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1.0 Introduction

The Commerce education is a primary manufacturing industry of quality human resources for the various organizational, social, industrial and educational needs of the country. The high quality human resource generates from quality education and quality education is gained from quality teaching and learning environment (Paul, 1992). The libraries attached to the educational institutions create and provide this kind of learning environment.

The mission of academic libraries is to meet the objectives and purposes of their parent institutions. Libraries have become an indispensable part of academic institution due to tremendous changes in the field of education and educational system (Sharma, 1992). In the present day’s educational system, the teacher teaches the methodology and inspires the students to find detailed information on his / her study from the library resources. This results in active participation of students in the learning process. This way today’s education is becoming more and more library-oriented than the classroom-oriented, where the students and faculty seek and use information consistently for their study, learning, teaching and research.

The academic scenario has undergone a tremendous change over the years due to the advent of Information Communication Technology (ICT) (Gupta, 2003). Libraries are no exception to this. The development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has affected the way libraries operate and provide services. Right from the ancient times to the present Internet era, the primary objective of library has always been the same. However, the way this
purpose has been achieved has drastically changed (Gopinath, et. al, 2001). The ICT has caused changes in the representation of knowledge—from the analog to the digital. The materials acquired are now the combinations of print, digital and multimedia. The catalogues are now available online as OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogue) or WebPACs (Web Public Access Catalogues). It has also changed the way the librarians manage information. The ICT has made tremendous impact on the academic activities of the faculty and the students. A significant transition can be seen in their approach and the way they seek and use information and the methods they employ for research and learning activities.

1.0.1 Commerce Education in India

Commerce education began in India as early as 1886 when the first commercial school in Madras was set up. The British Government started a School of Commerce in Calicut (Kerala) in 1895. In 1903, commerce classes were started in the Presidency College, Culcutta. Between 1903 and 1912, commercial institutions were also started in Bombay and Delhi with facilities for training in typewriting, shorthand, correspondence and business methods. (Bhorali, 1987). Commerce education at the University level began with the establishment of the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay in the year 1913. In the subsequent years there had been a growing recognition of the need for expansion of commerce education in the country. The recent Annual reports of UGC reveal that the enrolment in commerce education has registered the highest percentage of increase amongst all the social science disciplines in the country.
It is an accepted fact that the quality of business education depends on the resources that the institute has (Mishra, 2002). These resources are: highly qualified faculty, well-designed curriculum, good physical ambience and the very crucial support of well-stocked, up to date and well maintained library / information centre.

1.0.2 Commerce Education in Mumbai

The commerce education started at the College and University level with the establishment of the Sydenham College of commerce and economics in Mumbai way back in 1913 (Rajendra, 2001). In recent years, commerce colleges in Mumbai cross the hundred numbers. It is because Mumbai is the business and financial capital of India. Over 60% of the India international trade is transacted through Mumbai. Therefore, there is a great stress and demand for the commerce education in Mumbai. In recent times, due to the globalization of national economies, privatization efforts are being made even in the educational sector to meet the current and expected demands for the trained manpower. To balance the demand of the trained manpower there are many colleges imparting quality commerce education to supply the need of the city.

1.1 Changing Environment of Academic Libraries

The technological impact on library has brought out radical changes in library collection, tools, techniques, skills, products, services etc. The library automation and networking have totally transformed the nature and functions of
libraries. The library collection is also enriched with the new formats i.e. the media used for information has been changing from print to non-print media. The present age may be labeled as an electronic information age caused by the explosion of electronic methods in every specialized fields. The electronic media is helping libraries to increase their efficiency and effectiveness of information communication in all its dimensions. In an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) environment, the information is available in electronic forms like, e-books, e-journals, CD-ROMs, DVDs, electronic databases, and Internet web resources like subject gateways etc. Many of the sources available in the electronic form can be made available to the academic user community by developing electronic information access facilities (Satpathy, 2002). The availability of information in the electronic media has created an opportunity for global access to information.

Today electronic storage and telecommunication media are playing an important role in the transmission of information. It is with the emergence of ICT that storage of information in electronic form has become a reality. The ICT has dramatically changed the nature and functions of the present day libraries (Chaudhari, 1994). The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is advantageous to accommodate increased workload, achieving greater efficiency, generation of new services and helps in co-operative activities. The application of ICT helps in improving the quality and productivity of library and information services.
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In the modern world of information explosion, the Internet has become a necessity for the libraries. It provides instant access to numerous information sources, which include books, journals, reports, video films, sound recording and wide variety of other sources. It is a global network of computer networks, which has opened up unimaginable opportunities to seek information and use information for the productive work.

Due to the exponential growth of information in all fields of human knowledge, the retrieval of right information has become a great challenge. The library professionals need to accept the change in the environment, adapt and act accordingly, to meet successfully the needs and requirements of the Students and Faculty.

1.1.1 Commerce College Libraries in Mumbai

The libraries attached to the colleges are imparting the commerce education and support more practical process by developing the resources and providing Information and Communication Technology based services. Now-a-days College education has become more library centered education rather than the classroom-centred one. The students get most of their educational information resources in library and their practical activities also start with the library. The libraries are rendering the technology-based services. Due to ICT they manage collection development activity very well. Subscription to e-journals, e-databases and procuring educational CDs/DVDs, digitizing institutional resources in library have supported students and teachers in accessing right information in right time.
Many college libraries in Mumbai are operating with co-operation with each other.

Today, digital technologies are bringing about revolutionary changes in the way the information is stored, retrieved and disseminated. These have profound impact on the ways college libraries function and open up electronic access to information for thousands of users. College scenario, over the years, has undergone tremendous changes, assuming new dimensions influenced by the technology driven applications. Instead of a building collection of books, the library is now evolving into an electronic portal and subject gateways to a growing global collection in digital content. The emerging demand for the electronic information resources may warrant the restructuring of the college libraries to digital college libraries. The library's holdings can be accessed by the user as and when needed.

Most of the libraries have Internet facility and providing almost free access to students and faculty. The observation reveals that substantial use of Internet resources in the field of commerce includes e-journals, databases, reports, discussions, curricula, reading lists, information 'brochures' etc. Students and Faculty always rush to the library to get the required information.

1.2 Information Seeking Behaviour

The word Information is used to identify many different concepts. But it is difficult to define it precisely. In the generic sense meaning of information is facts on knowledge provided or learned as a result of research or study.
According to Oxford English Dictionary, "Information is the communication of knowledge or news of some fact or occurrence: the action of telling or being told something".

Information is the physical representation of abstractions that can cause a change in a person's state of knowledge. It can be a word, a printed page, a diagram, or a whole book, an article or an audio-visual material. It is useful in decision-making (Marchionini, 1995). Peter F. Drucker says "Information is the Manager's main tool, indeed the manager's capital, and it is he who must decide what information he needs and how to use it (Mohanti, 2002).

Information Seeking is a basic activity indulged in by all people and manifested through a particular behaviour (Ellis, 1989). It is also an aspect of scholarly work of most of the academic librarians who strive to develop collections, services, and organizational structures that facilitate information seeking.

Information Seeking Behaviour refers to the way people search for and utilize information. Most of the times students' 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 writing examinations.

1.3 Need for the Study

The nature of information is not easy to describe. Perhaps, the most explicit definition in literature defines information as recorded experience, which is used in decision-making. Today, Information and Communication Technology has
developed rapidly and has had a huge impact on access to information and on information seeking behaviour. The library staff must know and examine the criteria of information seeking and information used by the users for providing information services, designing new information systems, intervening in the operation of existing systems, or planning in new service programmes.

The need for this study arose from the users’ quest to get answers for the following questions:

1. What is the status of Information and Communication Technology in commerce college libraries in Mumbai?
2. What kind of information do faculty and students seek?
3. What methods are used for seeking information?
4. How is Information and Communication Technology used by the faculty and students in seeking information?
5. What are the problems of seeking information and how it can be solved?
6. What type of communication channels are used to gather latest information; the sources of information used in performing specific research activities; and duration of the time spent in browsing and reading literature by faculty and students.
7. How the library services support and satisfy the information needs of faculty and students in a changed environment.

And also literature search on LISA and scanning of journal articles, convention volumes revealed the complete lack of in-depth studies on the topic
except a few general surveys. It is time now to take into consideration actual user needs, behaviours, attitudes, problems, situations and gaps in knowledge. Hence, the need for the present study.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Keeping in view the need for the study, objectives and hypotheses, the researcher thought of selecting the problem entitled as below:

"Information Seeking Behaviour of Faculty and Students in the Changing Environment: A Study of Commerce College Libraries in Mumbai".

1.5 Objectives

The present study is to examine the information seeking behaviour of the faculty and students among commerce colleges in Mumbai in the changing (Information and Communication Technology) environment. The following are the objectives:

1. To identity the information seeking behaviour of the faculty and students of Commerce colleges in Mumbai;

2. To see the change in nature of information seeking by faculty and students with the application of Information and Communication Technology;

3. To determine the use of different formats of information sources;

4. To study the purpose of information seeking by the faculty and students;
5. To examine the motivating factors in information seeking by the faculty and students;
6. To study the problems faced by the faculty and students while seeking information;
7. To find out the different practices and methods used by the faculty and students in retrieving information in ICT Environment;
8. To find out to what extent the availability of information sources affects the information seeking patterns and communication of the users.
9. To suggest strategies of improving the faculty and students information seeking behaviour.

1.6 Hypotheses

Based on the rich experience and knowledge about the commerce college libraries, resources, services and the users, the researcher has formulated the following hypotheses.

1. The faculty and Students are aware of different formats of the electronic information sources available in the commerce college libraries.
2. Information and Communication Technology has a significant impact on the faculty and students information seeking behaviour.
3. There is a significant change in the use of format or mode of access to information sources.
4. The faculty and students are aware of different information search tools available.

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5. There is an increasing awareness and use of electronic information resources among the faculty and students; and

6. The faculty and students have to acquire new knowledge and skills in effective information seeking.

1.7 Research Methods and Techniques

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'method' as a mode of investigation; a special form of procedure adopted in any branch of mental activity for investigation and inquiry (OED, 1978) and methodology as the study of the directions of empirical research. In its broad sense, methodology refers to the processes, principles and the procedures by which one approaches a problem to seek solutions (Krishnaswamy, 1996). A researcher adopts certain techniques and procedures for studying a research problem, which are enumerated in the methodology.

1.7.1 Research Design

A research design is a plan of the proposed research work. It is a blue-print and therefore, at its best only tentative. Changes in the design are permitted and are dictated by considerations during the operations of the project. In other words, a research design is not a highly rigid plan to be followed without deviation, but rather a series of guide-posts meant to help researcher to proceed in the right direction.
The present research design consists of formulating the research problem, comprehensive review of the available literature, defining the scope of the study and its limitations, formulation of hypotheses, collecting, processing and analyzing the data and, finally, enumerating the inferences and the conclusion (Kothari, 1985).

For this study the data has been collected through various methods viz. historical analysis, literature survey, questionnaire survey and lastly personal interview. The historical analysis and literature survey are useful in collecting textual data from published and unpublished sources. The questionnaire method is quite useful in soliciting information from the faculty members, and students of commerce colleges in Mumbai. Hence, the data collected for this study has the combination of primary as well as secondary sources.

1.7.2 Data Collection

Data serves as the basis or as the raw material for the analysis. Without the analysis of factual data, no specific inferences can be drawn. Inferences based on imagination or guesswork cannot provide correct answers to research questions. The relevance, adequacy and reliability of data determine the quality of findings of the study. Hence, the importance of data for any type of studies.

1.7.3 Questionnaire Survey

Considering the nature of the problem, the most suitable method for data collection is the questionnaire method. A questionnaire is a written document,
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listing a series of questions pertaining to a problem under the study to which the investigator requires the answer. It may be defined as a data gathering device, containing a list of logically arranged written questions on a problem under investigation for which the researcher requires the responses as well as opinions for testing hypotheses.

Hence, this survey has been undertaken with the help of a questionnaire designed for the purpose. While designing the questionnaire, care was taken to include both closed and open-ended questions. Multiple Choice Questions enhance the response, as they are easy to fill up. Hence, they were included in sufficient numbers. Wherever necessary, interviews with a few users to interpret the questions to them and to collect the required data were also held.

1.7.4 Distribution of Questionnaires

The researcher tried several methods to distribute the questionnaire among the library users. The faculty and students were approached in the library and requested to fill up the questionnaires. Several faculty members were approached in the college staff room, computer labs, library and were persuaded to fill up the questionnaires. The librarians of different colleges were given several copies of the questionnaire and were requested to get them filled up by the students, whenever it was convenient for the users.
1.7.5 Population and Sample Size

The sample was drawn from sixty five colleges where commerce is one of the faculties in the colleges. Since the users' number, that is, users population size, is very large, the Random Sampling Technique has been applied. In order to assess the users' perception about the information seeking behaviour, 25% of the total number of faculty members is surveyed. The number of students in these colleges runs into thousands. Hence, the sample size was limited to 5% only.

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed among the students. 356 duly filled in questionnaires were received back, thus resulting into a response rate of 71.2%. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed among the faculty members. 143 faculty members returned the duly filled-in questionnaire, thus resulting into a response rate of 71.5%.

1.7.6 Pilot Study

The copies of the Questionnaire were taken to the students and faculty to collect the preliminary information as a pilot study. It was planned with the following objectives to:

- assess fundamentally whether the respondents can understand the questions easily and answer them without any difficulty.
- assess whether the questions are structured with the simple and self-explanatory words.
- judge whether the questions are meaningful and relevant.
1.7.7 Validation and Administration of the Questionnaire

The filled up questionnaires were planned to place for discussion with the subject experts to obtain their views regarding the content and coverage. Their views are considered and the required modifications are made wherever necessary in the questions. The content validity will be thus ensured and established.

The schedule was constructed in consultation with and approval of the practicing librarians to distribute the questionnaire. The Copies of the questionnaire were distributed personally to the respondents and the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents. The respondents are requested to fill up the questionnaire without skipping any question and not imposing any time restriction to fill the questionnaire. Help was made to the respondents whenever it was needed to fill up the questionnaire.

The suggestions received through the pilot study helped in revising and restructuring certain questions in the questionnaire. After the pilot study, the questionnaire was refined and finalized. The refined questionnaire was administered to the sample population. A copy of the questionnaire is appended as Appendix “A” and “B”.

1.7.8 Analysis of Data

The analysis of data is the highly skilled task in the research process. Analysis means the critical examination of the assembled data for studying the characteristics of the object under study and for determining the patterns of
relationships among the variables relating to it. A research work starts with the formulation of hypotheses. The analysis of the data helps in either rejecting or accepting the hypotheses.

In the present study, the data collected from the published sources and the questionnaire have been evaluated and analyzed to find out the results. The data from the questionnaire was fed to the computer by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), and the output was checked and corrected to find out if there were any typographical errors. The statistical analysis of the data was made with the help of the SPSS Software. The same tool was used for presenting the frequency distribution tables, graphs and other tables of variables to establish the relationship between them. In accordance with the procedures followed for qualitative research, the textual data has been organized, themes and patterns generated, and, finally, hypotheses were tested through statistical analysis. Based on the interpretation of data, inferences and conclusion were drawn.

1.7.9 Statistical Measures Employed

The statistical tools help a researcher in studying the concentration and dispersion of user's opinion. The averages, namely Arithmetic Mean and Median are used to study the concentration of user's opinion. Standard Deviation (SD), and Co-efficient of Variation are used to study the dispersion of observations. These measures are defined for the frequency distribution as follows:
1.7.91 Arithmetic Mean

The Arithmetic mean of N observations is given by

\[ \bar{X} = \frac{\sum f_i x_i}{N} \]  

Where ‘N’ is the total number of observations, ‘f’ represents the frequency of users, and ‘X’ denotes the variable used for the study.

1.7.92 Standard Deviation

The standard deviation for the frequency distribution is given by

\[ \sigma = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{n} f_i (x_i - \bar{X})^2} \]  

Where \( N = \sum_{i=1}^{n} f_i \) = Total frequencies, \( \bar{X} \) = Arithmetic Mean of X

1.7.93 Co-efficient of Variation

The relative measure of Standard Deviation (SD) is the Co-efficient of Variation (CV).

\[ CV(x) = \frac{\sigma}{\bar{X}} \times 100 \]  

Where \( \sigma \) = Standard Deviation

\( \bar{X} \) = Arithmetic Mean

The Co-efficient of Variation is used to study the homogeneity and heterogeneity of variation. The group is more consistent (or homogenous) and the
more the Co-efficient of Variation the group is, the more the variable (or less consistent).

1.7.94 Chi-Square Test

The Chi-Square test for independence is applied to study the association between two attributes and is given by

\[
\chi^2 = \frac{\sum f_i (O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \tag{4}
\]

Where \(O_i\) = the observed frequency
\(E_i\) = the expected frequency

The equation 4 follows the Chi-Square distribution \((n-1)\) d.f and \((r-1) (s-1)\) d.f. For \(r \times s\) is contingency table.

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of the present study is confined to examine information seeking behaviour of the faculty and students in the changing environment among commerce college libraries in Mumbai. The colleges were selected on the basis of the infrastructure and ICT facilities available in their libraries. Here 'Commerce College' is defined as a college where at least one of the faculties teaches the commerce subjects. The 'changing environment' refers to the contemporary environment i.e. present day, how the library resources developed, services planned, designed, rendered and users access the information, how users search for and utilize the information in the ICT environment.
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The limitation of this study is that it is restricted to only commerce discipline and hence leaves out several other significant disciplines like Science and Technology, Arts, Medical, Management and Engineering. Other limitation is that, geographically it is limited to Mumbai, thus effectively leaving out several other colleges located in other parts of Maharashtra. A comprehensive study involving colleges across Maharashtra state would have given a more meaningful picture of information seeking behaviour at a state level. But it is a stupendous work and as such researcher has concentrated research studies on the commerce colleges situated in the metropolitan city of Mumbai.

1.9 Chapterization

The entire study is divided into seven chapters. A brief overview of each chapter is given below:

Chapter 1

The first chapter gives an introduction to the problem of the study, discusses briefly on commerce education in India and Mumbai. It briefly covers the changing environment of academic libraries and information seeking behaviour. Further, a bird’s eye view on Commerce College libraries in Mumbai. Also it provides a glimpse of the need, objectives, hypotheses, scope and limitations of the study, research methods and the techniques adopted.

Chapter 2

This chapter covers a comprehensive literature review from important published and unpublished literature on changing information environment,
library resources and services in the ICT environment, information seeking 
behaviour, and information seeking models.

Chapter 3

The third chapter deals with the importance, growth and development of 
commerce education in India with special reference to Mumbai. It also deals with 
the brief profiles of commerce colleges in Mumbai affiliated to the University of 
Mumbai.

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter examines in detail on the information seeking 
behaviour, information seeking behaviour models, behavioral model of 
information seeking on the web.

Chapter 5

The fifth chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected 
through the questionnaires from the faculty among the commerce colleges. The 
data related to information seeking behaviour in ICT environment, the purpose of 
using electronic information resources, the problems faced in accessing the 
information and solution found etc. were analysed.

Chapter 6

The sixth chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data 
collected through the questionnaires from students among the commerce colleges. 
The data related to information seeking behaviour in the ICT environment, the
purpose of using electronic information resources, the problem faced in accessing information and solution found etc. were analysed.

Chapter 7

The chapter seven covers the summary of findings, suggestions, conclusion and the future areas of research. At the end, a selected bibliography and appendices are given.

1.10 Summing Up

The world of business is changing very fast. The last few decades has witnessed a remarkable change in the manner the business in India is run. Under such circumstances, the commerce education also has undergone transformation. Keeping in tune with the intense requirements of business and industry, the commerce colleges have started several specializations.

The faculty members and students now depend heavily on the libraries to prepare for their assignments, teaching and research work. The libraries, over the years, have consistently added new information sources and services to meet the varied needs of the users. They have embraced the ever changing environment (innovations in information communication technology) to the fullest extent. The libraries are moving towards becoming accessible from anywhere, and at anytime.

To sum up, the college libraries have to serve several purposes like helping the students with their coursework demands, helping the faculty in teaching and research. The commerce college libraries are presently doing very useful work by
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adding the best of information sources available at the national and international level to their existing collection.

The information and communication technological improvement in the college libraries has tremendously changed the ways in which the library users access, find and use the information today. The college librarians must employ the best practices of information management to address the contradictions and solve the problems caused by such rapid and accelerating technological integration.

The libraries must consider the information in all formats like electronic journals, Online Databases, CD ROM databases for inclusion. Once they realize the importance of digital sources, they will be able to serve their users better. Presently, this is the need of the hour in all commerce college libraries in general and Mumbai in particular.
References


