS:**

The findings of the study yield several inferences, which have far reaching implications to the management concerned, university and college librarians involved in the
provision of social science information in Marathwada Region. An attempt is made in this section to discuss these implications, specific inference and its implication is given side by side as follows.

(1) For their information search social scientists depend more on secondary sources than on primary and territory sources.

This tendency may have resulted due to the non availability of primary sources of information. Lack of training in collecting and interpreting the data by social scientists may be one of the reasons of the non use of primary data. In the case of primary and tertiary sources such as reference works, indexes a bibliographies, librarians must help the users as interpreters of these tools. In their contents and arrangement reference tools are most complicated than general books. Indexing and abstracting services due to their bulky and complicated arrangement detract the users, in the first instance. However, once the user know the purpose and value of
these tools, and are familiar with their layout, they are likely to use these sources more often.

(2) Social scientists in Marathwada are still print oriented. Digital media has only a limited impact on the social science community.

Complexity of the information seeking behaviour necessitate easier and modern techniques rather than a total dependence on outdated and conventional information search techniques in libraries in Marathwada. Therefore the first and for most need of the hour is to modernize the libraries and provide the users access to computerized databases not only in university but in college library also.

(3) An average social scientist consults the periodicals between 2 to 5 and seldom 7 journals in his discipline.

While preparing the subscription list the librarian of the University library should get prepared two lists of periodicals one of core periodicals and another of
peripheral periodicals. The subscription list should be restricted to the core periodicals. Only when additional funds are available peripheral journals may be subscribed.

A review of the subscription list after three years may also be helpful in dropping the less used and in adding the newly started journals of academic interest.

(4) Lack of awareness of the users about existing library services is determined.

A well planned user education programme must be carried out in the libraries to facilitate the user to make the best use of the library resources and services.

Efforts should be made by the libraries for marketing some of the important services to its user, thus the keeping the users aware of.

(5) Almost all social scientist in Marathwada face one or the other constraints while seeking information. The major constraint is related to economic.
This may be due to prejudice against social scientist and bias in favour of pure sciences. It is not the problem of short funds alone but it is the problem of inequitable distribution of funds. Considering the importance of social science in the society the library management authorities has to press hard to the funding agencies to adopt a policy of equitable distribution.

(6) Majority of the respondents have expressed their willingness to pay for services rendered.

Management may consider formulating a policy for resource (financial) generation in libraries by charging for services rendered. However it must be clearly understood by the managements that such cost recovery can supplement their library funds and cannot replace the same. Users will not pay for products of low or poor quality.
(7) Respondents feel that collection in their own institutional libraries as well as University library is inadequate.

If the University and its affiliated college libraries themselves are unable to procure more and more reading material due to insufficient library funds, there is a need to enter into resource sharing arrangements with other libraries locally, regionally, or nationally.

Inter library loan facility should be broadened covering the main university libraries in Maharashtra as well as out side Maharashtra. It will enable users to access to wide range of materials.

Two University libraries and number of affiliated college libraries in Marathwada, each of them operates in isolation. The social scientists, in their information seeking process use their own institutional library or university library of which the collection and library services they feel inadequate.
The readers come to university libraries with the belief that the university library shall supplement their information. If the university library fail to do so, the readers will stop coming to the university library, or they will visit it occasionally. To attract potential users and retain actual users the university libraries in Marathwada will have to make constant endeavor to keep its collection up to date and its services need oriented.

8] The readers are by and large indifferent to book selection in their libraries.

Though the book selection is primarily the concern of Heads of the Departments of Universities and colleges and the librarians, readers should be involved in the process of book selection in order to have a representative and balanced collection of reading material. The reading material thus acquired is likely to be much more in use than the one acquired without reader's consent. Readers participation may be achieved by soliciting their suggestions for new books, by sending them
announcements of new titles for their approval by inviting them to book exhibitions organized specifically for the purpose.

9] Inspite of the advance services to have been made by university libraries majority of the readers continue to depend on traditional services.

A wide communication gap between library staff and the readers, keeps the reader ignorant about the capability of the library and what the library is actually doing. There is imminent need to bridge this gap. Some of the University libraries in the Foreign countries have done it by appointing Public Relation Officers. In our case, the objective may be achieved by appointing full time Reference Librarian. He/Her besides providing Reference Services and library instruction, would also look after the publicity and publication programme of the library.

10] Professor and Head of the Departments have expressed lack of time in using the libraries.
The libraries and librarians should put additional efforts to provide the library and information services at respective work spots or wherever the users desires.

8.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

The present study is not a complete one, since it deals with the information seeking behaviour in social science discipline only. Future researchers can explore other similar areas. They can attempt comparative study on information seeking behaviour of social scientists attached to different subject fields.

Investigation into the differences in the information seeking behaviour of academicians in science and social science disciplines in another area where further research can be carried out.

A comparative study can also be conducted to investigate into information seeking behaviour of male and
female social scientists to examine if the gender plays an important role in information seeking process.

Another possibility for research would be a comparative study of information seeking behaviour of academicians and research scholars are in respective disciplines.

There is an ample scope for finding correlation among various variables within each aspect of information seeking behaviour.

PROFILE OF SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN MARATHWADA:

Summarizing the results of present study, a generalized profile of information seeking behaviour of social scientists in Marathwada has been constructed as given in Table 8.1.
### Table 8.1
**PROFILE OF SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN MARATHWADA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>User characteristics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Social scientists</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority of the social scientists in Marathwada fall in the age group of 41-50 years. Middle aged persons between 31-50 years are more than that of younger and older people. They are mostly male and lecturers predominate. Their main purposes of social science study and research is to keep abreast with the knowledge of their subject, study and research. Language barrier does not affect the conduct of their study, still there is a considerable reliance on traditional topics of research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>Information seeking procedure : use of formal and informal sources</strong> | <strong>Formal and informal sources of information used in descending. Order are visit to library; discussion with experts, supervisor, consult bibliography, library catalogue, consult review articles, discussion with library staff, consult indexing and abstracting journal, publishers catalogue etc.</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Accidental discovery of information</strong></th>
<th>Social scientists experience accidental discovery of information in their information seeking process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delegation of information gathering work</strong></td>
<td>Prefer to conduct their own searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessing of information</strong></td>
<td>Social scientists depend on library collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acquiring of information</strong></td>
<td>Field trips and conferences/seminars are preferred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invisible college</strong></td>
<td>Do not depend upon invisible college as an information channel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of sources of information</strong></td>
<td>Social scientists used variety of sources of information, but they are print oriented. Priority is given to books and periodicals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of libraries</strong></td>
<td>Social scientists use a number of libraries to pursue their study and research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>