INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF CITIZENS IN REWA DIVISION

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ABSTRACT: - The present paper briefly reviews the information needs and seeking behavior of citizens, focus on purpose for which information is required an types of sources used.

KEYWORDS: Categorization of citizens, information needs of citizens, the role of library .

INTRODUCTION

Studying 'citizen' information needs can be a staggering task as the term 'citizen' covers practically every inhabitant of the city, state or nation. And it involves studying virtually every aspect of everyone's life. A number of separate studies have been conducted on the information needs and information seeking behavior of individual groups (Scientists' medical professionals, social scientists, legislators, manages, students at different levels, the disabled, ethnic minorities etc.) When an attempt is made at studying citizens' information needs – it becomes a study of all the individual groups put together. Thus it is no mean task. Categorization of citizens is also a very difficult exercise. Some ways of categorizing are the following:- Citizen can be divided according of the kind of activities. Which they are engaged in-professional, semi – professionals and non-professionals.

Professionals are those who have undergone training for a certain period of time in a specialized field. They possess a professional degree and usually practice their profession following professional ethics. Professional groups include lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, managers etc.

Semi-Professionals: this group includes any person who is actively engaged in some field or sport for pay nut on a part time basis. Semi-professional work has some features of professional work but requires less

knowledge, skill and judgment. Qualified midwives, pharmacists and semi-professional baseball players are some of the people included under this category.

Non-Professionals: Simply put, anybody who is not included under the first two categories can be considered a non-professional. Uneducated housewives, religious leaders (some may hold professional degrees), manual labourers etc. Can all be included under this category.

Another categorization of citizens can be the following:-
1 Individuals 2 Governmental agencies and departments 3 Non-Governmental agencies 4 Industrial enterprises 5 Academic institutions 6 Research institutions 7 Cultural organizations 8 Religious organizations

INFORMATION NEEDS OF CITIZENS

Information needs are strongly influenced by the specific circumstances of people and the places in which they live.

The factors that affect the information needs and information seeking behavior of citizen are the following:-

1. Whether the source is within reach
2. Whether money will be involved – if so, how much money.
3. Whether time will be involved – if so, how much time.
4. Whether the source will have the answer to their problem
5. Whether they will understand what the source provides as answer

Show the information needs of different categories of citizens and the sources most commonly used by each category.

Type of user	Purpose for which information is required	Types of sources used
General	(1)Decision making (2) problem solving (3) educational purpose (4) health care (5) welfare benefits eligibility, (6) legal issues, (7) leisure and recreation, (8) political issues, (9) financial matters, (10) transport and travel (11) religious matters (12) technology and communication	(1) Family and friends (2) offices of governments and agencies (3) post offices (4) citizens advisory bureau (5) professional people (6) public libraries (7) local council office (8) academic libraries (9) MPs (10) professional trade associations (11) chambers of commerce
Women	(1) Educational information (2) family/personal information (3) health care (4) employment	(1) Family and friends (2) professionals people (3) advice agencies (4) post office (5) citizens advice bureau (6) TV (7) public libraries
Ethnic minorities	(1) Immigration (2) Equal rights	(1) Advice agencies (2) Post offices (3) chambers of commerce (4) Public libraries (5) family and friends
The disabled	(1) Welfare benefits (2) health care (3) Equal rights	(1) Citizens advisory bureau (2) Contact with MPs
The Youth	(1) Job seeking (2) Education (selecting of school or university, obtaining funds and grants) (3) leisure	(1) Family and friends (2) Professional people (3) Public libraries (4) TV

Information needs of and sources used by specific users

Types of users	Purpose for which information is required	Preferred sources
School students	Subject, tests, examinations, fellow students, classroom and laboratory work, extra- curricular activities	Teachers, parents, text books, reference books, TV, radio, the internet etc.
College and university students	Tests, examinations, practical work field trips, extra-curricular activities, career etc.	Text books, general books, reference book teachers, parents, friends, TV, radio newspapers internet etc.
Research scholars	Latest trends, research in progress, publication, seminars, teaching etc.	Guides, teachers, friends, journals, research in progress, registers, TV, radio, news papers, librarian, the internet etc.
Doctors	Psychology of patients, colleagues, new gadgets, new drugs, new methods for treatments etc.	Journal, books, colleagues, experts, TV, newspapers the internet etc.
Business professionals	Presents positions in the market, competitors, new companies, new products, suppliers, foreign markets, currency etc.	Internal reports, meetings, journals, discussions with colleagues, newspapers, TV, the internet etc.
Teachers	Subjects, teachings methods, latest development,	Books, journals, colleagues,

	psychology of students, tests, examinations etc.	teachings aids library, librarian, TV, newspapers, the internet etc.
Housewife	House care, family care, personal grooming, household appliance, neighbors, market, travel etc.	Family, friends, news papers, TV, neighbor, public library, radio, the internet etc.
Manual labourers	Housing, employers, payment, site, machines etc.	Fellow labourers, contractors etc.
Religious leaders	Members of the group (temple, church, mosque) problem in society welfare	Religious books, general books, TV, newspapers, religious journal, the internet etc.
Social workers	Health, environment, right, education, government etc.	Discussions with colleagues, TV, governmental agencies, newspapers, journal, the internet etc.

Preferred methods of obtaining information include the following

1. Talking face to face with someone
2. Reading a book
3. Looking through a collection without help from the staff
4. Talking by telephone to someone
5. Reading newspaper
6. Listening to the radio
7. Watching television
8. Reading a leaflet/pamphlet
9. Using a computer
10. Reading a magazine
11. Writing a letter

THE ROLE OF LIBRARY

Earlier studies indicate that citizens never considered the library as an important information source. People had a stereotyped and traditional information view of public libraries. While some agreed that library officials were helpful, others found the atmosphere in libraries too off-putting. Some citizens even went to the extent of saying that it would not affect them personally if the libraries closed down.

Over the years however, libraries seem to have taken note of users' complaints. Having tired of always being last one the list of sources preferred by users- the libraries seem to have finally woken up. Latest studies show libraries as being the most preferred sources among a number of sources. More and more people have begun using libraries and more and more are becoming members. Membership is particularly higher amongst the higher social classes and the better educated.

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