Information needs of the academic staff of B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences

Mohan Raj Pradhan*

Abstract

A survey was done to investigate the information needs of the academic staff of B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS). The tool used for data collection was questionnaire. The results shows that user should be aware of the various tools of library for making efficient use of the existing resources of the library.

Keywords: Information needs; Survey method; Planning.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of modern technology has transferred the role of modern libraries in meeting the needs of users, particularly in providing rapid and accurate information. The computerized library system at BPKIHS is in process and linked with Healthnet Nepal. This connection is a major breakthrough in the communication barrier BPKIHS is facing. Besides receiving MEDLINE, POPLINE and HSBN (Health Science Bibliography of Nepal) database service, web pages can also be downloaded.

The problem to be solved at present are manifold, but the most critical is the need to process the existing documents for making use of available resources efficiently and effectively. Hence this research study was carried out to find out the services to be offered in the library for varied groups viz academic staff of all levels and medical residents.

Each teaching institute has the prime responsibility of providing information resources for the purpose of fulfilling its teaching, learning and research activities.

Structuring an institute's information service has a major effect upon institute's teaching learning development. A well organised, carefully planned information system can accelerate progress and enhance development.

The overall objective of an institute's information system is to enable organization to serve the reading, reference and research needs of its population. Since an institute's population is usually heterogenous, first
of all, it is intended to make basic understanding of the collective population and later, to segment the population into meaningful subset to be addressed individually according to predetermined priorities. The next set is to discover what particular types of information resources are most fitting for the institute in question and how they should be assembled and organized.

With these ideas a user study of B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Science (BPKIHS) is done; the result will be utilized to draw master plan of BPKIHS library information system, which anticipates user's information needs according to the characteristics of the BPKIHS organizational setup.

Survey objectives

The objectives of the survey are:

- to obtain a detailed description of the use of BPKIHS library and/or information needs.

- to increase the understanding of the reasons for using particular sources.

- to link information behaviour with other factors, such as work patterns.

- to investigate the needs of the academic staff of BPKIHS of the library services at present being

offered as well as to relate the level of satisfaction of library services to the academic staffs.

Sampling design

The sampling frame is the total number of teachers. The study population is total number of teachers responding the questionnaire. An individual teacher will be its sampling unit.

Data collection

Mail questionnaire is used for collecting data. The questionnaire is divided into three parts and each part is further subdivided. The first part is related to personal history of user; the second part is related to the evaluation of information resources used/to be used and paying intention of the respondents and the third part is related to physical facility and manpower resources provided by the library.

Rate of response

Out of the total number of 35 academic staff, the number of questionnaire returned was 14 (40%). It was arbitrarily decided that sample less than 10% would not be statistically meaningful. Since the response rate is 40% so it meets our requirement for statistical analysis.

Method of data analysis

The collected information was processed through SPSS V4.0 software package and data entry was done through dbase 4.0. Cross tabulation and simple statistical tools such as percentage average and ratio were used for descriptive analysis.

Results

1. **Age distribution**

The relationship of age distribution and educational qualification is shown in Table I. The mean age having post graduate degree is 38 years and the mean age having above post graduate degree is 44 years.

Table I

Degree	*N*	*%*	*Mean*
Post Graduate	11	78.6%	38
Above Post Graduate	3	21.4%	44
Total	14	100%	36

2. **Level of education and subject speciality**

A cross tabulation of the level of education and subject speciality is presented in Table II. Out of 14 (100%) respondents, 79% possessed post graduate degree and 21% posessed above post graduate degree. In the
field of basic science 67% post graduate degree and 33% possessed above
postgraduate degree. In the area of applied science, 82% had postgraduate and 18% had above postgraduate degree.

Table II

	Subject				*Total*	
Degree	*Basic Science*		*Applied Science*		*N*	*%*
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*		
Post Graduate	2	66.7%	9	81.8%	11	78.6%
Above Post Graduate	1	33.3%	2	18.2%	3	21.4%
Total	3	100%	11	100%	14	100%

Nature of activities

The nature of activities of the respondents have been presented in table III. They are (i) teaching (ii) research (iii) patient care and (iv) preventive or promotion of health. Here the respondents are usually involved in more than one activities. The break up of data says that moderately 57% were involved in teaching, 79% were involved in research and 14% were involved in patient care. In preventive or promotion of health care nobody is involved moderately.

Table III

	None	*Less*	*Moderate*	*Heavy*	*Total*
Teaching	0	2 (14.3%)	8 (57.1%)	4 (28.6%)	14 (100%)
Research	0	2 (14.3%)	11 (78.6%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)
Patient care	4	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)	6 (42.8%)	14 (100%)
Preventive or promotion of health	4	8 (57.1%)	0 (.0%)	2 (14.3%)	14 (100%)

Use of Library

With regard to use of library during the last 2 months 50% used 1 to 10 times, 29% used 11 to 20 times and 21% used 21 to 30 times.

Table IV

Document use	
3-10	7 (50.0%)
11-20	4 (28.6%)
21-30	3 (21.4%)
Total	14 (100%)

Prioratization in the use of primary literature

There was an instruction to the respondents to rank the priorities in numerical order against each. In the case of primary literature, 86% have given first priority to journal. Regarding the secondary literature, 50% have given first priority to indexes and 36% have given second priority to abstract. With respect to consolidating literature first priority is given to textbooks (Table V).

Table V

	1st	*2nd*	*3rd*	*Total*
Journal	12 (85.7%)	1 (7.1%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)

Conference proceedings	2 (14.3%)	9 (64.3%)	3 (21.4%)	14 (100%)
Technical reports	1 (7.1%)	4 (28.6%)	9 (64.3%)	14 (100%)

With regard to prioratization in primary literature, 1st priority was given to journal; 2nd priority was given to conference proceeding and 3rd to technical reports.

For secondary literature, first priority is given to indexes, second priority to abstract and third priority to bibliography. The result of the analysis seems unusual. Normally, the secondary literature which contains abstract should receive the first priority (Table V). It means users of literature are not clear as to what type of secondary literature should receive what priority.

Table VI

	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Indexes	7 (50%)	3 (21.4%)	4 (28.6%)	14 (100%)
Abstract	5 (35.7%)	6 (42.9%)	3 (21.4%)	14 (100%)
Bibliography	3 (21.4%)	4 (28.6%)	7 (50%)	14 (100%)

Table VII

	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Reviews	5 (35.7%)	(42.9%)	3 (21.4%)	14 (100%)
Textbooks	9 (64.3%)	4 (28.6%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)
Manuals	1 (7.1%)	3 (21.4%)	10 (71.4%)	14 (100%)

With respect to consolidated literature, first priority was given to textbook, second priority to reviews and third priority to manuals (Table VII).

Proportion of various categories of documents

The institute is located in the outskirts and medical book shops are not available in the market. So most of the students and teachers have to depend on library materials. So with respect to proportion of various categories of documents to users, the result was as follows: highest favour for text proportion was 1:5 by 78.6%, for monographs by 35.7% proportion being 1:5 and by another 35.7% the proportion was also favoured as 1:Total. For reference books the proportion was favoured as 1:Total by 42.9%. Here also the result is unusual. The proportion for monograph cannot be 1:5, if the proportion for textbook is selected as 1:5 (Table VIII).

Table VIII

	1:1	1:5	1:Total	Total
Textbooks	3 (21.4%)	11 (78.6%)	0	14 (100%)
Monographs	4 (28.6%)	5 (35.7%)	5 (35.7%)	14 (100%)

Reference books	5 (35.7%)	3 (21.4%)	6 (42.9%)	14 (100%)

Prioratization of bibliographic tools

Regarding the prioratisation to bibliography tools, first priority was given to Index Medicus, second priority to Medline, third priority to POPLINE and fourth priority to HSBN database. Regarding prioratization to secondary literature respondents were not sure about the type of literature. With the advancement of computerization usually user prefers MEDLINE to Index Medicus printed volume. Similarly, most of the users first prefer HSBN database for research in Nepal but it has got least priority. One reason maybe that most of the faculty members have come from neighbouring country, India, so they prefer to global literature instead of Nepal related (Table IX).

Table IX

	1st	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*	*5th*	*Total*
Index Medicus	3 (21.4%)	9 (64.3%)	0	0	2 (14.3%)	14 (100%)
Medline	10 (71.4%)	3 (21.4%)	0	1	0	14 (100%)
Popline	0	1 (8.3%)	6 (50%)	3 (25%)	2 (16.7%)	14 (100%)
HSBN	1 (8.3%)	0	5 (41.7%)	3 (25%)	3 (25%)	12 (100%)
HSBN database	0	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	5 (41.7%)	5 (41.7%)	12 (100%)

Adequacy of book-stock

Regarding adequacy of book-stock, 7.1% respondents expressed that all their needs were fulfilled. 28.6% said most, and 28.6% said none of their requirement fulfilled (Table X). Being a new institute and for medical books not available in the town itself, it is obvious that users will not be satisfied with the present stock to fulfill their need of books.

Table X

All	1 (7.1%)
Most	4 (28.6%)
Some	1 (7.1%)
Few	3 (21.4%)
None	4 (28.6%)
Do not know	1 (7.1%)
Total	14 (100%)

Willingness of spending income for acquiring documents through network

Almost 100% respondents expressed their view that library should be linked with some network system for acquiring materials not available at library. With respect to willingness of spending money, for acquiring materials through network, 50% respondents said that they can spend 1 to 2% of their income for this purpose, while 42.9%, said that they can't spend money for acquiring materials through network (Table XI).

Table XI

Nil	6 (42.9%)
1 to 2 percent	7 (50%)
3 to 5 percent	1 (7.1%)
Total	14 (100%)
Mean	2%

Library services used in the last year

The results of library services used by respondents last year is shown in table XI. Being a new institute the idea of asking this question is to know the percentage of various services of library used by respondents. Borrowing of books (78.6%) and borrowing of periodicals (71.4%) are highly used services, while reservation of books (7.1%) is the least used service (Table XII).

Table XII

	Library resources not used	*Library resources used*	*Total*
Borrowing books	3 (21.4%)	11 (78.6%)	14 (100%)
Borrowing periodicals	4 (28.6%)	10 (71.4%)	14 (100%)
Stock in library	2 (14.3%)	12 (85.7%)	14 (100%)
Inter-Library loan services	12 (85.7%)	2 (14.3%)	14 (100%)
Reservation of books	13 (92.9%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)
Provision of photocopy services	7 (50%)	7 (50%)	14 (100%)
Reference Service	7 (50%)	7 (50%)	14 (100%)

Personally owned books in connection with teaching duties

Being a newly established institute and situated in the outskirts, it is obvious that the library alone cannot provide all the books needed by the teachers. So to fulfill their teaching duties, teachers should also own personal books. Regarding personal ownership of books, 42.9% have 1 to 9 books and 35.7% have 10-24 books (Table XIII).

Table XIII

	None	*1-9*	*10-24*	*25-49*	*Over 50*	*Total*
Personally owned books	1 (7%)	6 (43%)	5 (36%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)

Evaluation of physical facilities of library

Table XIV shows the status of the existing (i) space (ii) seating arrangement (iii) study environment (iv) arrangement of reading materials. The facilities were graded as good, satisfactory and not satisfactory. Since the library is moved to the new building response regarding space, seating arrangement and study environment may not be true. So only arrangement of reading materials is analysed. 64% respondents expressed 'not satisfactory' regarding the arrangement of reading materials.

Table XIV

	Good	*Satis-factory*	*Not Satis-factory*	*Total*
Space	0	0	14 (100%)	14 (100%)
Seating Arrangement	0	0	14 (100%)	14 (100%)
Study Environment	0	3 (21.4%)	11 (78.6%)	14 (100%)

Arrangement of reading materials	1 (7%)	4 (29%)	9 64%)	14 (100%)

Evaluation of manpower resources

Evaluation of manpower resources were presented in table XV. The opinions of the respondents were invited in respect to the availability of staff, job performance of staff and cooperation of staff. 43% graded the staff availability as not satisfactory, followed by 50% 'satisfactory' and 7% graded 'Good'; excellent is graded by none.

Staff performance

In this category, 7% graded as 'not satisfactory', followed by 79% as satisfactory, 14% 'good' and excellent not graded by any.

Staff cooperation

In response to staff cooperation, 50% graded as satisfactory followed by 29% as 'good' and 21% as 'excellent'.

Table XV

	Excellent	*Good*	*Satisfactory*	*Not Satisfactory*	*Total*
Staff availability	0	0	7 (50%)	6 (43%)	14 (100%)
Staff performance	0	2 (14%)	11 (79%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
Staff Cooperation	3 (21%)	4 (29%)	7 (50%)	0	14 (100%)

Expectation of future library services

This was an open ended question, most of the users expressed similar views of increasing textbooks and journals, making available the facility of photocopy services at the library.

Conclusion

This study is the first in BPKIHS, intended to answer a number of questions concerning the functions and responsibilities of BPKIHS, library. Answer to some questions are unusual and anomalous responses are given by some of the respondents. This unusual response indicates that the respondent are not aware about various tools of library. In view of the judgements given by the respondents, we should recommend that the weakness identified be tackled which would satisfy the need of respondents. Therefore, the recommendations are as follows:

1. Information services should be more efficient and effective and for that manpower in respect of both quantity and quality should be enhanced.

2. Users should be aware about various abstracting and indexing tools and use of medical subject heading.

3. The back files of journals should be as complete as possible. The quantity and quality of current journals should be increased.

References

1. Ahmed Z. Users need identification: a device for the development of appropriate resources and service for the health literature, library and information services (HELLIS) network in Bangladesh, In: Medical Libraries-keys to health information. Proceedings of the 6th International Congress of Medline Librarianship, New Delhi, 1980, **5**: 1-12.

2. David BB. User needs: the key to changing library services and policies. Bulletin of the Medical Library Association, 1975; 62/2, 195.8.