

Information-Seeking Behavior of Undergraduate Students at the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela

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Abstract

Information is a fundamental resource for personal, academic, and professional development. Rapid advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), widespread Internet accessibility, and the digitization of books, journals, and other scholarly resources have significantly transformed the creation, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information. Consequently, academic libraries have evolved from traditional repositories of printed materials to dynamic information centers that provide access to a wide range of print and electronic resources.

This study investigates the information-seeking behavior of undergraduate students at Rourkela College, Rourkela, with the objective of assessing the effectiveness of the college library in meeting users' information needs. Academic libraries play a pivotal role in supporting teaching, learning, and research by facilitating access to reliable information resources and promoting information literacy. They assist users in identifying, retrieving, evaluating, and effectively utilizing information for academic and personal purposes.

Understanding students' information-seeking behavior provides valuable insights into their information needs, preferred information sources, search strategies, and the challenges they encounter while accessing information. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the improvement of library resources and services, thereby enhancing user satisfaction and supporting academic excellence within higher education institutions.

Keywords: Information Seeking Behavior, Academic Library, ICT, Behavioral Study

INTRODUCTION

Information is a fundamental resource that supports personal, academic, and professional development. The rapid growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), widespread Internet access, and the digitization of books, journals, databases, and other scholarly resources have significantly transformed the way information is created, organized, stored, accessed, and disseminated. These technological developments have reshaped the information landscape and increased the demand for efficient library and information services.

Information-seeking behaviour refers to the process through which individuals recognize an information need and undertake a series of activities to identify, locate, evaluate, and utilize relevant information from a variety of sources. It is influenced by several factors, including users' educational background, information literacy skills, technological competence, availability of resources, and the purpose for which

information is required. Understanding information-seeking behaviour is essential for libraries because it enables librarians to design user-centred services, improve resource utilization, and enhance the quality of information delivery.

Education is widely recognized as a key driver of social, economic, and cultural development. In promoting the global vision of "Education for All," the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has emphasized equitable access to quality education and information resources. Academic institutions play a vital role in achieving this objective by fostering teaching, learning, research, and innovation. Academic libraries serve as the intellectual backbone of these institutions by providing access to scholarly resources and supporting the academic community.

An academic library is an integral part of a higher education institution, established primarily to support its teaching, learning, research, and extension activities. It provides access to a diverse range of print and electronic resources, including books, journals, e-books, databases, institutional repositories, and digital collections. In addition to collection development and technical processing, academic libraries offer services such as reference assistance, information literacy programmes, interlibrary loan, document delivery, and access to digital information resources.

With the increasing adoption of digital technologies, the role of academic libraries has evolved from being traditional repositories of printed materials to dynamic knowledge centres that facilitate lifelong learning and research. Modern academic libraries integrate information and communication technologies to provide efficient, user-oriented services that meet the changing information needs of students, researchers, and faculty members.

The information-seeking behaviour of students is of particular importance because it reflects how effectively they identify, retrieve, evaluate, and use information for academic and research purposes. Studying this behaviour enables librarians to understand users' information needs, preferred information sources, search strategies, and the challenges they encounter while accessing information. Such insights are valuable for improving library collections, enhancing digital services, strengthening information literacy programmes, and promoting the effective utilization of library resources.

The present study examines the information-seeking behaviour of undergraduate students at the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela. The study aims to assess students' patterns of information use, identify the resources and services they frequently utilize, evaluate their awareness of digital library facilities, and provide recommendations for improving library services to better support teaching, learning, and research within the institution.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employs a descriptive survey research design to investigate the information-seeking behaviour of undergraduate students at the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela. The descriptive approach was adopted to understand students' information needs, library usage patterns, preferred information sources, and awareness of library services.

Review of Literature

A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted to establish the theoretical framework of the study. Relevant scholarly publications were identified through searches in Google Scholar, Library and Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA), and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. In

addition, the reference lists of relevant articles were manually examined to identify further studies on information-seeking behaviour, academic libraries, information literacy, and digital library services.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised undergraduate students of Rourkela College, Rourkela. Since surveying the entire population was not feasible, a sample of **50 undergraduate students** was selected for the study.

Sampling Technique

A **Simple Random Sampling** technique was employed to ensure that each library user had an equal opportunity to participate in the survey. This method helped obtain representative data from students belonging to different academic disciplines.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included items relating to library visits, information needs, preferred information sources, awareness of digital library services, and the utilization of library resources. Secondary data were collected from books, scholarly journals, conference papers, dissertations, and electronic databases relevant to the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine the information-seeking behaviour of undergraduate students at the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela.
2. To identify the information sources most frequently used by undergraduate students.
3. To assess students' awareness and utilization of library resources, digital services, and electronic information sources.
4. To evaluate the role of the academic library in supporting teaching, learning, and research activities.
5. To identify the challenges faced by students while seeking information.
6. To recommend measures for improving library resources and information services to enhance user satisfaction.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between the frequency of library use and students' academic satisfaction.

H₂: The availability and use of digital library services significantly influence students' information-seeking behaviour.

H₃: Information literacy programmes positively affect students' ability to locate, evaluate, and utilize information resources effectively.

H₄: The availability of electronic resources and ICT-enabled library services significantly enhances the effectiveness of academic library services and improves users' information-seeking behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information-seeking behaviour has been widely studied in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), particularly in relation to users' information needs, information sources, search strategies, and the utilization of library resources. Previous studies have significantly contributed to understanding how users

interact with traditional and digital library services and have provided valuable insights for improving academic library services.

Reddy, Krishnamurthy, and Asundi (2018) conducted a comprehensive review of literature on information use, users' information needs, and information-seeking behaviour. Their study highlighted the evolving nature of users' information requirements and identified several research gaps that warrant further investigation in the field of information behaviour.

Fatima and Ahmad (2008) examined the information-seeking behaviour of students at Ajmal Khan Tibbiya College, Aligarh Muslim University. Their findings revealed that students primarily relied on library resources to meet their academic information needs and emphasized the importance of user awareness regarding available library services and information sources.

Thindwa, Chawinga, and Dube (2019) investigated the information-seeking behaviour of Security Studies students at Mzuzu University, Malawi. The study explored students' information needs, preferred information sources, and search patterns, highlighting the growing dependence on electronic information resources for academic activities.

Kadli and Hanchinal (2015) studied the information-seeking behaviour of law students in two law colleges in Mumbai. Their research focused on library visitation patterns, purposes of information seeking, preferred information resources, and the challenges encountered while accessing information. The authors recommended strengthening library services to better meet users' academic requirements.

Mahesh Kumar and Jayaraman (2014) examined the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of academic librarians in Coimbatore. The study emphasized the importance of awareness and effective utilization of available library resources and services for improving information delivery and professional practice.

Several studies have also examined the role of quality assurance and accreditation in strengthening academic library services. Srinivasaragavan, Ramasamy, and Afokiasamy (2015) evaluated the impact of accreditation on library and information services in academic institutions affiliated with Madurai Kamaraj University. Similarly, Ghante and Chikate (2016) reported that the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) significantly improved library infrastructure, collections, services, and overall management practices.

Singh (2016) emphasized the critical role of library and information services in enhancing the quality of higher education through the accreditation process. Sivakumar (2017), Napasanaikar and Hangaragi (2017), and Goel (2018) further highlighted the contribution of NAAC quality indicators in promoting effective library management, improving service delivery, and encouraging continuous quality enhancement in higher education institutions.

Best practices in academic libraries have also been explored by several researchers. Kaliyaperumal, Baskaran, and Perumal (2011), Walde (2012), and Patil (2013) documented various innovative practices adopted by academic libraries to improve user services, strengthen resource management, and enhance overall library performance. Ponmudiyar (2019) analysed the status of NAAC-accredited higher educational institutions in Tamil Nadu and emphasized the importance of quality assurance in library development.

Theoretical perspectives on innovation in libraries have been extensively discussed by Rogers (2003), who proposed the Diffusion of Innovations theory to explain how new ideas and technologies are adopted within organizations. Howard (1981) examined the relationship between organizational structure and innovation in academic libraries, while Musmann (1982) reviewed innovation research applicable to

library environments. Lowry (2011) discussed the impact of declining library budgets and financial constraints on innovation and service development in academic libraries.

The reviewed literature indicates that information-seeking behaviour is influenced by several factors, including information needs, user awareness, availability of print and electronic resources, digital technologies, information literacy, institutional support, and the quality of library services. However, relatively few studies have specifically examined the information-seeking behaviour of undergraduate students in colleges located in Odisha, particularly at Rourkela College. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by investigating the information needs, resource utilization patterns, and information-seeking behaviour of undergraduate students at the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is the systematic process of organizing, cleaning, coding, and transforming raw data into meaningful information to identify patterns, trends, and relationships. It enables researchers to summarize the collected data using appropriate statistical techniques and present the findings in a logical and interpretable manner. Data interpretation follows the analysis process and involves explaining the significance of the results, drawing meaningful conclusions, and making appropriate recommendations based on the research objectives.

In research, data analysis facilitates the identification of relationships among variables and supports evidence-based decision-making. The findings obtained through statistical analysis help researchers understand user behaviour, evaluate existing services, and recommend measures for improving organizational performance.

The present study is based on primary data collected from undergraduate students of Rourkela College, Rourkela, through a structured questionnaire. The collected data were classified, tabulated, and analysed using simple statistical tools such as frequency and percentage. The results are presented in the form of tables and graphs for better understanding and interpretation.

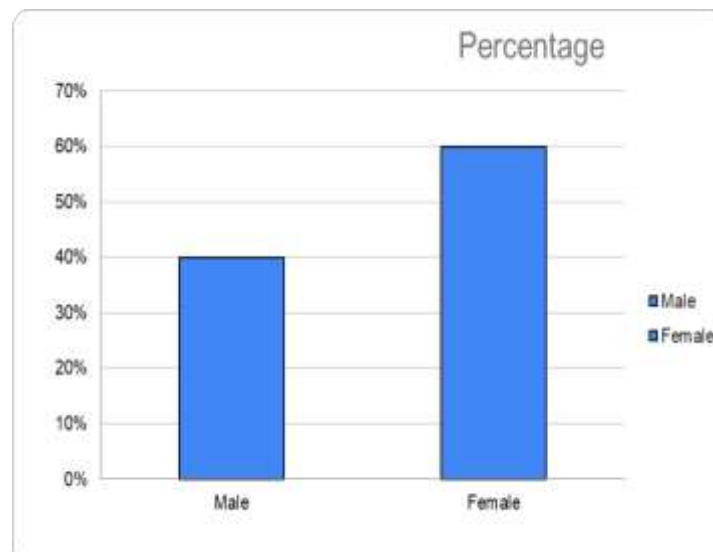
Rourkela College Library serves a large academic community comprising undergraduate students, faculty members, and researchers. In recent years, the library has adopted Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications to enhance its services. The implementation of the **Koha Integrated Library Management System (ILMS)** has automated major library operations, including cataloguing, circulation, acquisitions, serial control, and Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) services. These technological initiatives have significantly improved access to library resources and enhanced the efficiency of library services.

Table 1: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	20	40%
Female	30	60%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

Table 1 presents the gender-wise distribution of the respondents. Out of the total sample of 50 undergraduate students, 30 respondents (60%) were female, while 20 respondents (40%) were male.



The findings indicate that female students constituted most of the respondents and reported comparatively higher utilization of the library resources and services than male students.

Table 2: Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

Age Group (Years)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18–20	30	60%
21–25	13	26%
26–30	7	14%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

Table 2 shows the age-wise distribution of the respondents. Most of the respondents (60%) belonged to the 18–20 years age group, followed by 26% in the 21–25 years category and 14% in the 26–30 years category. The findings indicate that the library is predominantly utilized by younger undergraduate students, reflecting their active engagement in academic and learning activities.

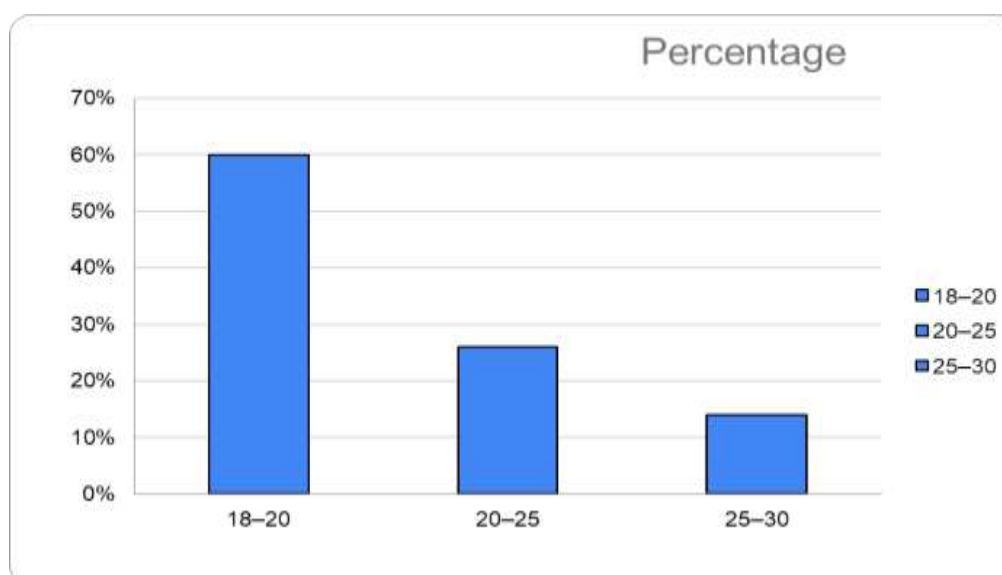


Fig:2

Interpretation

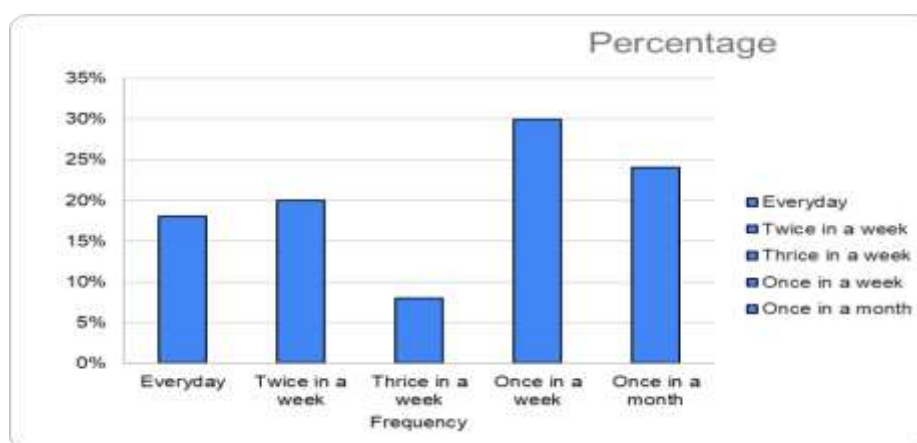
Table 2 presents the age-wise distribution of the respondents. Among the 50 undergraduate students surveyed, **30 respondents (60%)** belonged to the **18–20 years** age group, making it the largest category. This was followed by **13 respondents (26%)** in the **21–25 years** age group and **7 respondents (14%)** in the **26–30 years** age group. The findings indicate that the majority of library users are younger undergraduate students, suggesting that students in the early years of higher education make more frequent use of the academic library for their learning and information needs.

Table 3: Frequency of Library Visits

Frequency of Visit	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Every day	9	18%
Twice a week	10	20%
Three times a week	4	8%
Once a week	15	30%
Once a month	12	24%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

Table 3 illustrates the frequency of library visits among the respondents. The highest proportion of students, **15 respondents (30%)**, reported visiting the library **once a week**. This was followed by **12 respondents (24%)** who visited the library **once a month**, **10 respondents (20%)** who visited **twice a week**, and **9 respondents (18%)** who visited **every day**. Only **4 respondents (8%)** reported visiting the library **three times a week**. These findings indicate that most students use the library on a weekly basis, reflecting its continued importance in supporting their academic and information needs.



Graph-3

Interpretation

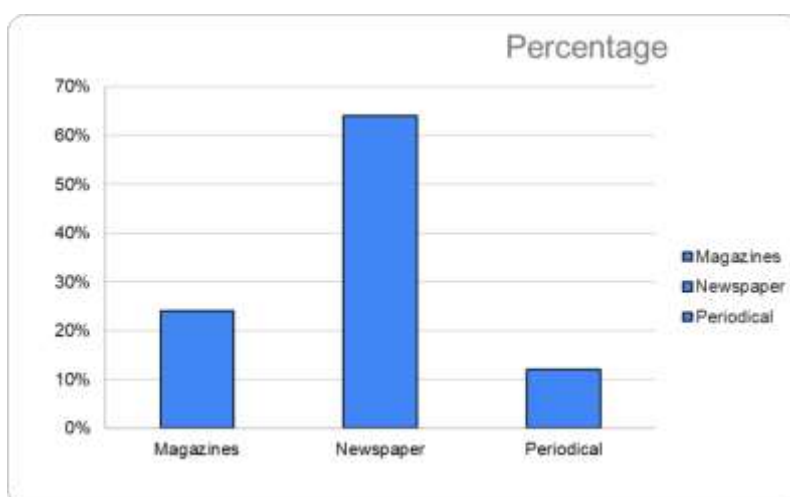
Table 3 presents the frequency of library visits among the respondents. The findings reveal that **15 respondents (30%)** visit the library **once a week**, representing the largest group of library users. This is followed by **12 respondents (24%)** who visit the library **once a month**, **10 respondents (20%)** who visit **twice a week**, and **9 respondents (18%)** who visit the library **every day**. Only **4 respondents (8%)** reported visiting the library **three times a week**. These findings indicate that most students use the library

on a regular weekly basis, demonstrating that the academic library continues to play an important role in supporting students' learning, information needs, and academic activities.

Table 4 presents the various information resources and library materials available to users in the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela.

Material Type	Number	Percentage
Magazines	12	24%
Newspaper	32	64%
Periodical	6	12%

Table-4



Graph-4

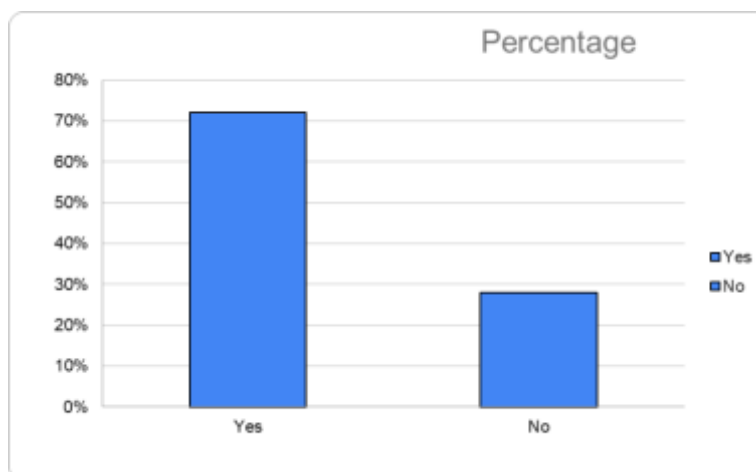
Interpretation

Table 4 presents the types of library materials most frequently used by the respondents. The findings indicate that **newspapers** are the most frequently used information resource, with **32 respondents (64%)** reporting their use. This is followed by **magazines**, which are used by **12 respondents (24%)**, while **periodicals** are utilized by **6 respondents (12%)**. The results suggest that newspapers are the preferred source of current information among students, whereas magazines and periodicals are comparatively less utilized.

Table 5 presents the level of awareness of e-library services among the undergraduate students at Rourkela College, Rourkela.

Table-5

Awareness	Number	Percentage
Yes	36	72%
No	14	28%



Graph-5

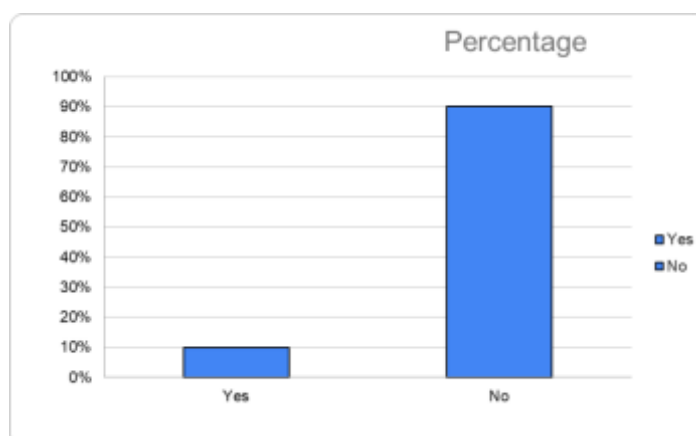
Interpretation

Table 5 presents the respondents' level of awareness of e-library services. The findings reveal that **36 respondents (72%)** are aware of the e-library facilities available in the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela, whereas **14 respondents (28%)** reported that they are not aware of these services. The results indicate that a majority of students are familiar with the library's electronic resources and digital services. However, the proportion of students who lack awareness suggests the need for user orientation programmes and information literacy initiatives to improve awareness and promote the effective utilization of e-library services.

Table 6 presents the respondents' views on the automation of the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela.

Table-6

Knowledge of Automation	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	10%
No	45	90%



Graph-6

Interpretation

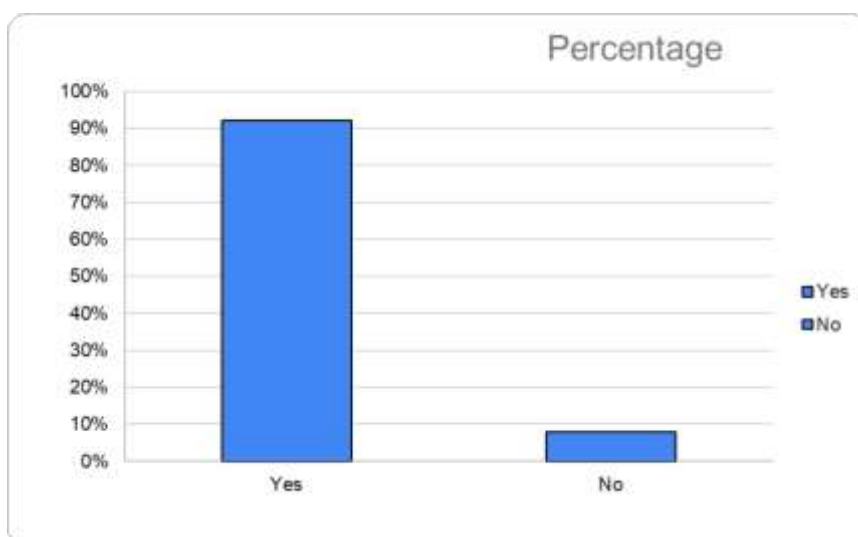
Table 6 presents the respondents' views regarding the automation of the Academic Library of Rourkela

College, Rourkela. The findings indicate that **5 respondents (10%)** believed that the library has implemented automation facilities, whereas **45 respondents (90%)** reported that the library is not automated. Although the library has adopted the **Koha Integrated Library Management System (ILMS)** for managing library operations, the responses suggest that a large proportion of students are either unaware of the existing automation facilities or have limited exposure to the automated services provided by the library. This finding highlights the need for user orientation programmes and awareness initiatives to familiarize students with the library's automated services, including the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), circulation, cataloguing, and other digital facilities.

Table 7 presents the availability and utilization of Open Access resources in the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela.

Table-7

Open Access	Number	Percentage
Yes	46	92%
No	4	8%



Graph-7

Interpretation

Table 7 presents the respondents' awareness of Open Access facilities available in the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela. The findings reveal that **46 respondents (92%)** are aware of the Open Access facilities provided by the library, whereas only **4 respondents (8%)** reported that they are not aware of these facilities. The results indicate a high level of awareness among students regarding Open Access resources. This suggests that the library has been successful in promoting access to Open Access information resources. However, continued user education and awareness programmes may further improve the utilization of these resources among all students.

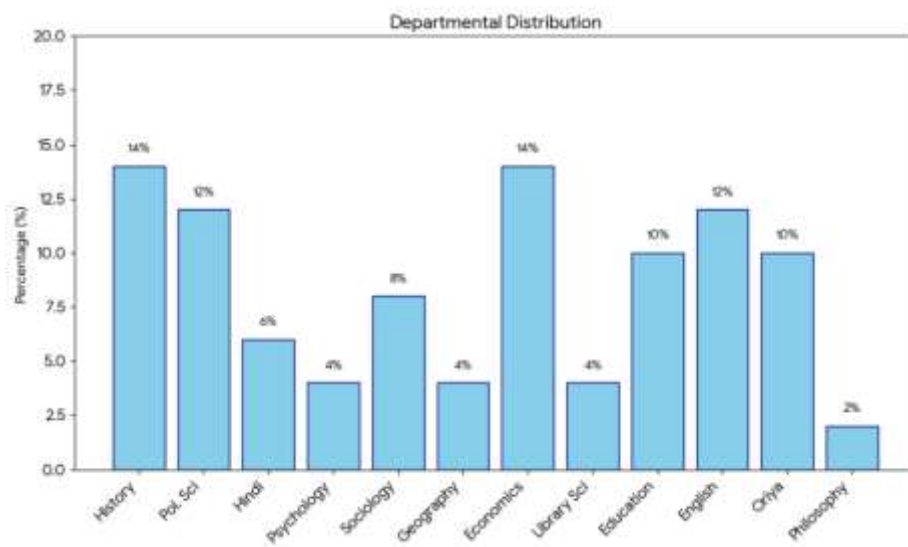
Interpretation

Table 8 presents the department-wise distribution of the respondents. The data indicate that a total of **50 undergraduate students** from different academic departments participated in the study. The table shows both the number of respondents and the corresponding percentage from each department, ensuring a representative distribution of the study sample. This departmental representation provides a

comprehensive understanding of the information-seeking behaviour of students across different academic disciplines and enhances the reliability of the study findings.

Table-8

Dept.	Number	percentage
history	7	14%
Political science	6	12%
Hindi	3	6%
Psychology	2	4%
sociology	4	8%
geography	2	4%
economics	7	14%
Library & information science	2	4%
education	5	10%
English	6	12%
Oriya	5	10%
philosophy	1	2%



Graph-8

Table 8 presents the department-wise distribution of the respondents. A total of **50 undergraduate students** from various academic departments participated in the study. The highest representation was observed from the **History** and **Economics** departments, each contributing **7 respondents (14%)**. This was followed by **Political Science** and **English**, with **6 respondents (12%)** each. The **Education** and **Odia** departments accounted for **5 respondents (10%)** each, while **Sociology** contributed **4 respondents (8%)**. The **Hindi** department represented **3 respondents (6%)**, whereas **Psychology**, **Geography**, and **Library and Information Science** each contributed **2 respondents (4%)**. The **Philosophy** department had the lowest representation, with **1 respondent (2%)**. Overall, the respondents were drawn from a wide

range of academic disciplines, ensuring a reasonably balanced sample and enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. The study revealed that **female students constituted most library users**, accounting for **60%** of the respondents, whereas **male students represented 40%**. This indicates comparatively higher library utilization among female students.
2. Most of the respondents (**60%**) belonged to the **18–20 years** age group, suggesting that younger undergraduate students are the most frequent users of the academic library.
3. With regard to the frequency of library visits, **30%** of the respondents reported visiting the library **once a week**, making it the most common pattern of library usage among the students.
4. Among the available reading materials, **newspapers** emerged as the most frequently used information resource, with **64%** of the respondents indicating their preference, followed by magazines and periodicals.
5. The study found that **72%** of the respondents were aware of the **e-library services** provided by the Academic Library of Rourkela College, while **28%** lacked awareness of these services.
6. Although the library has adopted the **Koha Integrated Library Management System (ILMS)**, **90%** of the respondents perceived that the library was not fully automated. This finding indicates a lack of user awareness regarding the existing automation facilities rather than the absence of library automation.
7. A significant majority (**92%**) of the respondents were aware of the **Open Access facilities** available through the library, reflecting a high level of awareness of freely accessible scholarly information resources.
8. The department-wise analysis revealed that students from the **History** and **Economics** departments recorded the highest level of library participation, each accounting for **14%** of the respondents. This suggests comparatively higher utilization of library resources among students from these disciplines.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the present study, the following suggestions are proposed to enhance the quality and effectiveness of library services at the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela:

1. **Strengthen Digital Resources:** The library should expand its collection of electronic resources by subscribing to additional e-books, e-journals, online databases, and other digital information resources to meet the changing academic and research needs of students.
2. **Update the Library Collection:** The library should regularly enrich its collection with the latest editions of textbooks, reference books, scholarly journals, magazines, and other relevant learning resources to ensure the availability of current and reliable information.
3. **Ensure Adequate Availability of Textbooks:** Sufficient copies of prescribed textbooks should be maintained to meet the academic requirements of students, particularly during examination periods.
4. **Promote Information Literacy:** Regular orientation programmes, workshops, and hands-on training sessions should be organized to improve students' awareness and effective utilization of e-library services, Open Access resources, OPAC, and other digital library facilities.

5. **Enhance Library Automation:** Although the library has adopted the **Koha Integrated Library Management System (ILMS)**, greater efforts should be made to fully automate all library operations and to increase users' awareness of the automated services available through the library.
6. **Strengthen Library Governance:** A dedicated Library Advisory Committee comprising librarians, faculty members, and student representatives should be constituted to periodically review library services, identify user needs, and recommend measures for the continuous improvement of library resources and facilities.
7. **Improve ICT Infrastructure:** The library should strengthen its Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure by providing high-speed Internet connectivity, additional computer terminals, Wi-Fi access, and digital learning facilities to support teaching, learning, and research activities.
8. **Conduct Periodic User Satisfaction Surveys:** Regular user feedback and satisfaction surveys should be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of library services and to identify areas requiring further improvement.

CONCLUSION

Academic libraries play a crucial role in supporting teaching, learning, and research by providing timely access to reliable information resources and promoting information literacy among users. The present study examined the information-seeking behaviour of undergraduate students at the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela. The findings indicate that the majority of students actively utilize the library for their academic needs and are generally aware of the available e-library and Open Access facilities. However, the study also reveals the need to enhance user awareness of library automation services and to strengthen the effective utilization of digital resources.

The success of an academic library largely depends on its ability to understand and respond to the evolving information needs of its users. Therefore, continuous improvement in library collections, digital resources, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, user education programmes, and fully automated library services is essential for delivering high-quality information services. Regular assessment of users' information-seeking behaviour will enable libraries to develop user-centred services and improve overall user satisfaction.

Furthermore, quality assurance initiatives such as those promoted by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) encourage academic libraries to modernize their infrastructure, adopt innovative technologies, and continuously improve service quality. By implementing these measures, the Academic Library of Rourkela College, Rourkela, can further strengthen its role as a dynamic knowledge centre that effectively supports the academic and research activities of its users.

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