

Information-Seeking Behavior of Trainee Public Administrators in Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration, Jaipur

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the information-seeking behavior of public administrators during education and training. It also highlighted the use of study materials and other sources of information, which are also using by the users study or preparing for administrative jobs. Questionnaire method was used for data collection. The study focuses on the use of various library facilities available in the institute's library.

Keywords: Information seeking behavior, RIPA, Information Searching habits.

1. Introduction

Public administration has always denoted government when 'Public' actually means community or people. In early 1950, public administrations really meant providing service to the people by the state apparatus applying the guidelines of equity, justice, ethics and fair-play. The idea behind establish the Institute of public administration is to broaden the area of knowledge in public policy and governance through applied research and education as well as training of administrators to serve the people of the nation.

HCM RIPA takes the truth of administration on the move in to thought in the entirety of its expertise improvement, research and training administration exercise. Harish Chandra Mathur Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration (HCM RIPA) in 1969, Officer's Training Schools (OTS) came into existence as Harish Chandra Mathur Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration. Shri Harish Chandra Mathur was a well known prestigious administrator and parliamentarian from Rajasthan. Government of Rajasthan added "Rajasthan" before the word "State" in the name of the Institute in April 1983. Thus HCM SIPA became HCM RIPA (Harish Chandra Mathur Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration). Today, the HCM RIPA is a top level state administrative training institute formed by government of Rajasthan for training of civil servants.

RIPA Objectives:

- The foremost objective of the HCM RIPA is to contribute to a containing improvement in the administration of the state so that it is able to fulfill the expectation of the people for development at an accelerated pace.
- To do affords for the promotion and study of public administration and economic and political science with special reference to public administration and bring about an attitudinal change in officials to make them more work efficient, responsive and responsible to meet the requirements of public service.

- Engage itself in honing and enhancing the skills of government and semi government officials through the process of training.
- Give opinion to the government regarding different policies and programmes through operation research studies and practical suggestions as per generated on the bases of experience and case studies.
- Provide leadership and guidance to other training establishments in the state in respect of training techniques and other related subjects.

About the Library and other Information Aids

RIPA has an excellent library having a collection of about 90,000 volumes in the area of public administration, management, technology, governance, environmental sciences, sociology and financial management and so on. The library regularly services periodicals and annual reports from national and state organizations. Indexing service is also provided by the library.

Not only a rich library the Institute has computer centre equipped with state of art information technology with more than 120 latest computer systems with a campus wide networking. The audio-visual facilities provided by the Institution are the very relevant service to meet the needs of training as well as dissemination of information. RIPA library has good reprographic facilities.

2. Literature review

This paper reports a study of the information related behavior of “Trainee public administrators”. This group of new administrators comprises those who have recently completed formal education get selected after the examination and getting training or building up their own administrative skills to serve the government and foremost the nation. This is an interesting group to investigate the information seeking behavior of the selected officers. Psacharopoulous (1982) explained the need of information in the present age. We can evaluate the educational system and redefine scientific research only with the help of information and when we are talking about information seeking behavior, “the understanding of information needs and information-seeking behavior of various professional groups are essential as it helps in the planning, implementation and operation of information system and services in work settings (Devadason and Lingman, 1997). Upadhyay and Dang (2014) discussed the information seeking behavior of students of administration institutions in Delhi, they found that majority of users searching information for keep up-with current developments but the users don’t know the sources available in the library. They revealed that internet is the major source of information.

To get aware about information needs and information-seeking behavior is the necessity for developing library collection upgrading facilities and improving services to effectively meet the information needs of the users who learn that how to be an efficient public administrator.

3. Objective of the study

Following are the main objectives of the present study:

- To find out information needs of public administrators getting training in RIPA.
- To know how public administrators fulfill their needs with the help of library resources likewise e-journals etc.

- To get satisfaction level of the public administrators with the services being provided in the library.
- To give suggestions to rectifying the services being provided by the library.

4. Methodology

The study followed the method of survey questionnaire that was prepared after comprehensive literature search and discussion with subject experts. Both open and closed questions were included in the questionnaire. The population of the study consists of the library users of RIPA, Jaipur. It is a small and specific study consists of 40 potential respondents.

5. Data analysis and discussion

Because of the users of the library are Rajasthan administrative service officers and the purview of the study is only RIPA Jaipur. It is decided to not include the personal profile of the respondents. They all are equal in education, gender and other competencies. So no question dealt with the personal information about the respondents.

Table 1- Purpose of information seeking

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	General awareness	16	40
2.	To develop administrative academic skills	28	70
3.	To enhance training utility and academic interest	8	20
4.	Information have policy relevance for the state government	12	30
5.	For innovative policy initiative and implementation strategies	16	40

The respondents were asked about their purpose of information seeking. About 40% of respondents were replied for general awareness, 40% were for innovative policy initiative and implementation strategies, only 20% were replied to enhance training utility and academic interest whereas highest 70% for seeking information to develop administrative academic skills.

Table 2- Formal source of information

S.N.	Sources	Number	Percentage
1.	Books/Monographs	20	50
2.	Scientific- technical journals/periodicals	12	30
3.	Reference sources (as biographies handbooks 1& A sources etc)	12	30
4.	Patents, reports/standards specifications	0	0
5.	Conference workshop/seminar proceedings	16	40
6.	Online journals, database, archives	4	10
7.	Internet intranet sources as audio/video, CD-ROM, DVD	24	60
8.	Review articles, theses	8	20

The respondents were asked about methods and sources they use to get information for their training. The result show that internet, intranet sources as audio/video CD ROM, DVDs, was the most preferred sources 60%, followed by Books/monographs 50%, conference workshop/seminar proceedings 40%. Scientific- technical journals/periodicals and reference source (as biographies handbooks I&A sources etc.) were given equal preference with 30% each (Table-2). Other remaining sources have every less response.

Table 3- Informal source of information

S.N.	Sources	Number	Percentage
1.	Email, list service, discussion etc.	16	40
2.	Private correspondence	8	20
3.	Discussion with libraries or reference staff of your library	16	40
4.	Consult a knowledgeable Person in the field supervisor	20	50
5.	Any other please specify	0	0

The respondents were asked about informal source of information. The result show that “Consult a knowledgeable Person” was the preferred source 50%, Email, list service, discussion etc and Discussion with libraries or reference staff were given equal preference with 40% each in Table-3. “Private correspondence” has lesser response.

Table 4- Means of keeping abreast of current development

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	Scanning of current issues of print/online journals	28	70
2.	Scanning recent issues of abstracting tools	16	40
3.	Attendances at conference	4	10
4.	Internet/ e-mail alert	16	40
5.	Institutes prepared background papers	12	30
6.	Reading materials and case studies in the form of training monographs	12	30

Scanning of current issue of print/online journals is the most useful mean to keep abreast with current development 70%. Scanning recent issues of abstracting tools and Interest/ e-mail alert have equal 40% response. Institutes prepared background papers and reading materials and case studies in the form of training monographs have lesser 30% response.

Table 5- Methods used for obtaining Journal articles

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	Personal subscription to print journals	12	30
2.	Personal subscription to online version	4	10
3.	Library online electronic version	8	20
4.	Library's print subscription	8	20
5.	From database, e- archives etc.	8	20
6.	Interlibrary loan	0	0
7.	Document delivery	0	0

Personal subscription to print journals was showed the most preferred method 30%. Library online electronic version, library's print subscription, from database, e- archives are the other method with equal 20% response. It is totally understandable that the personal subscription to online version is an expensive way, so that the less response 10% is very obvious.

Table 6- Information seeking habits relevant to the work

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	E-mailing colleges or other expert	12	30
2.	Discussion lists/list serves	4	10
3.	Reading e-mail alerts	4	10
4.	Scanning journal titles or citations	8	20
5.	Reading articles/books	28	70
6.	Attending conferences/seminars/ workshops	12	30
7.	Searching electronic journals	8	20

Table 6 shows that majority of respondents 70% reading articles/books. Other options are e-mailing colleges or other expert and attending conferences/ seminars / workshops 30%, searching electronic journals 20%, scanning journal titles or citations 20% are comparatively very low.

Table 7- Time spend on information gathering

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	There is not enough time to keep up with everything	16	40
2.	Have no trouble in managing time in regards to information gathering	8	20
3.	Have trouble in managing time in regards to information gathering	16	40

A majority of respondents 40% said that they have not enough time to keep up with everything. Equally 40% found trouble in managing time in regards to information gathering. Very few 20% have no trouble in managing time in regards to information gathering.

Table 8- Preference to obtain journal articles/reference materials

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	Print copy	4	10
2.	Electronic copy	0	0
3.	Both print and electronic	36	90

Table 8 stated that majority of respondents 90% preferred both print and electronic form, whereas only 10% responded to print form.

Table 9- Electronic sources make easier or more difficult to gather and use information

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	Easier	28	70
2.	More easier	8	20
3.	Difficult	0	0
4.	More difficult (there is too much information for me to sort through efficiently)	4	10

Most respondents 70% said easier, 20% said more easier where as 10% said more difficult. The reason behind is too much information to sort through efficiently.

Table 10- Collection of documents of own institution's library

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	General collection balanced	20	50
2.	Meet the requirement	16	40
3.	Reference collection strong enough	16	40
4.	Adequate primary sources	12	30
5.	Indexing/abstracting sources in your field of specialization	4	10
6.	Library get document on loan basis	4	10

Respondents were asked about the collection of their own Institute's library. Most of them 50% were agreed on "general collection balanced", followed by meet the requirement and reference collection strong enough 40% equal response. Indexing/abstracting sources in your field of specialization and library get document from other library on loan have less response 10% each.

Table 11- Training to search for professional/technical information

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	If yes then it was useful	4	10
2.	If no then such training would have been useful	36	90

It is clear from the above table that 90% respondents have not taken any kind of training, but they would have been useful, if they get like so.

Table 12- Time spend in the library (per week)

S.N.	Purpose	Number	Percentage
1.	Less than 5 hours	4	10
2.	5-10 hours	32	80
3.	10-20 hours	4	10
4.	More than 20 hours	0	0

It is revealed from the above table that majority 80% respondents used library 5-10 hours per week, whereas equally 10% respondents used library less than 5 hours and 10 to 20 hours.

Table 13- Use of other library facilities

S.N.	Facilities	Number	Percentage
1	Computers services	32	80
2	e-Resources	30	75
3	Telecommunication and its facilities	25	62.5
4	Photocopying	26	65
5	Internet/ Intranet/ Wi-fi etc.	30	75
6	Multimedia	20	50
7	Digital Library	10	25
8	Video conferencing/video	12	30

When the respondents were asked about the use of facilities available in the library, majority 80% respondents were used computer services followed by 75% respondents used e-Resources and Internet facility. 65% respondents were used photocopying, 62.5% telecommunication, 50% used multimedia, 30% used Video conferencing whereas only 25% respondents used digital library facility.

6. Major findings

Following are the major findings of the study:

- Majority 70% respondents seeking information for develop administrative academic skills.
- Majority 60% respondents preferred to use internet, intranet sources and audio/video CD ROM, DVDs for their information requirements.
- Scanning of current issues of print/online journals was used by the 70% respondents.
- 70% respondents visited the library for reading articles/books.
- Majority 90% respondents preferred to obtain journal articles/reference materials in both print and electronic format.
- 70% respondents said that electronic sources make easier to gather and use information.
- 50% respondents agreed that the collection is balanced.
- Majority 80% respondents spent 5-10 hours per week in the library to meet their information needs.
- Computer related services were used by 80% respondents.
- 90% respondent would like to attend the training program for the use of computer based information sources.

7. Conclusion & recommendation

The libraries like RIPA and the library professionals are to realistically serve the administration of the nation; they must recognize the changing needs and variations in information gathering and provide services that would be most useful. The success of the library based on the selection of library resources. The collection should meet the requirements of the end users. The study reveals that internet is the major source of information.

Library and information science professionals, especially in India, should focus on the studies on user information needs to provide more clearance about the information needs of public administrators and civil service officers.

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