

Information Use Pattern of Disability Rehabilitation Service Providers in India

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Abstract

This paper is based on survey method to determine the Information Use Pattern (IUP) of Disability Rehabilitation Service Providers (DRSP) or Disability Rehabilitation Professionals and Personnel in India. The scope of this study is to identify the purpose of information access, types of information sources, they use to get desired information, the problems they come across on the way and their level of satisfaction in this process. This study was conducted through a questionnaire designed and administered to collect the data from the selected sample group of professionals and personnel who are engaged with different organizations in disability rehabilitation sector in India.

Keywords: Information Use Pattern, Information Needs, Information Seeking Behaviour, Disability Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Professionals and Personnel, Persons with Disabilities, Differently-able.

1.0 Introduction

In this information age, it seems to be impossible to perform any activity without information. To accomplish any task successfully, even our day to day activities we need information and undoubtedly, disability rehabilitation sector is not an exception.

The disability rehabilitation is a challenging task as it is a combined effort of different measures aimed at reducing the disabling conditions to enable the persons with disabilities to live in the main stream of the society. Hence, if we are planning to uplift the 15% population of the world who is suffering from some kind of disability(WHO, 2011) and want to rehabilitate them, we need lot of information on different aspects of disability and rehabilitation. *Particularly*, the Disability Rehabilitation Service Providers (DRSP) or Professionals and Personnel such as Clinical Psychologist, Audiologist, Speech Pathologist, Prosthetists and Orthotists, Vocational Counsellors, Community Based Rehabilitation Professionals and so on need to be fully equipped with relevant information to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.

Further, in the present age where libraries are also stuck with a lot of pressure to reset their role in the society, therefore, it becomes essential specifically for special libraries to analyse information access pattern of their stake holders in their respective areas in order to develop a mechanism to deliver right information to the right user at the right time.

Hence, this user study is an effort to know the information use pattern of Disability Rehabilitation Service Providers (DRSP) or Rehabilitation professionals/ Personnel and to assess the problems faced by them to get desired information in disability rehabilitation sector in India.

1.1 Literature Review

The review of the literature for this study was carried out to find out the relevant work that already been done in this area regarding information use pattern of Professionals/ personnel in Disability Rehabilitation field in order to identify the research gaps. It has been found that many research studies were carried out on information use pattern or information needs or information seeking behavior of users in some specific fields throughout the world but present study is unique of its kind. A study conducted by Naick (2013) focused to evaluate the use of library resources by the students of engineering colleges through a survey based study and found that students need ready, core and standard information for examination, knowledge and research purposes respectively. Therefore, acquisition of books should meet the requirements of the users accordingly. Pareek and Rana (2013) studied the information seeking behavior and library use Pattern by research scholars at the Banasthali University with a purpose to determine their information requirements and awareness about library services available to them. The study emphasized to provide guidance to researchers to meet their information requirements by using the library resources and services.

Meho and Tibbo (2003) revised "David Ellis's information-seeking behavior model of social scientists, which includes six generic features: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, and extracting. The study uses social science faculty researching stateless nations as the study population. Although the study confirmed Ellis's model, it found that a fuller description of the information-seeking process of social scientists studying stateless nations should include four additional features besides those identified by Ellis. These new features are: accessing, networking, verifying, and information managing. In view of that, the study develops a new model, which, unlike Ellis's, groups all the features into four interrelated stages: searching, accessing, processing, and ending. This new model is fully described and its implications on research and practice are discussed".

Singh and Satija (2007) conducted survey research on information seeking behavior of agricultural scientists working in the ICAR institutions of Delhi and Punjab Agricultural University and found that the agricultural scientists (72.05%) were very much dependent on their institutional libraries followed by their personal collection and the collection of their supervisors and colleagues to meet their information needs. Mahawar, Verma, and Saha (2009) concluded in their study of the information seeking behavior of geologists of Geological Survey of India, Lucknow that they used formal and informal information sources such as seminars, conferences and mainly Internet.

Kloda and Bartlett (2009) found from seventeen studies mostly surveys, conducted since 1990 and demonstrated that very little is known about the clinical information needs of and information use by rehabilitation therapists. The sources most often consulted by rehabilitation therapists were printed materials (books and journals) and colleagues. Databases consulted less often, and few rehabilitation therapists were aware of databases other than MEDLINE. A study by Reddy and Karisiddappa (1997) conducted on Information Seeking behavior of the professionals in the field of disability with special reference to Mentally Handicapped in India and concluded that informal channels were more used for information gathering. The study emphasized that the lack of awareness of information sources and knowledge of search techniques and constraints of formal systems in this field should be addressed by user education programmes etc. Mick, Lindsey and Callahan (1980) strongly suggested that environmental and situational constraints play an important role in determining information behavior. Therefore,

that interventions aimed at improving information flow within organizations must be carefully modeled to the specific situation in order to draw optimum impact.

1.2 Objectives of The Study

On the basis of literature review, the following objectives of the study are structured to fill the research gaps:

1. To investigate the various sources of information used by Disability Rehabilitation Service Providers (DRSP);
2. To investigate the use of libraries by DRSP;
3. To find out the use of Institutional Information Resources by the DRSP;
4. To identify the problems they face to get desired information; and
5. To study the satisfaction level of DRSP to get their information.

1.3 Methodology

In this study, the Questionnaire based Survey method was used. To meet the objectives of the study a structured questionnaire was framed by having both open and closed ended questions for the purpose of data collection. A representative sample of 200 Disability Rehabilitation Service Providers (DRSP) or Disability Rehabilitation Professionals/Personnel from different broader disability field was selected on purposive cum convenience basis. The included disability fields were Mental Retardation (MR), Visual Impairment (VI), Hearing Impairment (HI), and Locomotor Impairment (LI). Besides this, participants from the area of Multiple Disabilities (MD) were also selected. Hence, 40 participants from each mentioned field were selected to constitute the sample for this study from Delhi based organisations carrying out varied tasks in disability rehabilitation sector in India. The Professionals and Personnel working in National Institutes established for different kinds of disabilities by Government of India were not included in this study. The 200 Questionnaires were distributed, out of which 115 questionnaires were received back and only 110 were properly filled by the respondents. Thus the collected data with the help of 110 questionnaires was analysed and interpreted by using appropriate statistical techniques for the purpose of discussion.

1.4 Findings and Discussion

The data collected from Disability Rehabilitation Service Provider (DRSP) respondents for this study have been analysed and summarised as follows:

Table 1.
Gender wise Distribution

Sc. No.	Respondents Gender	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Male	59	53.64
2	Female	51	46.36
	Total	110	100

The Table 1 shows the gender wise distribution of DRSP-respondents. Here 59(53.64%) were Male respondents and Female were 51(46.36%).

Table 2.
Disability Area wise distribution

Sc. No.	Disability Area	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Mental Retardation (MR)	25	22.73
2	Visual Impairment (VI)	25	22.73
3	Hearing Impairment (HI)	20	18.18
4	Locomotor Impairment (LI)	25	22.73
5.	Multiple Disabilities (MD)	15	13.64
	Total	110	100

The Table 2 reflects the picture of the Disability Area wise category of DRSP-respondents in this study. The sample population comprised of/from different broader disability areas to represent an overall view of this sector. The received questionnaires were categorised as per their numbers i.e. 25 (22.73%) respondents from Mental Retardation (MR), Visual Impairment (VI), and Locomotor Impairment (LI) while 20 (18.18 %) respondents were from Hearing Impairment (HI) area and 15(13.64%) from Multiple Disabilities (MD).

Table 3.
Disability Qualification wise distribution

Sc. No.	Disability Qualification	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Above Post Graduate	23	20.91
2	Post Graduate	25	22.73
3	Degree	32	29.09
4	Diploma	30	27.27
	Total	110	100

The Table 3 illustrates disability qualification wise categorisation of DSRP-respondents. Here, diploma holders were 30 (27.27%) followed by degree holders 32 (29.09%), Post-Graduate 25(23.73%) and the respondents above Post- Graduation were 23 (20.91%).

Table 4.
Rehabilitation Services Rendered

Sc. No.	Type of Rehabilitation Service rendered	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Master Trainer/ Executives	43	39.09
2	Medical	20	18.18
3	Educational	38	34.55
4	Vocational	09	8.18
	Total	110	100

In the Table 4 the various types of rehabilitation services rendered by the respondents in disability rehabilitation sector are indicated. Here, 43(39.09%) respondents were Master Trainer and Executive Heads, 20 (18.18%) involved in medical rehabilitation service, while 38(34.55%) engaged in educational activities and 9 (8.18%) were providing vocational rehabilitation to persons who are differently able.

Table 5.
Experience in Disability Sector

Sc. No.	Experience in Disability Area	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	More than ten years	68	61.82
2	Up to ten years	42	38.18
	Total	110	100

The Table 5 gives a picture of years of experience of the services of participated DRSP-respondents in this field. The 68 (61.82%) participants had more than ten years of experience in disability rehabilitation sector while 42 (38.18%) had up to ten years of experience of performing various jobs in this field.

Table 6.
Type of Information Required

Sc. No.	Type of Information Required	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	About Govt. Schemes	5	4.55
2	Innovative Practices	2	1.82
3	Disability Statistics	3	2.73
4	Disability Organisations & Services	5	4.55
5	All above	95	86.36

The Table 6 is a depiction of types of Information required by the respondents in disability area to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently. The 5(4.55%) respondents wanted information mainly about Government Schemes to rehabilitate the persons with disabilities, 2(1.82%) need information about Innovative Practices in this field specially who are associated with medical rehabilitation activities, 3(2.73%) preferred disability statistics information, while 5 (4.55%) demanded information about different disability organisations & services in this area. But most of the respondents i.e. 95 (86.36%) required all types of information on disability rehabilitation.

Table 7.
Information Sources

Sc. No.	Information Sources	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Library	14	12.73
2	Internet	19	17.27
3	Institutional resources	72	65.45
4	Friend/colleagues	93	84.55
5	Personal Notes/ Collection	97	88.18

The Table 7 shows various Types of Information sources used by the participated respondents in disability area to meet their information needs. The 14(12.73%) respondents used Library as a source of information followed by 19 (17.27%) used Internet, 72(65.45%) respondent used Institutional resources while 93 (84.55%) got information mainly from their Friends and colleagues and 97(88.18%) used Personal Notes/ Collection. Here it is clearly indicated through this table that major source of disability information of the professionals and personnel in this sector are their Friends and colleagues and mainly their Personal Notes/ Collection. The Multiple options were allowed here.

Table 8.
Problems to get desired Information

Sc. No.	Problems to get Information	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Language Problem	33	30
2	Suitable Format i.e. Braille/ Audio/ E-text	65	59.09
3	Not responded	12	10.91
	Total	110	100

The Table 8 shows the kinds of problems faced by the respondents to get desired Information in disability area. This was an open ended question to know the availability of right information in right format or the most suitable format to them. The majority of respondents i.e. 65 (59%) face language problem as they do not get the desired information in the native

language i.e. Hindi specially those who are working on grass root level and had direct conversation with the persons with disabilities or their family. The second problem is of the suitable format or unavailability of desired information in Braille or Audio or E-text specifically for those DRSP i.e. 33 (30%) respondents who are working with persons with visual impairment and Hearing Impairment specially.

Table 9.
Use of Library Services of National Institutes

Sc. No.	Use of Library Services of National Institutes	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Good Extent	05	4.55
2	Some Extent	14	12.73
3	Not at all	91	82.73
	Total	110	100

The Table 9 shows the use of library services of National Institutes in disability area by the respondents. Only 5(4.55%) respondents use the library services of the National Institutes to good extent while 14 (12.73%) to some extent and 91(82.73%) do not use any kind of libraries services of these Institutes. The main reasons for not using the services are Geographical distances, Unawareness about services etc. as mentioned by the respondents.

Table 10.
Satisfaction towards Accessibility to Disability Information

Sc. No.	Satisfaction to get Disability Information	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Good Extent	19	17.27
2	Some Extent	31	28.18
3	Not at all	60	54.55
	Total	110	100

The Table 10 shows the satisfaction level of the respondents of the study. Here, the level of satisfaction of 19 (17.27%) respondents is up to Good Extent but it is up to Some Extent of 31 (28.18%) respondents while 60 (54.55%) says Not at all about their satisfaction level towards accessibility to needed information in disability field.

1.5 Conclusion

On the basis of interpretation of data and above discussions, it is concluded that all the Disability Rehabilitation Service Providers (DRSP) feel information crisis in their respective fields. Though some sort of information required by them is available in varied institutes working in the field of disability rehabilitation but not accessible by all information seekers. The obstacles identified in the form of geographical distances, lack of awareness of available information resources, restricted use of Libraries of National Institutes as these are not permitted

to use by outside users. Secondly, the desired information is not available in the native language is also a big challenge for professional and personnel who are engaged in community based rehabilitation programmes on the grass root level. Besides this, the unavailability of relevant information in the requisite format like Braille, Audio, E-text, large-text etc. and the lack of facility to convert the information in to suitable format is another problem faced by the Service Providers in this field. These factors are caused to unnecessary duplication of work and wastage of resources and undoubtedly, it affects the information use pattern of all information seekers in the sector. The findings of this study indicate that the ultimate problem of rehabilitation professionals and personnels are to access the desired information is more or less same irrespective of their experience, Qualifications, disability field, job profile etc.

Though, all these problems might be addressed by the libraries of various well established organizations very efficiently and effectively by providing access to all information seekers in this field. However, this is very interesting finding of the study that overallmost of the participants still considered libraries as a traditional house of books which are in passive mode and not capable to cater to their information needs. Therefore, the libraries in Disability Rehabilitation sector have a great role to play as well as a big challenge to transform their image from traditional one to an Information Centre accessible and usable to the information seekers in this field.

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