BRIDGING THE GAPS IN ASSESSING INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF RESEARCH SCHOLAR'S FOR USE OF RESOURCES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: A STUDY OF UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN UTTAR PRADESH (UP)

Vijay Laxmi Bhardwaj* Dr. Sanjay Kumar Sharma**

* Research Scholar

Department of Library and Information Science Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula, Uttar Pradesh, India

** Supervisor

Department of Library and Information Science Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula, Uttar Pradesh, India



Abstract: -This study investigates the information-seeking behaviour of research scholars across Five universities in Western Uttar Pradesh (UP), ranging from historically established institutions like the University of Lucknow (1921). A total of 125 responses were collected, offering insights into digital preferences, research stages, and library service expectations. The majority of respondents reported using laptops and preferred accessing journals through online search engines. Weekly library visits were common, underscoring consistent engagement with academic resources. Notably, 72 respondents were aware of library training programs, yet nearly half did not attend them. Among attendees, 44% found these programs very or somewhat effective, highlighting a need to enhance participation and relevance. Scholars most frequently requested AI-powered research recommendations and mobile-friendly websites to improve digital access. Today this e-resources on the demand by the academic level. This study carries out the scholars are taken the Data on primarily engaged and paper writing use many stages, emphasizing the requirement for the library support and services, this paper create the bridging the gaps between in the training and user focused.

Keywords:- Academic Library, Library services, Digital Literacy, Digital Divide, Information seeking behaviours, Bridging Gap

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The landscape of academic research has changed dramatically as a result of digital technologies, which have brought forth new ways to learn and share information. Electronic resources, including academic databases, eBooks, online journals, and institutional repositories, have become essential in today's academic

environments. Researchers have unmatched access to information on a global basis because to these digital instruments. Digital resources have advantages over traditional print materials, such as immediate access, robust search capabilities, and remote usage. These aspects are particularly helpful in an era characterized by

multidisciplinary study and international scholarly collaboration.

Digital technology integration in academia hasn't been as successful in every institution and area, though. One example of the difficulties associated with unequal digital adoption is Western Uttar Pradesh, a major educational hub in North India that is home to many colleges and research institutes. There is still a big disconnect between researchers' actual use of the resources and their availability, even though many of these institutions have ostentatiously embraced digital transformation by establishing electronic libraries and subscribing to digital databases. This disparity highlights the wider challenges that emerging educational systems encounter when attempting to adjust to worldwide digital developments.

Faculty and student disparities in digital literacy are equally alarming. Many researchers find it difficult to carry out sophisticated searches, evaluate online content critically, and navigate complicated digital platforms, especially those traditional or non-digital from academic backgrounds. Limited institutional support and a dearth of organized training programs exacerbate this problem. Lack of collaboration between academic departments and library services frequently results in low awareness and underuse of the digital resources that are accessible.

This study seeks to explore these issues by analysing the information-seeking behaviours of research scholars in Western Uttar Pradesh. It will assess levels of awareness, usage habits, and perceived obstacles in the adoption of digital academic resources. Key areas of investigation include: the degree of familiarity with digital tools, preferred resource types, search methodologies, and barriers—whether technical, financial, or educational—faced by researchers.

The findings of this research are expected to have wide-reaching implications. First, they can help academic libraries tailor their digital offerings and improve resource allocation. Second, the study can inform policymakers on where to invest in infrastructure and training. Third, it contributes to the global discourse on digital equity in higher education, especially in emerging regions. Importantly, by identifying effective practices among successful users, the research may highlight scalable solutions that other institutions can adopt.

Despite its Western Uttar Pradesh focus, this research is relevant to other emerging academic ecosystems dealing with comparable institutional and technological issues. Since digital technologies are becoming increasingly important in academic research around the world, it is imperative to guarantee equitable access and effective use in order to preserve the quality and competitiveness of scholarly work. The objective of this research is to draw attention to existing deficiencies and offer practical suggestions that can aid in closing the digital divide in academic settings. By looking at how technology, institutional strategy, and user behavior interact, it provides insightful information to help academics advance and innovate in the digital era.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Dixit. Chitransh al.. (2024).et Examining how researchers seek out information is the focus of this essay. Finding out why researchers use information resources and what kinds of issues they encounter when doing so is the goal of the study. In order to collect primary data for the study, survey research was utilized and structured questionnaires were distributed. According to the results, the majority of respondents (51.79 percent) are between the ages of 23 and 27. The data shows that most people who fill out surveys are doing so for school projects.

García-Orosa, Berta & Abutayeh, Noor. (2024). The study sought to examine the role of academic libraries in facilitating the process of distance learning in Jordanian universities. The study objectives were accomplished using a descriptive approach. The data-gathering process involved the administration of an online questionnaire by email, Facebook, and Twitter. Additionally, a literature review of articles relating to the topic matter was conducted as part of the study. The data analysis was conducted with SPSS 25. The survey revealed that university libraries offered moderate and low degrees of support for the distance education process. Libraries failed to utilize various technologies, including their website and social media platforms, to enhance their digital content and provide the necessary information to users. The databases to which the library had a subscription had a low accessibility rate of 38%. Similarly, the academic library's virtual activities to promote reading also had a low accessibility rate. Furthermore, the library lacked any mechanisms for user engagement. However, the results indicated that the guidelines and rules are adaptable to the library's service provision. The authors highlight the suitability of this topic for future peer research and investigation.

Vijavan, Abirami & Javaprakash, M. (2024). The goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive inventory of the resources that are utilized to access information, as well as to gain knowledge about the characteristics, importance, and classification ofthese resources. Additionally, we would like to know how often people seek information and how satisfied they are with the results. Taken together, our research looked at how nursing students seek out and use information, as well as the means via which they have obtained this data. This article presents the results of a descriptive and analytical study that used a well-structured questionnaire to gather data from Salem. Participant usage of the mobile device for information seeking and storage was prevalent, according to the results. In order to ensure that nursing students have access to accurate and current information, training programs are necessary. The majority of nursing students who participated in the survey sought out the information for educational objectives, and they made use of both print and electronic media. In addition, the majority of the participants accessed and stored the data via electronic devices. Hey there! People require information

as a fundamental necessity. Information is essential for societal progress in the modern day. The importance of studying the availability of sources for information seeking in the digital era cannot be overstated. Academic libraries are a great resource for students, faculty, researchers since they allow easy access to a wealth of knowledge. The idea of informationseeking behavior developed out of the more general field of user studies, and people's information demands for decision-making are influenced by their requirements and interests (Raja & Kumar, 2015). In 2014, Ikenwe Identifying information needs, searching out the necessary information to satisfy those needs, selecting the proper information, and evolving that selection are all parts of information-seeking behavior (Davies, 2007). In a recent study, Farahian and Parhamnia (2020) examined nursing students' information-seeking habits, the resources they had access to, and the obstacles they faced.

Duragannavar, Gururaj et al., (2023). Information plays a significant role in teaching, learning and research. It is an essential resource for all the professionals to work effectively in their respective fields. Information is a basic input for business firms, government departments, public enterprises, and non-profit organisations. To acquire, understand and use of relevant information involves a critical process of collection, organization, evaluation and dissemination. It also calls for adequate awareness of the domain knowledge, skills of access, credibility of sources, authenticity and timeliness

etc. This study makes a sincere effort to collect the data from the research scholars regarding their perception, method of accessing and using the information.

Hasan, Shahzeb & Ghosh, Chaitali. (2023). The research habits of library and information science majors are the focus of this investigation. Research participants have primarily been Master of Library and Information Science (MLISc) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) students, from whom the necessary data and resources were retrieved with relative ease. The majority of the students who continued their research used publicly available internet sources, as shown in the paper.

Chanda, Dr. (2021). The utilization of technological information originating college libraries contributes to the growth of both businesses and technical manpower in the collegiate education sector. This is because college libraries are prominent information organizations and play a critical role in meeting the information needs of their users. The study's overarching goal is to learn how college libraries assist their patrons in their quest for knowledge. The study's overarching goal is to better understand how college libraries in the Guwahati Metro area use and access information in order to draw comparisons and assessments of their information current environments. The methodology consists of a survey that was carried out using a basic random sample method to gather In order to accomplish this, structured surveys have been developed. In order to make the study statistically significant for the overall efficient and successful usage of management libraries, it has been suggested to employ an appropriate statistical technique. Results: Google Search is a great place to look for information, and the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAX) is the best IT-based resource for libraries. The primary goal of conducting research is to fill out assignments, take notes, and get ready for competitive exams. The respondents' primary concern is the lack of appropriate study materials, slow internet connections, and poorly located information sources.

Kumar and Singh (2020) explore the persistent disparities between institutions in developed and developing regions in India. In many under-resourced settings, infrastructural limitations and financial constraints researchers from fully engaging with digital scholarly Library resources, soexacerbating global inequalities in academic participation.

Khan, Amjid & Khan, Asad. (2020). This study aimed to examine the information-seeking behavior (ISB) of research students at the University of Peshawar. It looked at their information needs, sources, resources, obstacles to ISB, the importance of libraries to research quality, and the factors that motivate them to use libraries. Approach, methodology, and design: The researchers in this study used a quantitative strategy, gathering their data through the use of questionnaires. Research students at the University of Peshawar pursuing Master's, Master of Philosophy, or Doctoral degrees in the Arts and

Humanities, Social Sciences, or Management Information Sciences made up the study's population. A convenient sample size of 300 research students was used. An impressive 85% of participants participated in the survey, and SPSS (20 version) was used for data analysis. Important results: Students who were doing research sought for information to help them with a variety of tasks, including choosing a study problem, gathering up-to-date material, and producing their research proposals, articles, and theses. These studies drew on a variety of sources and tools to satisfy their information demands. When asked where they got the material they needed for their projects, the majority of students said they attended workshops specifically for research or sought out the assistance of other academics. Additionally, in order to fulfill their information needs, research students utilized online research resources and the internet. In addition, they made use of the library's research and information services to find what they needed. Research students have identified a variety of obstacles to obtaining the necessary knowledge, with the most common being a lack of adequate internet access, inadequate information and communication technology facilities, and a lack of study spaces available in libraries. The most important reasons for using or visiting the library were the dependable information sources and electronic databases. Caveats of the research: The convenience of the sample recruitment raises the likelihood of sample bias in this study, and the fact that it was conducted at the University of

Peshawar means that the results cannot be applied outside of that setting. Implications for practice: librarians may feel compelled to rethink their information literacy curriculum in light of the results, with the goal of raising the ISB of the students included in the study. The results might encourage the institution to upgrade its Internet and ICT infrastructure bv informing administrators of the challenges research students encounter while trying to find the information they need. The purpose of this research was to fill a void in the existing literature on ISB by examining it within the framework of PSU. It uncovered elements that either enhance or hinder researchers' utilization of libraries. One possible outcome of these findings is the development of a reliable information literacy curriculum to bolster research-based education at Peshawar University.

Gupta, Divyanshu & Margam, Madhusudhan. (2018). The purpose of the paper is to explore how research scholars of University of Delhi seeking for information in digital environment. A structured questionnaire was designed and personally distributed among 140 respondents, of which, 123 responses received eliciting a response rate of 87.86 per cent. The findings of the study reveal that most of the respondents prefer digital platform for seeking their required information. E-journals were very common source among the respondents for seeking their information. Wiley Online Library was the top most used database out of ten most used databases. The faster communication in this digital era affects the e-resources usage pattern of respondents. Most of the respondents familiar with full-text databases (e.g. Elsevier, JStore, Emerald, etc.). Unavailability of required specific material in the library is the problem faced by the respondents. Finally, a majority of respondents attend professional conferences, seminars, and workshops for their current awareness and individual need of information.

Aharony (2010) identifies some challenges on widespread lack of awareness among researchers regarding the full spectrum of e-resources available through institutional online Portal. This limited awareness is further compounded by financial and logistical constraints.

As Frazier (2001) find out, paywalls, costly subscription models, and intricate login protocols frequently obstruct access—barriers that are particularly burdensome for scholars in developing countries. Technical issues further amplify these challenges. Singh and Sharma (2018) said that unreliable internet connections, obsolete hardware, and non-compatible software environments in regularly disrupt scholars' ability to access or use the digital E resources effectively in library

Above study explore some barriers contribute to the utilization the Library E-Resources in many academic levels This study emphasizes the necessity of new innovation. Such an integrated approaches are essentials to be end the digital divide in equitable participation in the Global perspective in academic age.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine the level of awareness and usage of Library E- resources among research scholars in West Uttara Pradesh
- To Explore the most popular platforms and sites for obtaining scholarly resources.
- To examine the challenges faced by scholars in utilizing digital libraries.
- To propose strategies for improving Eresource accessibility and usability
 Libraries

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive survey method to explore and analyze the information-seeking behaviour of research scholars in academic libraries across selected universities in Western Uttar Pradesh. The objective is to understand how scholars interact with library resources, the challenges they face, their preferences for digital tools, and the effectiveness of existing library services and training programs.

1.4.2 Data Collection tool

A structured questionnaire was developed as the primary tool for data collection. The questions were both closed and open-ended, designed to capture diverse aspects of information-seeking behaviour, such as frequency of library visits, preferred resources, use of technology, awareness and participation in library training programs, and expectations from academic libraries.

1.4.3 Population and Sampling

The study was conducted among research scholars enrolled in five prominent universities in Western Uttar Pradesh, including historically significant institutions such as the University of Lucknow (established in 1921). A convenient sampling method was used to select participants, ensuring a representative mix from various disciplines. A total of 125 valid responses were collected from scholars pursuing M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs.

1.4.4 Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered both online and in-person over a two-month period. Respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained. The questionnaire covered multiple dimensions of information-seeking behaviour, including access methods (physical vs digital), preferred devices, types of information sought, satisfaction with existing library infrastructure, and recommendations for service improvement.

1.4.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to interpret responses. The findings were further discussed to identify patterns, gaps, and opportunities in the current library services. The qualitative responses were thematically analyzed to supplement the numerical data and provide context to user preferences and expectations.

1.4.6 Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to research scholars from five universities in Western UP and may not reflect the information behaviour of students or scholars from other regions or academic levels. Despite this, the study provides valuable insights into the evolving needs of research scholars and identifies areas for enhancement in academic library services.

1.7 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1

Frequency of Library Visits by Research

Scholars (n = 125)

Frequency of	No. of	Percentage
Visit	Respondents	(%)
Daily	18	14.4%
2–3 times a	26	20.8%
week		
Weekly	47	37.6%
Occasionally	22	17.6%
Rarely/Never	12	9.6%
Total	125	100%



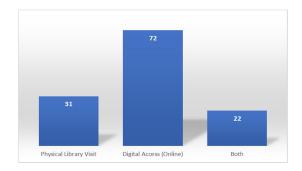
Frequency 1.1:

Frequency of Library Visits by Research Scholars (n = 125)

Table 1.1 presents the frequency of library visits by research scholars, based on a sample of 125 respondents. The data reveals that the majority of research scholars (37.6%) visit the library on a weekly basis, indicating a consistent but not daily engagement with library resources. A significant portion, 20.8%, reported visiting the library 2-3 times a week, suggesting a relatively higher level of academic involvement. Daily visits were reported by 14.4% of respondents, reflecting a smaller yet dedicated group of scholars who rely heavily on the library for their research needs. Meanwhile, 17.6% of the scholars visit the library only occasionally, and 9.6% reported rarely or never using the library facilities. Overall, while most research scholars maintain some regularity in their library usage, a notable proportion either infrequently access or avoid the library altogether, which could be due to factors such as availability of digital resources or personal research habits.

Table 1.2:
Preferred Mode of Access to Library
Resources

Mode of Access	No. of	Percentage
	Respondents	(%)
Physical Library	31	24.8%
Visit		
Digital Access	72	57.6%
(Online)		
Both	22	17.6%
Total	125	100%



Frequency 1.2:

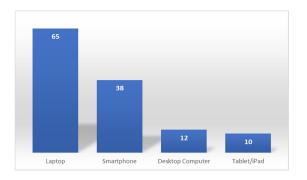
Preferred Mode of Access to Library Resources

Table 1.2 highlights the preferred mode of access to library resources among research scholars. A majority of the respondents (57.6%) indicated a preference for digital access, reflecting a growing inclination toward online resources and the convenience of remote access to scholarly materials. About 24.8% of the scholars still prefer to visit the physical library, suggesting that for some, traditional modes of accessing information remain important—possibly for accessing print materials or for a focused study environment. Additionally, 17.6% of the respondents reported using both physical and digital modes, indicating a blended approach to resource utilization. This distribution underscores the increasing role of digital platforms in academic research, while also highlighting the continued relevance of physical library spaces.

Table 1.3:

Devices Used for Accessing Digital
Resources

Device Used	No. of	Percentage
	Respondents	(%)
Laptop	65	52.0%
Smartphone	38	30.4%
Desktop	12	9.6%
Computer		
Tablet/iPad	10	8.0%
Total	125	100%



Frequency 1.3:

Devices Used for Accessing Digital Resources

Table 1.3 presents the types of devices used by research scholars to access digital resources. The majority of respondents (52.0%) reported using laptops, making it the most commonly used device, likely due to its portability and functionality for academic work. Smartphones were the second most preferred device, used by 30.4% of respondents, reflecting the convenience and accessibility of mobile technology for quick reference and reading. Desktop computers accounted for 9.6% of

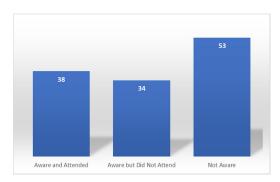
usage, suggesting that a smaller group still relies on more stationary setups, possibly in institutional or home office settings. Tablets and iPads were used by 8.0% of the scholars, indicating limited preference for these devices, possibly due to their smaller screen size or limited processing capabilities for complex academic tasks. Overall, the data suggests a strong preference for portable and versatile devices, especially laptops and smartphones, in accessing digital academic content.

Table 1.4:

Awareness and Participation in Library

Training Programs

Category	No. of	Percentage
	Respondents	(%)
Aware and	38	30.4%
Attended		
Aware but Did Not	34	27.2%
Attend		
Not Aware	53	42.4%
Total	125	100%



Frequency 1.4:

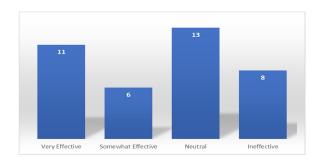
Awareness and Participation in Library

Training Programs

Table 4 illustrates the level of awareness and participation in library training programs among research scholars. Of the respondents, only 30.4% reported being both aware of and having attended such programs, indicating relatively low active participation. Another 27.2% were aware of the programs but chose not to attend, which may suggest barriers such as scheduling conflicts, perceived irrelevance, or lack of interest. Notably, the largest group—42.4% of respondents—were not even aware of the existence of library training programs. This significant lack of awareness highlights a potential gap in communication or outreach by librarv authorities. Overall, the data suggests that while some scholars benefit from library training initiatives, there is a pressing need to improve awareness and encourage greater participation to enhance the effective use of library resources.

Table 1.5: Perceived Effectiveness of Library Training Programs (Among Attendees Only, n = 38)

Perceived	No. of	Percentage
Effectiveness	Respondents	(%)
Very Effective	11	28.9%
Somewhat	6	15.8%
Effective		
Neutral	13	34.2%
Ineffective	8	21.1%
Total	38	100%



Frequency 1.5:

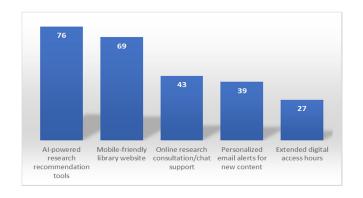
Perceived Effectiveness of Library Training Programs (Among Attendees Only, n = 38)

Table 1.5 presents the perceived effectiveness of library training programs among the 38 research scholars who attended them. Of these attendees, 28.9% found the programs to be very effective, indicating a positive impact on their ability to utilize library resources. Another 15.8% considered the programs somewhat effective, suggesting partial benefit. However, the largest proportion (34.2%) expressed a neutral stance, implying that the programs may not have significantly influenced their skills or practices. Notably, 21.1% of the attendees found the training programs ineffective, pointing to possible shortcomings in content relevance, delivery methods, or practical applicability. These findings suggest that while the programs have been helpful for some, there is room for improvement in making them more engaging, relevant, and impactful for a broader group of participants.

Table 1.6:

Preferred Support Services to Improve
Library Use

Suggested Service	No. of	Percentage
	Mentions	(%) (Multiple
		Responses)
AI-powered	76	60.8%
research		
recommendation		
tools		
Mobile-friendly	69	55.2%
library website		
Online research	43	34.4%
consultation/chat		
support		
Personalized email	39	31.2%
alerts for new		
content		
Extended digital	27	21.6%
access hours		



Frequency 1.6:

Preferred Support Services to Improve
Library Use

Table 1.6 outlines the preferred support services suggested by research scholars to enhance their library usage, with respondents allowed to select multiple options. The most frequently mentioned service was AI-powered research recommendation tools, selected by 60.8% of participants, highlighting a strong interest in intelligent systems that can streamline information discovery and improve research efficiency. Following closely, mobile-friendly library websites were favored by 55.2% of scholars, indicating the demand for accessible and user-friendly digital interfaces on mobile devices.

Online research consultation or chat support was suggested by 34.4% of respondents, reflecting a need for real-time assistance in navigating databases and refining research strategies. Additionally, 31.2% expressed interest in personalized email alerts for new content, suggesting a preference for automated updates on relevant materials. Lastly, extended digital access hours were mentioned by 21.6%, indicating that some scholars face time constraints and would benefit from greater flexibility in accessing library services. Overall, the responses point toward a growing demand for technologically enhanced, personalized, and accessible library support systems.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This study provides a detailed overview of the shifting patterns in information-seeking behaviour among research scholars in selected universities of Western Uttar Pradesh, emphasizing both advancements and ongoing challenges. Despite the varied academic backgrounds of these institutions, a common pattern is evident: researchers are increasingly reliant on digital tools, especially laptops and web search engines, to support their academic pursuits. Scholarly journals continue to be the primary source of academic information, underscoring their enduring value in research. Although awareness of available training programs is relatively high, the levels of participation and their perceived impact remain unsatisfactory. Almost half of the respondents had not attended any training sessions, pointing to the pressing need for programs that are more engaging, inclusive, and practically oriented. Additionally, the growing demand for AI-driven research assistance, better navigation systems, and mobileaccessible platforms signals a strong preference for libraries that are smart, adaptive, and easy to use. During critical phases such as data collection and thesis writing, scholars express the need for specialized academic support. However, technological and educational limitations often obstruct the full potential of digital resources. To overcome these obstacles, academic libraries must transform into dynamic, user-focused, technology-enhanced environments. By aligning their services with the specific needs of researchers and strengthening digital infrastructure, institutions can significantly boost research quality, empower scholars, and

contribute to a more robust and innovative academic environment in the region.

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