Preface

Researchers on community information have shown that individuals in the community get their information from other individuals. Learning about situations and activities that people engage in and how people look for information is a key to knowing how to meet information needs and to plan services which effectively meet information needs. A look into the published literature on information needs and uses, and about user and use studies reveals the vast literature on the subject. Excellent reviews on the subject by Dervin & Nilan (1986) and Hewins (1990) have been published. Unfortunately, the publications are made with communities from western countries where the situations are completely different to what we are having in this country. This dearth of literature on the subject in Indian context puts the researchers in this country in discomfort to carry out the work. Of course, few works, worth mentioning, are made by authors with Indian communities. For example the work of Baliarsingh (1989), a pioneering work in India in which he studied the information needs of 892 respondents belonging to 8 communities in the Puri District of Orissa; and very recently the research work carried out by Mohanty (1997) on the information needs of an industrial community by considering 809 employees of the Rourkela Steel Plant, Rourkela, Orissa are the excellent works carried out in this country. These works provided the necessary basis for designing the present investigation. In this investigation the information needs of 842 respondents belonging to 10 communities residing in the 6 areas out of 15
of the Rourkela Civil Township are studied, with specific objectives of identifying the information providers to tackle 12 day-to-day information seeking situations, their reading interests, means of utilisation of leisure time, library consciousness and their willingness to avail the advisory services in the community to solve their every day information needs. Though generalisation on information needs of general public cannot be made from the projects of this type, it atleast hopes to become an useful addition to the existing literature, especially in Indian context.

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