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Review Of Research

LEGAL INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOR MODELS

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ABSTRACT

Access to information has been prime agenda of libraries. In the legal information system, timely access to information pertaining to judgments, case laws etc., to the lawyers, teaching faculty, and students and public in general is necessary. Efforts are made in this paper to highlight the significance law libraries and its growth over the period of time. Strategies to search information, seeking behavior and Information seeking models are discussed along with concept of data to wisdom and also explore various e-resources pertaining law discipline are provided.

KEYWORDS :*legal information system , seeking behavior and Information seeking models* **.**

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Higher education system in India has constantly strived hard to build colleges and universities as places of culture and learning keeping them open to all and, above all, reinforcing the theme of learning throughout life. Participating in and contributing to major debates concerning the direction and future of society is seen as a major task and a moral obligation of the university system. India recognises that the new global scenario poses unprecedented challenges for the higher education system in general law profession in particular. Law librarianship is a challenging profession and information requirements of the user and it is truly a vital factor in the administration of justice, an institution of extra-ordinary social significance in a free society. Users of law libraries may be law students, teachers, practitioners, judges, civil servants, local government officials, legislators, jurists, or research scholars.

Since the rise of law colleges and universities across the world during the age of enlightenment, the law library has always held a central position as the heart of an institution, both symbolically and in terms of its physical placement. The law universities and colleges in India have been the living repository of a long-cherished heritage- a heritage continually revitalized by the students, teachers and researchers with their contribution to and interaction with it. Law profession plays a deceive role in the present century. In the present competitive circumstances, all the competitions of economy, science and technology, and comprehensive national power are competitions of persons in the final analysis. The status of law colleges/ universities in India is shown in following table.

Selected State-wise Number of Applications Received by BCI for Setting up of Law Colleges/Universities in India (2015-2016)	
States/UTs	**Number**
Andhra Pradesh	2
Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura	5
Bihar	1
Chhattisgarh	2
Delhi	1
Gujarat	19
Himachal Pradesh	5
Karnataka	4
Kerala	1
Madhya Pradesh	3
Maharashtra and Goa	8
Punjab and Haryana	10
Rajasthan	10
Tamil Nadu and Puducherry	1
Uttarakhand	6
Uttar Pradesh	35
West Bengal	3
India	**116**

Source : Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3129, dated on 17.12.2015

1.2 CONCEPTS OF INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

The concept of "Information needs" has proved to be elusive one and difficult to define and the topic is approached from such a variety of prospective as that no single definition exists. It is quite evident that information is vital resource to every individual. There is no aspect of a human life where information is not required. As such it goes without saying that there is a 'information needs' is difficult. Crawford (1978) agrees that 'information need' is a difficult concept to define. to isolate and especially to measure. It involves a cognitive process, which may operate on different levels of consciousness, hence may not be clear to the inquirer himself.

According to Brenda Dervin (1989) 'an information need is an impediment preventing an individual form moving forward in cognitive time space. The person is faced with a gap that must be bridged by 'asking question, creating ideas, and/or obtaining resources. Such gaps do not occur in the abstract but arise out of particular critical events and situations'. Seetharama (1996) identifies types of information need, namely Scientific and technical information; Management and policy information; Operational information and General information.

Information Seeking and use of Information are interrelated. The information needs of a particular group of users, information flow from a specific situation/organisations are difficult to determine and again the use of information are so complex and diverse that there cannot be simple and single to cope up with the task of effective retrieval of needed information without assessing their specific information. Hence this complex situation has given rise to the growing concept of information searching and the manner of determining the pattern of searching is said to be information seeking

behaviour. Information seeking behaviour results from the recognition of some need perceived by the user who as a consequence makes demand upon formal system such as Libraries, Information Centres, online services or some other person in order to satisfy the perceived need.
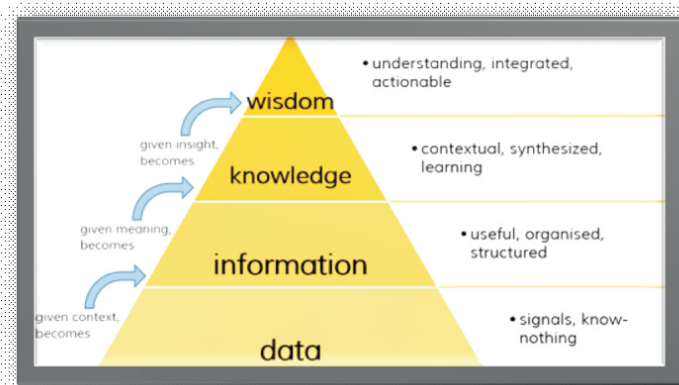
Wilson (1999) characterizes what he calls "Data Behavior" as 'those exercises a man may participate in while recognizing his or her own requirements for data, hunting down such data in any capacity, and utilizing or exchanging that data'. An individual gets data keeping in mind the end goal to connect a crevice in a specific basic episode. Data looking for conduct emerges as an outcome of a need saw by a data client, who keeping in mind the end goal to fulfill that need, makes requests upon formal or casual data sources or administrations, which brings about achievement or inability to discover pertinent data. On the off chance that effective, the individual then makes utilization of the data found and may either completely or mostly fulfill the apparent need; in the event that he neglects to fulfill the need, he should begin seeking once more.

1.3 INFORMATION USE AND SEARCH BEHAVIOUR

Information-seeking behaviour is best understood in the context of primordial concepts that underlay the intellectual thought processes. The basic concepts are data, information, knowledge and wisdom in that sequential order. Data is the primordial state which gets converted into information through qualitative interaction, and reaching the further stage and the highest that of transforming itself in to knowledge. Data may be "raw, unevaluated or unprocessed or meaningless" and, in other words, "the representation of a fact or set of facts, about an entity, or value or a set of values of the attributes of an entity, in a formalized manner suitable for communication, interpretation or processing by human and for mechanical or computer means are "data". The vast majority of documents stacked in any information system are said to be data and no wonder the saying "garbage in and garbage out" has gained currency among scientists all over the world. Information is thus generated by the manipulation of raw data. Information is hard to define and it continues to be defined variously. In the context of information technology; information is increasingly viewed as a message, because it is transmitted by the act or process of communication. It may assume response. That is why the library is being increasingly termed, as an information retrieval system. Information services including abstracting and indexing services, databases, custom search services, literature search services and translation services assist in the process of converting raw data into information.

The process of information is closely related to the next higher state of knowledge. The existing knowledge gets modified in the very process. There is a close relationship between data, information and knowledge i.e., Information is piecemeal, fragmented, particular, whereas knowledge is structural, coherent and universal; information is timely, transitory, perhaps even emphemeral, whereas knowledge is of enduring significance; information is a flow of messages, whereas knowledge is a stock largely resulting from the flow, in the sense that the input of information may affect the stock of knowledge by added to it restructuring it or changing it in any way though conceivably may leave knowledge unchanged". Knowledge is thus assimilated correlated and com¬prehended and wisdom is the end product. Information and knowledge are of various types.

The relationship between data, information, knowledge and wisdom may be viewed in terms of decision-making process. If data processing is to be viewed as an organizing process, the next stage of information may be connoted by the synthesizing process. The difference between data and information is as between analysis and synthesis. The highest level of knowledge consists of two related processes, namely, "judgmental" and "decision process". The concep¬tual state of knowledge which is most relevant in our context belongs to the later stage as shown in following figure.

1.4 INFORMATION SEEKING MODEL

Information seeking behavior is comparable and is very similar in different fields, the difference generally comes in the emphasis. Ellis Model of Information Seeking consists of six features i.e. starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring and extracting. The features briefly discussed are;

• Starting

In the starting stage of the information seeking process the researcher is beginning a new or unfamiliar project. This initial familiarization involves activities characteristic of the initial search for information" and includes obtaining starting references and information. The idea is to identify the topic and begin a search for relevant information. In starting a research project there are many informal and formal resources one could use. Informal resources can include personal contacts or colleagues, browsing through catalogue systems or the Internet. Formal resources are such things as printed indexes, formal bibliographies, research guides, and abstracts.

• Chaining

Chaining involves locating references to further work by using relevant material already retrieved that categorizes chaining as being either forward or backward chaining. Backward chaining looks at the references within an article to locate other relevant printed articles written in the past. Forward chaining makes use of citation indexes to find out which articles have cited the relevant article you possess (Ellis et al. 1993).

• Browsing

Browsing can be seen as either a specific stage in the information seeking process or an activity carried out during phases of the process; for example, during the starting stage one may browse library bookshelves for initial sources of information.

• Differentiating

Ellis et al. (1993) define differentiating as "... an activity which uses differences between sources as a filter on the nature and quality of the material examined". Differentiating is based on human judgment to determine the relevance of the information retrieved. The selection of material based on some predefined criteria defines the usefulness or satisfaction of the information retrieved. This criteria can be based on the actual information contained in the publication, or guidelines such as cost saving, precision, completeness, credibility, and convenience of location, or it could be based on the perceived relevance of specific authors, journals, institutions, etc.

• Monitoring

Monitoring "is the activity of maintaining awareness of developments in an area through regularly following particular sources" as previously noted, a large part of monitoring is conducted using browsing techniques. However, browsing is also a major information gathering technique in its own right. In monitoring the individual must determine a select range of sources to look at so as not to get overwhelmed. These sources are usually the predominant sources used in the particular field. There may be different sources of information used in each discipline for monitoring, but the overall nature and form of the activity is the same.
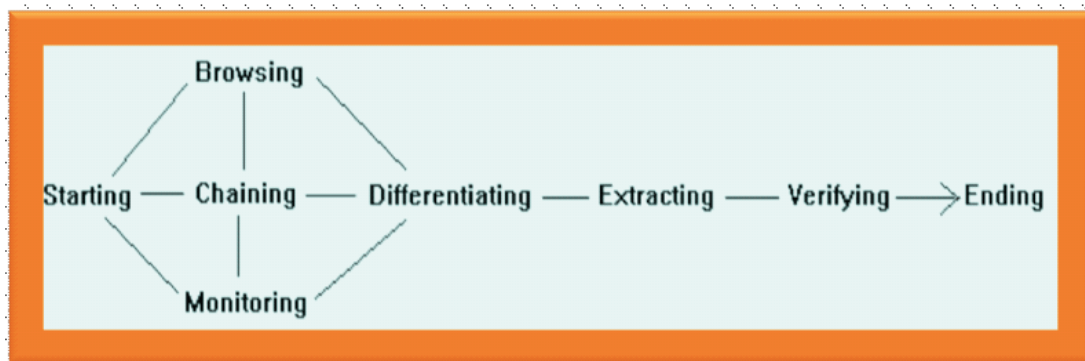
• **Extracting**

Extracting is defined as the behavior involved in systematically going through a specific source and identifying material to locate or follow up on. Formal sources are more frequently used for systematic analysis, although informal sources may also be used in extracting. This is a task which is primarily carried out during the starting or initial familiarization phase of the information seeking process to produce a concise list of references to begin searching with.

• **Verification and Ending**

Verification and ending are information-gathering activities used during the verifying and ending phases of researching. In verifying, the information and sources used to produce their own material are checked for information accuracy and errors. The sorts of problems that come to light include typographical, numerical, equation, and citation errors. Verification for most only involves knowing and using reliable sources. Most scholars do their major information gathering activities at the start of a project for initial familiarization, and some also perform literature and information searches during the lifetime of the project.

Wilson (1999) proposes how these features may relate to each other depicted in Figure.

1.5 Legal Information E-Resources

Some of the important e-resources pertaining to law and allied areas which are available under UGC Infonet consortia are:

Publisher	Number of Journals
Annual Review of Law and Social Sciences http://www.annualreviews.org/journal/lawsocsci	1
Cambridge University Press	17
JSTOR	97
Oxford University Press	26
Project Muse	7
Science Direct	7
Springer Link	14
Taylor and Francis	9
Wiley Blackwell Publishing	19

Other e-resources of interest to the legal practitioners and academicians are
• Manupatra Database
• LexisNexis
• AIR Online
• Annual Survey of Indian Law
• Executive Chartered Secretary
• ExCus – (Excise, Custom and Service Tax)
• Journal of Indian Law Institute (1958-2007) 50 years
• Patents & Trade Marks Cases
• Supreme Court Cases Full Text Online
• Taxmann's Direct Tax Laws

1.6 CONCLUSION

For Legal profession, current information about case laws and developments in various national, state level and district court needs to be updated and as such by making use of print and online reports and databases, the library has to equip with these resources to support the information needs of law professionals and students. Law librarianship is a special library and as such the librarians have to be more technical and specialized in their collection development, organization and information services to the users.

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