CHAPTER THREE
BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE PLAN
3. BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE PLAN OF THE STUDY

3.1 BACKGROUND

Recently, in order to cope with the demands of fast-paced society, technological advancement, culture of information revolution and new challenges of academic and vocational opportunities, students, teachers, and other academic communities are encouraged to become information literate and lifelong learners. Realizing the importance of information seeking behavior among the teachers, students, and others, the National Policy on Education 1986, as well as, the University Grant Commission has directed institutes of higher education to improve and facilitate the culture of information seeking behavior and to improve the utilization of resource support library and documentation services for students and others. Accordingly, university teachers and librarians are not only to deliver pieces of information but to support the learning process and skills for information seeking and problem-solving behavior of the students (Andrup, et al. 1995). Therefore, universities and documentation centers are in desperate need to understand the nature of information seeking behavior of the student community.
By Information behaviour is meant those activities a person may engage in when identifying his or her own needs for information searching for such information in any way and using and transforming that information (Kirton, 1999). Information seeking behaviour refers to the way people search for and utilize information. Most of the time student's information seeking behaviour involves active or purposeful information seeking as a result of the need to complete course assignments, prepare for class discussions, seminars, workshops, conferences or write final year research papers (Fister, 1992). Information seeking is a process of volition and the result of intellection.

Many researchers have defined Information seeking as communication behaviour. Considering the types, structure and objectives, information may be of the following types; such as innovative information and unequivocal information (Weick, 1969), quantitative, time-phased or short type of information (McCormick, 1976), input or output of information (Baird, 1977), internal resources or external information, etc. In academic curriculum Bloom (1956) and others had considered information domains in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.

Information seeking has been compared as a rational problem solving process and in most cases Information seeking process is dynamic and changeable in terms of individual differences (Allen and Kim, 2001; Borgman, 1989; Crozier, 1997; Humphreys and Revelle, 1984; Miculincer, 1997; Solomon, 2002). The reasons behind different information approaches may lie in the context but also may be
related to the person’s inner processes, information habits, needs, cognitive abilities, learning outcomes and personality traits (Eskola, 1998; Heinstrom, 2003; Kernan and Mojena, 1973). Researchers highlighted that needs, demands, feeling of stress, uncertainty, frustration, anxiety, insecurity, ability, cognitive style etc are mediating and moderating the nature of Information seeking behaviour of the individuals (Heinstrom, 2002; Kuhlthau, 1993a; Nah, 2001; Venkula, 1988).

In addition to person related variables, the information seeking needs of the students are influenced by the University pedagogy that is the course content, evaluation system, learning or teaching styles. In many situations Information seeking also dependent upon approaches of learning such as co-operative, competitive individualistic approaches by the learner (Blickle, 1996; Cooper and Mueck, 1992; Johnson and Johnson, 1989). Realizing the implication of healthy Information seeking behaviour of the University students for their future progress, achievement, classroom environment, interpersonal relationship, Co-operative learning behaviour etc., the present researcher has planned to undertake research on Information Seeking Behaviour of the University students with following aims and objectives.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

“A Study on the nature of Information Seeking Behaviour among the University Students”.
3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the attributes of information seeking behaviour of the university students and to develop an Information Seeking Behaviour Inventory for university students.

- To identify the attributes of learning behaviour (co-operative, competition and individualistic) among the university students and to develop a Learning Behaviour Inventory for university students.

- To ascertain the nature of information seeking behaviour with respect to gender of the university students (male and female).

- To ascertain the nature of Information seeking behaviour with respect to selected situational variable (discipline of study) of the university students.

- To ascertain the nature of selected person related variables (NEO-Five personality factors, learning behaviour and achievement need) of the university students with respect to their level of information seeking behaviour.

- To ascertain the nature of outcome of information searching (level of satisfaction) among the university students with respect to their level of information Seeking Behaviour.

- To identify the pattern of relationship among sets of variables- person related variables (NEO-Five personality factors, learning behaviour and achievement need), outcome of information searching (level of satisfaction) and Information Seeking Behaviour, of the university students.
3.4 HYPOTHESES

**H1** The nature of the test scores of Information seeking behaviour of the University student varies in terms of their gender (male and female).

**H2** Irrespective of gender (male and female), the nature of the test scores of Information seeking behaviour of the university students varies in terms of their discipline of studies (arts, science and commerce).

**H3** The nature of the test scores of the NEO-five personality factors (Neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness) of the university students varies in terms of their level of Information Seeking Behaviour (high, moderate and low).

**H4** The nature of the test scores of the learning behaviour of the university students varies in terms of their level of Information Seeking Behaviour (high, moderate and low).

**H5** The nature of the test scores of the achievement motivation of the university students varies in terms of their level of Information Seeking Behaviour (high, moderate and low).
H6 The nature of the test scores of satisfaction for information searching of the university student varies in terms of their level of Information Seeking Behaviour (high, moderate and low).

H7 The nature of relationship among sets of variables (test scores) for Information seeking Behaviour, selected personal attributes (NEO - Five personality traits, learning behaviour and achievement motivation) and outcome of information searching (Level of satisfaction) of the university students reveals dissimilarities with respect to the level of Information Seeking Behaviour (high, moderate and low).

3.5 SAMPLE

It has been presumed that there may be male female difference in both information seeking and cooperative learning. Also the students may differ due to the course of study. Again it is a common experience that the university students of the selected State aided Universities in the Southern part of West Bengal tend to seek information to the maximum extent. Therefore, the samples would be drawn from the male and female university students and from the broad streams namely arts, science and commerce from the selected State aided Universities of the Southern part of West Bengal. The break of samples is proposed to be as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Commerce</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among this 150 students would be utilized for preparation of the tools and pilot study and the rest 600 would be utilized for hypothesis testing.

3.6 INSTRUMENTS

A. To be developed

(a) General Information schedule (GIS): This would include student’s demography (age, sex, and class of study), parental information and information regarding outcome of information searching (level of satisfaction), etc.

(b) Information seeking behaviour inventory (ISBI): This would be developed to measure different dimensions of information seeking behaviour namely, ‘information need’, ‘drive for search’, ‘mode of information use’, ‘diversity in search’, ‘level of cognitive nature of search’,
'nature of accessibility of resource', 'involvement in resource utilization', etc.

(c) Learning behaviour inventory (LBI): This would be developed on dimensions of learning behaviour namely 'co-operative learning behaviour', 'competitive learning behaviour' and 'individualistic learning behaviour'.

B. To be locally adapted

(a) Achievement motivation scale (Beena, 1986)

C. To be used as original

(a) NEO PI-R short 60 items version (McCrae and Costa, 1992)

3.7 PROCEDURE

Step 1 Selection of Universities as well as selection of students from different Universities by matching and stratifying as per plan.

Step 2 Construction and standardization of inventories (2) and Local adaptation of test (1)
Step 3

(i) Collection of data from the selected sample groups.

(ii) Tabulation of test data to meet the requirement of hypotheses testing.

3.8 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

- Descriptive analysis would be done for all variables.
- For testing of group differences 't' and ANOVA would be computed.
- Correlation and regression analysis etc would be done for testing of relationship and prediction power of variables.

3.9 APPLIED VALUE OF THE STUDY

- The present study is expected to develop data based information about the situational variables for facilitating information seeking climates in the university system, documentation centers and library.

- The study is expected to highlight the test battery to screen out the problem of Information seeking and learning among ambitious students and develop the appropriate strategies for their progress.
The result are expected to highlight the facilitating and inhibiting factors of Information Seeking Behaviour which may be helpful to prevent wastage of time and resources at the institutional level, as well as, the student level and formulating just in time intervention by the counselors and teachers for streamlining the motivation for Information Seeking Behaviour among the students.

N.B: This outline plan of the study was approved by the members of the Ph.D Committee in Applied Psychology, Calcutta University in the meeting held on 16th February 2007.