



Information Needs and Seeking Behavior of Print Media Journalists in Rewa Division

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Abstract

This study information needs and seeking behaviour of users is very important in order to develop good library collection and provide effective competent services to the users. This article reports and the results of study conducted to determine the information needs and information seeking behavior of journalists working in Rewa Division, Madhaya Pradesh.

It was found that journalists used various type sources for acquiring the needs information, area of specialization and academic background. The periodicals, news magazines current issue of newspapers, newspaper clipping, files and dictionaries/bibliographical dictionaries are most frequently used sources of information by them.

Keywords: Information needs; Information seeking behavior; journalists; Rewa Division

Introduction

Information needs, seeking and using are the areas of fundamental concern to library and information science professionals. During the past 30 years or so, a considerable body of literature has been produced dealing with the information needs and seeking behaviour of both individuals and groups in a variety of contexts. According to Taliya (1992)^[1], it is understood that information needs arise when an individual finds himself in a problematic situation, when he or she no longer can manage with the knowledge that he or she possesses. We, as individuals and groups, "repeatedly find ourselves in situations where information is needed, gathered, sought, organized, retrieved, processed, evaluated, and used" (Solomon, 1996)^[2].

In this age of information explosion, our lives are based on information. Rapid changes in every field have made it a key resource for survival in this world. Every moment of our life depends of information, without which, it would be difficult to exist in the present information oriented society and the process does not stop anywhere as technical, economical commercial and cultural fields changes are occurring almost every moment. With the deep-rooted transformation of the world, our crucial need is to be informed of what is going on around us. Ever-growing competition among nations in the field of trade, education, technology etc leads to the acquirement of information and knowledge.

With the revolution in information and communication technologies, flow of information is tremendously increased. Access to information has become rapid and cheap. People can get to know a lot of everything without going anywhere. Abundant information is available in their houses and offices. Now they can enter in libraries, information centers, documentation centers or an organization in cyber environment and use their resources without entering their four walls. We can say that the physical movement of people in this age has decreased while the movement of information has increased.

Objectives of Study

The present study has the following objectives to achieve:

1. To determine the academic background and area of specialization of the journalists of Rewa Division.
2. To find out the ways and means of collection of data for preparing report on any event.
3. To identify the areas on which the journalists gather information.
4. To study the nature and level of accredited of the journalists.
5. Identify the sources which are used/consulted by the journalists for gathering information and preparing reports.
6. To identify the facilities provided to the journalists by the parent organization.
7. To identify the information institutions which help the journalists in enriching their knowledge.

Literature Reviewed

If something is not done to reconnect the study of use and users to their intellectual roots in the social sciences, then the spasmodic and non-cumulative kind of library research will continue (Ennis, 1964)^[3].

Academic research conducted by those in the library/information science field studying issues surrounding U.S. reporters has been sparse and devoted more towards single technology adoptions, information management practices, and education (which will not be covered in this review). A review of the literature reveals that a holistic approach considering all information methods and types has not been pursued by the researchers studying American Journalists recently.

The findings of the work "Information Seeking Behaviour and the preparations of information channels by Journalists of two daily newspapers" by Nancy Lee Herron (1986)^[4] has revealed that, newspaper journalists surveyed prefer informal channel use over formal channel use two to one, and the personal communication especially with colleagues was found to be the most important factor across all six principal areas of journalistic specialty. While journalists were relatively

consistent on their use of the various source types, there was diversity in the way, the different type of journalists look for and use varied information sources. Although reliability of channel and source types use was perceived to be important to journalists, the extent of use of a library and its accessibility tend to affect the frequency of use.

Dervin and Nilan (1986) [5] stated the trend of exposing the contexts of information seeking and using. Their approaches included the aim of being receptive to differences manifest in different information seeking and using situations.

Eden (1993)[6], in his study on information needs and seeking behaviour patterns of journalists in Nigeria has clearly depicted specific areas of information needs and information seeking behaviour patterns of journalists in selected Nigerian towns, formal information sources consulted and the role of libraries and librarians in the media organizations in the concerned areas.

Rosamma Joseph (1993) [7] conducted a survey of Indian journalists in the Indian state of Kerala who were in environments that had very little access to technology. This particular study focused on journalist's use of libraries – both news libraries and other libraries. The results of the study suggest that journalists in Kerala used the library mainly for background information on stories, while editors use the library to assist them in editing said stories. 86% of journalists surveyed use the library more than once a week, with most respondents spending an hour or less there. Time constraints due to deadlines are discussed at length, but the issue is not directly addressed in the survey. Instead, questions focus on who looks for information needed for a story, the type of print material journalists use and the purpose of its use, how often journalists use print material for a story, how much time they spend in a library and how long they have to wait for information.

The purpose of Zhang's (2011) [8] study was to report on users' information behaviour in China, a topic which had not been researched extensively. The aim was to help producers and providers collect and develop more electronic resources. The study investigated users' information behaviour at seven "211 project" universities in Wuhan, a city in central China. All these universities have access to the resources of the National Science and Technology Library (NSTL). The questionnaire included questions about respondents' basic identifying

information (educational level, job, etc.) and their information service requirements. The correlations among users' education level, users' jobs, users' retrieval methods, literature use, etc. were analyzed. The results showed that most NSTL users were graduate students and young staff members and the number of male users were slightly more than the female ones. The purpose of the utilization of electronic resources for customers was scientific research, teaching and the need for self-development. During a year, the demand of users was the highest in March and the lowest in August.

Methodology Used

Information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists and media personnel of the Rewa Division being the crux of this study dictates the very nature of the methodology to be adopted i.e. generation of primary data through interview schedules that investigate the information seeking nature of journalists and media personnel with focus upon the aspects of

- (i) Types of information sources
- (ii) Purpose
- (iii) Satisfaction level
- (iv) Level of search skills
- (v) Problems encountered

The questionnaire is essentially a skilful translation of objective into a set of questions intended to be answered in writing. Simply put, it is a written list of questions requiring answers in writing.

This is a common tool for data collection which has been proved useful on its own and also when combined with other methods such as interview and observation.

Out of 130 print media journalists questionnaires mailed, a total of 114 (print media is 114 journalists responded, thus having a response rate of 87.69% (114).

The data collected from the respondents through questionnaire has been tabulated, also represented graphically where found necessary and analyzed, interpreted and inferred.

Distribution of Respondents by Academic Qualification –Print Media

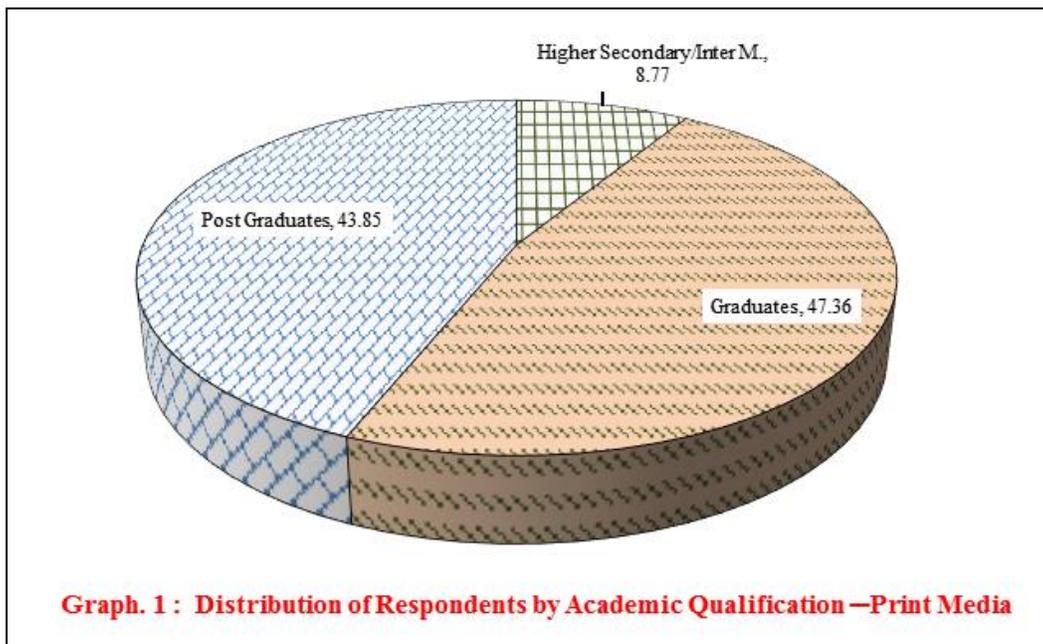
Table 1a provides the distribution of respondents by academic qualification in print media.

Table 1a: Distribution of Respondents by Academic Qualification –Print Media

S. No.	Category of Academic Qualification	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Higher Secondary/Inter M.	10	8.77
2	Graduates	54	47.36
3	Post Graduates	50	43.85
	Total	114	100%

Table 1a show that maximum number of respondents i.e. 54 (47.36%) are Graduates in print media; followed by 50(43.85%) are Post Graduates and only 10(8.77%) are

Higher Secondary/Inter Mediates. It is thus observed that maximum journalists are Graduates and minimum journalists are Higher Secondary/Inter Mediates in print media.



1. Distribution of Respondents by Professional Qualification – Print Media

Table 1b provides the distribution of respondents by Professional qualification in print media.

Table 1b: Distribution of Respondents by Professional Qualification – Print Media

S. No.	Category of Professional Qualification	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Graduate in Journalism	30	26.31
2	Post Graduate in Journalism	Nil	Nil
3	Diploma in Journalism	37	32.45
4	Without any professional qualification	47	41.22
Total		114	100%

Table 1b show that maximum number of respondents i.e. 47(41.22%) in print media have no Professional Qualification; followed by 37(32.45%) with Diploma in Journalism; 30(26.31%) with Graduate in Journalism and there is no journalists with under Post Graduate Degree in Journalism. It is thus observed that most of the journalists in print media have no Professional Qualification in Journalism. Diploma

holders in Journalism are comparatively more than journalists with Graduation in Journalism. However, there is no journalist in Rewa Division having P.G. Degree in Journalism.

2. Distribution of Respondents by Accreditation Status in Print Media

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Accreditation Status –Print Media

S. No.	Accreditation	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Accredited	38	33.33
2	Non Accredited	76	66.66
Total		114	100%

Table 2 show that maximum number of respondents i.e. 76(66.66%) working in print media as a Non Accredited and only 38(33.33%) as an Accredited. It is thus observed that maximum journalists working in print media are Non Accredited and minimum are Accredited.

3. Distribution of Respondents by Specialization in Print Media

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Specialization in Print Media

S. No.	Area of Specialization	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	General Writing/Reporting	84	73.68
2	Investigative	51	44.73
3	Critic	34	29.82
4	Feature writing	29	25.43
5	Political Events	26	22.80
6	Sports	17	14.91

7	Film Critic	05	4.38
8	Children's Literature	09	7.89
9	Literary	09	7.89
10	Any other	03	2.69
Total		267	234.22%

Note: The respondents have exercised more than one option; therefore the total number of respondents exceeds 114.

Table 3 show that maximum number of respondents i.e. 84(73.83%) in print media did not priorities their news reporting in any specific subject areas, instead they do report on everything that comes to their knowledge as the time warrants; followed by 51(44.73%) reporting Investigative; 34(29.82%) reporting Critic; 29(25.43%) Feature Writing; 26(22.80%) Political Events; 17(14.91%) Sports; 09(7.89%) equal shared Children's Literature and Literary; 05(4.38%)

Film Critic and only 03(2.69%) reporting other area. Thus it is observed that maximum journalists are news Reporting/Writing in General and minimum journalists are news Reporting/Writing in Film Critic in print media.

4. Distribution of Respondent by Area of Interest in Print Media

Table 4: Distribution of Respondent by Area Interest in Print Media

S. No.	Area of interest	Utmos Significant	%	Moderately Significant	%	Less Significant	%	Total of respondents	Total of%
1	Art of Technical or journalistic writing /Report writing	56	49.12	28	24.56	30	26.31	114	100
2	Yellow Journalism	25	29.12	49	42.98	40	35.08	114	100
3	Press Law	58	50.87	38	33.33	18	15.78	114	100
4	Ethics of Journalists	58	50.87	34	29.82	22	19.29	114	100
5	Press Accreditation	57	50.00	35	30.70	22	19.29	114	100
6	VIPs tour schedule	46	40.35	50	43.85	18	15.78	114	100
7	Techniques of Feature Writing	45	39.47	48	42.10	21	18.42	114	100
8	Investigative Journalism	61	53.50	37	32.45	16	14.03	114	100
9	Film Criticism	28	24.56	40	35.08	46	40.35	114	100
10	Recorded Speech of Politicians &Grated Luminaries	44	38.59	46	40.35	24	21.05	114	100
11	Copy right law, norms	30	26.31	40	35.08	44	38.59	114	100
12	Different Commission's report	32	28.07	38	33.33	44	38.59	114	100
13	Press clippings of important events	60	52.63	38	33.33	16	14.03	114	100
14	Antecedents of corrupt officials or corrupt politicians	48	42.10	42	36.84	24	21.05	114	100
15	Govt. Policies	50	43.85	40	35.08	24	21.05	114	100
16	Information of antisocial	65	57.00	34	29.82	15	13.15	114	100
17	Art of Cartoon preparations writing	30	26.31	40	35.08	44	38.59	114	100
18	Consolidated FIR reports of the local police station	25	21.92	48	42.12	41	35.96	114	100
19	Advertisement	30	26.31	50	43.85	34	29.82	114	100
20	Financial Reporting Stock Market Sports and Games events	28	24.56	53	46.49	33	28.94	114	100

It is observed from Table 4that most of respondents i.e. 65 (57%) have utmost interest in the field of 'Information on Antisocial' whereas only 25 (21.92%) respondents have utmost interest in the area of 'consolidated.....police station'. Similarly, moderate significance is give to 'Financial.....events' area by the highest number of respondents, i.e. 53 (46.49%) and only 28 (24.56%) respondents give lowest priority to 'Art of....writing'. Highest number of respondents, i.e. 46 (40.35%) put less significant to

'Film Criticism' whereas only 15 (13.15%) give less significant to 'Information on Antisocial'. Thus it is observed that maximum journalists in print media put utmost importance or take maximum interest in the field of 'Information on Antisocial' and the area of 'Film Criticism' gets the lowest significance by the journalists in print media.

5. Distribution of Respondents by Sources they Use for Obtaining Reading Material – Print Media

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Sources they Use for Obtaining Reading Material in Print Media

S. No.	Sources	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	From your intuitional library	55	48.24
2	Form a library not belonging to your institutions	34	29.82
3	By personal purchase	61	53.50
4	By borrowing from your professional colleagues	28	24.56
5	By any other sources	19	16.66
Total		197	172.78

Note: The Number of respondents exceeds 114, as respondents have exercised more than one option.

Table 5 show that maximum number of respondents i.e. 61(53.50%) in print media preferred personal purchase as the prime sources for obtaining their reading material; followed by 55(48.24%) who prefer the library attached to their parent newspaper organization as the vital sources for obtaining reading material; 34(29.82%)use other libraries not belonging to their institution; 28(24.56%) used to borrow materials from their professional colleagues and 19(16.66%) did not specify any particular sources for obtaining reading materials. Thus it is observed that maximum journalists in print media preferred personal purchase as the prime sources for obtaining reading material and minimum used to borrow materials from their professional colleagues. However, there is few journalists did not specify any particular sources for obtaining materials.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Sources used for the purpose of specific information in print media

Sources	No of Journalist	%	Rank
Dictionaries/bibliographical dictionaries	75	05.78	1
Government Publication	57	50%	2
Encyclopedia	52	45.61	3
Books	46	40.35	5
Newspaper clipping files	48	42.10	4
Periodicals	42	36.84	6
News magazines	36	31.57	7
Current issue of news papers	25	21.92	8
Photographs	24	21.05	9
Map/Atlas	20	17.54	11
Book issue of news papers	20	17.54	11
Census publication	20	17.54	11
Hand book	21	18.42	10
Book review	17	14.91	12
Archival sources	17	14.91	12
Indexes	18	15.78	13
Newspaper in microform	16	14.03	14

Table 6 show that dictionaries and bibliographical dictionaries are used mainly by the print media for the purpose of specific information 114 (65.78%), followed by government publication 75 (50%) and encyclopedia 52 (45.61%). These sources are the most used sources for the purpose of specific information and are the ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively for this purpose by the print media.

The analysis reveals that dictionaries/bibliographical, dictionaries, government publication, encyclopedias, periodicals news magazines are current issue of newspaper are ranked 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th respectively.

Finding and Conclusion

It can be concluded that journalists use wide range of sources of information in their day –to–day work. The analysis indicate that their varied information needs cannot be satisfied with one types of sources. The issue of sources of information is determined by various factors such as their information needs and purpose use of various purposes. For the purpose of seeking specific information, the five important sources are dictionaries/ bibliographical dictionaries, Government publication, encyclopedias, book and news -papers clipping files.

The finding further revealed that the journalists face many difficulties while seeking information. The main difficulties faced by journalists are lack of modern communication gadgets, information scattered in many sources, lack of time to look for or read information not readily available and inadequate library services and sources.

As journalists cited lack of modern communication gadgets as the major problem faced by them in their information seeking activities, most of journalists suggested that media houses should be equipped with modern communication gadgets such as latest computers with internet facilities, fax machines, etc. Like foreign journalists, Indian journalists should also be equipped with advanced communication gadgets such as laptop, fax machines etc.

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