INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF MEDIA PROFESSIONALS IN DELHI-NCR : A study of various information sources used by the different types of media professionals

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the information seeking behaviour of media professionals of selected media agency libraries in Delhi-NCR with special reference to the use of different types of information sources available in the media libraries from where, the information is collected by the media professionals for their professional usage. The study was conducted using a self-administrated questionnaire. 350 respondents from 14 different newspapers and news channels, media agencies of Delhi-NCR were chosen in the study. It is observed from the study that Internet; File footage; Online – databases; Broadcast stories of particular events, Television and Radio, Newspapers and Newspapers –Clippings are considered very high as the main source of information seeking tools where Book reviews; Thesis and dissertations are used very limited to seek the information.

KEYWORDS: Media Professionals; Information Seeking Behaviour; Print media; Electronic media;

Introduction

Mass media is an important buzzword in today's ICT World. Information society is redefined by the influence of mass media since it provides instant access to information which the general public wants. It is very evident that it merged in every walk of human life and has penetrated everywhere and makes our life more comfortable and easy. Mass media are defined as a diversified media technology that is deliberate to reach many of the masses in a short time through mass communication. These communication media technologies are mainly combined with broadcast media and print media. Basically, broadcast media includes television, radio, movies, taped music, mobile, internet etc. and they send data electronically and print media use a physical object for the retrieval and public exposure of the information such as newspapers; magazines pamphlets, etc. Mass media is divided into print media (newspapers, books, etc.) and electronic media (Telivison, Radio; Internet etc.)

Media professionals

Media professionals are defined as the special aspirant or information seekers. They are information consumers as well as communicators, who channel their energy to provide information to the masses.

Importance of mass communication and mass media

Mass communication caters to the mass audience by taking a message or information to various media or communication channels. For instance, the news media is the main source of information for the masses. This not only keeps the people abreast of the latest developments in different spheres of life, but also helps them to build an opinion and formulate their voting strategies. The news media is one of the most important instruments used for the propagation of culture, idea and opinions. Analyzing, the cultural selection in the electronic information society, we find that an important part of the selection lies in the choice between television channels.

The evolution of any society or a country lies with millions of lazy viewers who sit in their comfortable couches with their remote controls in their hands zapping between action films, revivalist preachers and commercials for a new fragrance, hardly realizing that by their choice in term of cultural and political influences they are the catalisits of transformation.

Literature Review

To analyse the real problem, quite a number of research studies have been conducted by the researchers to understand the information needs and information seeking behaviour of media professionals.

Poteet (2000) conducted a study entitled "Newspaper journalists' information seeking behaviour with online information sources". Specifically, with the newspaper journalists at Charlotte Observer and News and Observer of Raleigh. The findings of the study reveal that online sources of information are very important for information gathering as per their information needs; around 80% respondents use World Wide Web / Internet / Email daily, whereas most of the respondents never used forums like: - News groups; FTP application, TELNET, etc.

Nicholas et al. (2000) conducted a joint study entitled "Input of the Internet on information seeking in the Media 1" with 300 Journalists and Media Librarians using an open-ended interview & questionnaires to determine the effect of the Internet or World Wide Web on the British media. The focus was mainly on Newspapers. The study reveals that old and traditional Journalists use the internet very less and besides, they had a very poor approach to the Internet. On the other hand, they got better access to other information sources and this was the primary reason they were very traditional. The new media Journalists are found to be significant users of the Internet. Librarians were also found to be significant users of the World Wide Web. Generally, they look for Characters in E-papers and it was also found that other related official websites were also preferred by them. Their search history, mainly includes Fact checking, background information, review of related literature to compose an article; and so on and on the other hand it is also found that email facility used on very low scale by old and traditional journalists and not considered as journalist tool on a serious basis.

Millen and Dray (2000) in his joint study entitled "Information sharing in an online community of journalists" investigated the methods in which online community of news reporter's request and offer assistance to each other. In the study, the author identified the use of online technology, variety of information and temporal attributes of the group. The findings of the study reveal that one community of media professionals has a commitment to helping others and sharing information through announcing shared information sources. A small segment of the journalist community is interested in utilizing new technologies. Reporters are the group of media professionals or journalists who use technology and execute the value and usefulness of their work.

Dowell and Attfield (2003) in his joint study titled "Information seeking and use by newspaper journalists" investigated the information use and information seeking behaviour pattern of

journalists at a National British Newspaper agency with 25 journalists by using unstructured interview techniques at "The Times" Newspaper in London. Information seeking behaviour of the associated participants started with their job tasks or assignments. The finding of the study revealed that the journalists seek information that are related to the interpretation of the happenings or background information; facts, findings and truth related to the events; Originality of the News; Personal understanding; etc. The investigator abstracted their research work findings and conclusions in the form of a model which illustrate a journalist research and writing procedure which consist of 3 divisions i.e. Initiation; Preparation and Production.

Anwar, Al-Ansari and Abdullah (2004) conducted a joint study entitled "Information seeking behaviour of Kuwati Journalists". In this study Authors investigated the information seeking behaviour of 92 working Kuwati Journalists by using a Questionnaire. The study revealed that the type of information sources that Journalists emphasis on being; Fact Checking and to know the general and background information. Most of the information acquired by using a huge variety of both formal and informal sources of information. In terms of importance, authentication, satisfaction, the Internet, Human sources, Press-releases were considered high in use. The availability and use of in-house electronic Library of stories and reports generated by colleagues were found to be limited and not satisfying. The information search skills were considered as very important for the work by the Journalists. Time lacking was the major problem provided by most of the Journalist.

Anwar and Asghar (2009) in his joint study entitled "Information seeking behaviour of Pakistani newspaper journalists" investigated the information seeking behaviour of Pakistani newspaper journalists and the findings of the study reveals that the journalists utilize a variety of formal and informal sources of information. The journalists, mainly need information for news writing or preparation of news items and they give high significance to their personal collection of information sources; their day to day conversation and updated news dairy. They are highly satisfied with the internet sources; they utilize in house E- Libraries for gathering the ideas for storylines and background information. The authors revealed that the crucial difficulties in searching of the required information facing by the journalists are lack of training and in the accessing process of international sources of information.

Kronstad and Eide (2015) jointly conducted a survey entitled "How online Journalists learn within a non-formal context". The focal point of the study was to find out the experiences of journalists working in an online newspaper; The experience with their work place.; Non-formal learning; framework conditions and their learning environment. Interview methods were used in the study. The study includes the online journalists of online newspapers in the Western part of Norway.The Interviews were based on Open-ended and specific questions where the aim of the interview was to gain a broad perspective on the informants' experiences work place non-formal learning and to explore alternative perspective that emerged during the interviews. The major findings of the study suggest that a the theory of online Journalist's working place learning should be taken into consideration. The fact of that learning process in this regards, arise at various points of conscious awareness, behavioral aspects, motivational and emotional factors and encompassing cognitive. This field offers the subject of workplace learning and Journalism with context specific research on the non-formal learning processes of online newspapers Journalists.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to

- Identify various types of information sources used by the media professionals working in Delhi - NCR.

Methodology of the study

For the purpose of this study survey method was used to collect data,. The data were collected through self - administrated questionnaire. The total no of 350 questionnaires were distributed between the two types of media professionals (175 media professionals from Newspapers and 175 media professionals from News Channels) working in 14 different media agencies situated in Delhi-NCR region. The questionnaire was distributed personally at their work place. Most of the questionnaire were distributed at the time of their visit to their concerned organization's media house libraries personally and with the help of the their library professionals.

Analysis and findings

The sources from where we acquire or get the required information are known as information sources. The major findings and conclusions drawn on the basis of statistical analysis and interpretation are discussed below:

Use of different sources of information by newspaper's media professionals vs. News-channel's media professionals

There are different types of information required by the media professionals related to their information needs of the profession. These different kinds of information required are collected from different kinds of information sources. The collection of information source depends on the different factors such as accuracy, timely and speedy availability of information, less cost involved in the form in which the information is available, formats etc. The information is required by different type of peoples in different profession.

In the research study the respondents were divided into two categories as represented below:-
* News Channel's Media professionals
* Newspaper's Media professionals

The respondents in the study are divided into two categories based on their association with newspapers and news channels. Due to the different types of information needs of the different type of media professionals, different types of information sources may be required or used by them. In the study, the comparative analysis is done on the basis of descriptive statistics, i.e. Mean score and standard deviation.

The independent sample t test is applied in the study in order to see the presence of significant difference in the use of different information sources if any between the two types of respondents (newspapers and news channels). In the independent sample t test the two different categories of respondents are considered as independent samples. Their mean scores are compared in the hypothesis testing process. The level of significance is assumed to be 5 percent. The null hypothesis of the independent sample t test is mentioned below:

Null hypothesis: ***"There exists no significant difference between the mean score of the two types of respondent's w.r.t to their use of providing different information sources."***

The results of comparative descriptive analysis (mean score and standard deviation) as well as independent sample t test are shown below in the table 1.

Table 1: Results of independent sample t test

Information Sources	Newspapers Media professionals	News Channels Media professionals	Test of difference in the means of 2 independent groups	Remarks
	Mean (Std. Deviation)	Mean (Std. Deviation)	t-statistics (p value)	
Text and Reference Books	3.90 (0.953)	3.18 (0.882)	7.332 (0.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Journals or periodicals	3.63 (0.853)	4.21 (0.866)	-6.218 (.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
News magazines	3.91 (1.028)	3.95 (1.121)	-.298 (-766)	Null Hypothesis accepted
Newspaper clippings	4.15 (1.040)	3.90 (.977)	2.331 (.020)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
New addition list of books and journals	3.24 (1.213)	3.22 (1.108)	.184 (-854)	Null Hypothesis accepted
Back issues of newspapers	4.47 (.829)	4.25 (.917)	2.384 (.018)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Online databases	3.73 (1.252)	4.62 (.739)	-8.161 (.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Internet	4.13 (1.187)	4.70 (.699)	-5.488 (.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Handbooks and Yearbooks	3.39 (1.077)	2.97 (1.590)	2.952 (.003)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Dictionaries and Directories	3.67 (.985)	3.51 (1.771)	1.007 (.315)	Null Hypothesis accepted
Maps; Atlas and Almanac	2.53 (1.071)	2.83 (1.078)	-2.686 (.008)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Book reviews	3.00 (.988)	2.64 (1.246)	2.994 (.003)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Encyclopedia	2.99 (1.420)	3.66 (.997)	-5.096 (.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Indexes and Abstracts	2.99 (1.093)	3.18 (.983)	-1.748 (.081)	Null Hypothesis accepted
Photographs	4.22 (1.089)	4.14 (1.118)	.678 (.498)	Null Hypothesis accepted
Government publications and census publication	4.25 (.956)	4.03 (1.098)	1.973 (.049)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Research reports and Annual reports	3.87 (.882)	3.79 (1.171)	.722 (.471)	Null Hypothesis accepted
T.V and Radio	4.42 (1.190)	4.50 (1.055)	-.713 (.476)	Null Hypothesis accepted
Thesis & Dissertations	1.86 (1.079)	1.75 (1.265)	.864 (.388)	Null Hypothesis accepted
Conference proceedings	3.57 (1.167)	3.45 (1.392)	.832 (.406)	Null Hypothesis accepted
Parliamentary debates and Political leader's speech	4.33 (.937)	4.10 (1.032)	2.223 (,027)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Recorded conversations of professional colleague/experts	3.47 (1.066)	4.23 (1.042)	-6.746 (.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Newspapers in microforms	4.03 (1.008)	4.28 (1.021)	-2.318 (.021)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
File footage	3.51 (1.124)	4.67 (.789)	-11.174 (.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Archival sources	3.94 (1.165)	4.35 (1.016)	-3.520 (.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted
Broadcast news story of a particular event	4.03 (1.217)	4.49 (.964)	-3.895 (.000)	Null Hypothesis not accepted

The results of independent sample t-test indicates that the probability value of t-statistics with five percent level of significance is found to be less than 0.05 in case of following sources of information:-
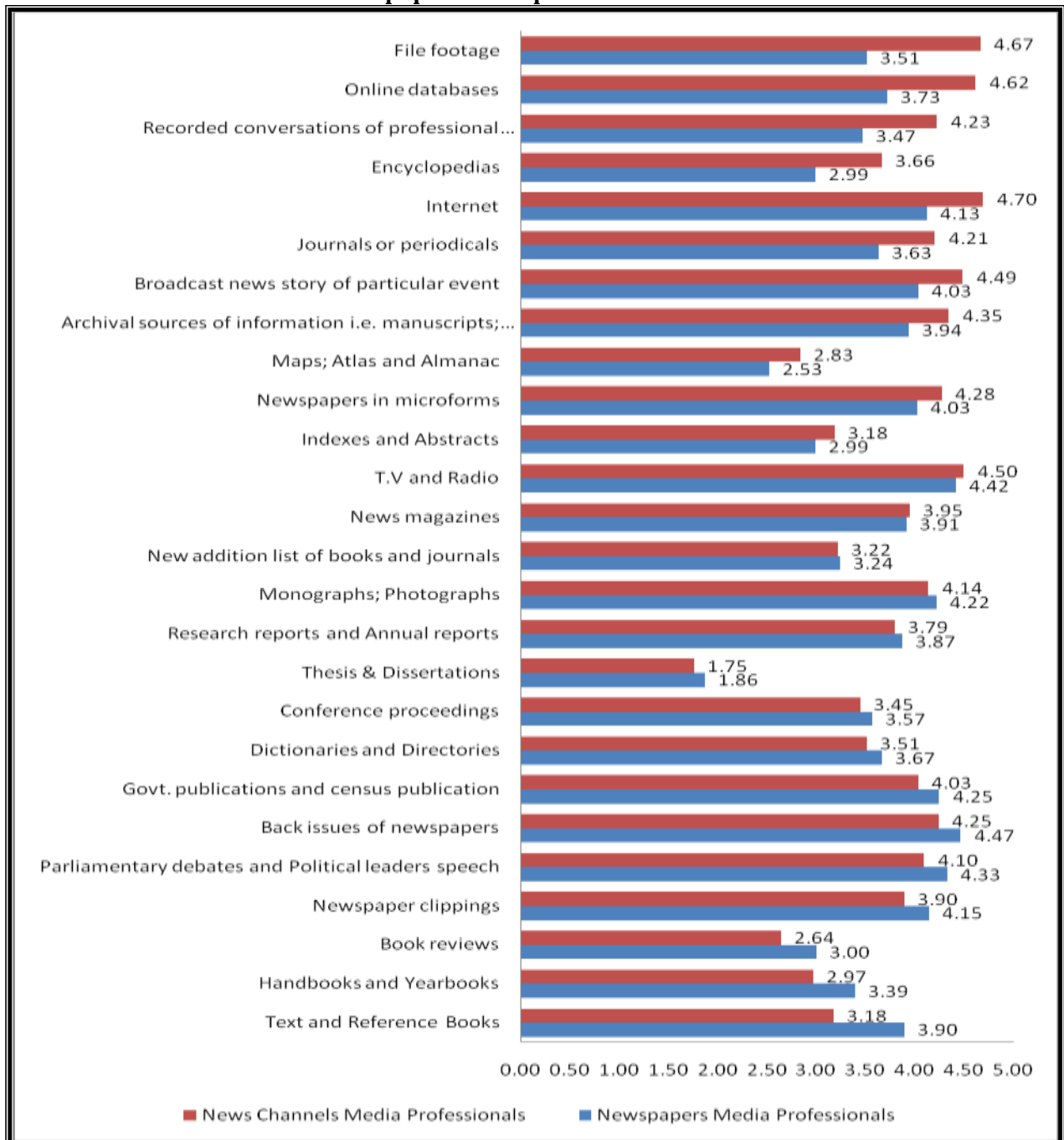
Information Sources	t-statistics (p value)
• Text and Reference Books	7.332 (0.000)
• Journals or periodicals	-6.218 (.000)
• Newspaper clippings	2.331 (.020)
• Back issues of newspapers	2.384 (.018)
• Online databases	-8.161 (.000)
• Internet	-5.488 (.000)
• Handbooks and Yearbooks	2.952 (.003)
• Maps; Atlas and Almanac	-2.686 (.008)
• Book reviews	2.994 (.003)
• Encyclopedia	-5.096 (.000)
• Indexes and Abstracts	-1.748 (.081)
• Government publications and census publication	1.973 (.049)
• Parliamentary debates and Political leader's speech	2.223 (.027)
• Recorded conversations of professional colleague/experts	-6.746 (.000)
• Newspapers in microforms	-2.318 (.021)
• File footage	-11.174 (.000)
• Archival sources	-3.520 (.000)
• Broadcast news story of a particular event	-3.895 (.000)

Hence, with 95 percent confidence level the null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in the mean score of responses received by two independent and different categories of respondents (newspapers and news channels, media professionals) with respect to their use of different information sources cannot be accepted. Hence it can be concluded that both types of respondents use the above mentioned information sources differently and the reason of the difference is discussed below. However, in case of mention below information sources:

Information Sources	t-statistics (p value)
• News magazines	-.298 (-766)
• New addition list of books and journals	.184 (-854)
• Dictionaries and Directories	1.007 (.315)
• Photographs	.678 (.498)
• Conference proceedings	.722 (.471)
• T.V and Radio	-.713(.476)
• Thesis & Dissertations	.864 (.388)
• Conference proceedings	.832 (.406)

The probability value of t-statistics are found to be greater than five percent level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis of no significance difference in the mean score estimated by the responses received from two different types of respondents of these sources can be accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the two categories of respondents uses these sources of information in the same way.

Figure 1 : The comparative use of different information sources by news channels and newspaper media professionals

In the research study the results indicate that there exist differently, in the process of data collection by different types of media professionals. The result indicates that the media professionals working with News channels uses Internet (mean score = 4.70), File footage (mean score =4.67), Online databases (mean score = 4.64), T.V and Radio (mean score = 4.50), Broadcast stories on particuler events (mean score = 4.49), Arcival sources of information (mean score = 4.35), Newspapers in microforms (mean score = 4.28), Recorded conversation of professional colleagues or experts (mean score = 4.23), Journals and periodicals (mean score = 4.21) etc. comparatively higher as compared to media professionals working in newspapers media agencies. The reason mentioned for this trend seems to be due to the very high competition in the news world to broadcast the news in a very effective way, where information has become the essential need of every human being. The mass media professionals look for accurate and authentic information in a very short of time with just a click away, and to satisfy such kind of needs of the media professionals internet has provided them latest, updated, quick, authentic information as per their information need at that particular point of time.

The Internet is overloaded with huge information and provide them a clear and detailed information on any phenomena. Next to internet, television and radio which are considered the second populer information source used by media professionals because television and radio are known as the authenctic source of information and they are provide the comparative and latest information in the different areas i.e education, entertainment, social, cultural, political, religious and economical etc. aspects and most important thing they helps diffrent media professionlas to identfy and understand the news telecast or broadcasting bhaviour of populer news channels. Another important information source is found as online databases. Online databases have all the information on a single application software and arranged and organized to retrieve all the required information from broad term categories to narrow term categories. These online databases are normally managed in media libraries by the library professionals and they are customized or organized to suit the needs of the media professionals. File footage, Broadcast stories of a particular event, Newspapers in microforms, Recorded conversation with professional colleagues/experts, Archival sources of information and Journals and Periodicals are also found highly used and consulted information sources by news channels, media professionals these all information sources were found well organized and arranged in the media libraries either on in an online database or physically on tapes. Library professionals of these media agencies were provided the needed pinpointed information to their users as per their information need.

However, in case of media professionals working with Newspapers are found to seek information from the information sources such as Back issues of newspapers (mean score = 4.47), Parliamentary debates and speeches from political leaders (mean score= 4.33), Government and census publication (mean score = 4.25), Photographs (mean score = 4.22), Newspaper clippings (mean score = 4.15), Text and Reference books (mean score = 3.90), Research Reports (mean score =3.87), Dictionaries and Directories (mean score =3.67), Handbook and Yearbook (mean score = 3.39) were found significantly higher than media professionals associate with News channel's media agencies.The respondents were asked the reasons of using the above sources of information on a higher scale than they mentioned as they are associated with different editorial sections of a newspaper agency like economic section, political section, social section, cooking section, women oriented article writing section, crime section, entertainment section, religious section etc. The response to this question is that they have to consult the different types of information sources as per their information requirements for news writing. It is interesting to note during the course of research study a huge, chronologically and categorically arranged "newspapers sections of back issues" in every library associated with newspapers. This is very important because newspapers cover both minor and major stories of particular aspects affecting the peoples in all phases of life.

Back issues of newspapers were provided to complete background and historical information of every event happened in the past and become helpful for newspaper media professional to create a new story related to that aspect. Newspaper clipping services are used on the higher scale because it helps media professionals to search the information on a specific subject and its availability in the digitized form also, so users can assess it easily and it's available 24x7, and has zero loss of articles. Parliamentary debates and speeches of Political leaders help them to create a news on the latest debates and the leader's promises. Government publication and census publication are important because they provide the imformation regarding the latest and amended rules, regulations and law and orders pass by governement, Dictionaries and directories help them to understand the words of a particuler words and to identify the details of an individual or organisation address, telephone numbers etc. Book review, text books and refrence books help them to understand the detailed concept of diffrent phenomenas and help them to sharpe their mind and improve their memory and provide them better focus.

The finding of the study revels that with the mean score of 4.47 and standard deviation of .829 the back issues of newspapers, for collecting information is found to be highest for newspaper media professionals as compared to all the other available sources of collecting information, this is followed by Telivison and Radio having the mean score of 4.42 with Standard deviation of 1.190.However, in case of professionals working with news channels the most reliable source of information is the internet (mean score = 4.70) and it is also found that the next attractive source of information is file footage (mean score = 4.67) as well as Television and Radio (mean score = 4.5). In addition to that the other important source of information of media professionals is found to be broadcast news stories of particular events, online databases, archival sources of information, newspapers in microforms, journals and periodicals, etc.

The findings of the study also revealed that least used sources of information by the both types of media professionals are thesis and dessertation (Newspaper's media professionals Mean score = 1.86 with 1.079 standard deviation and News Channel's media professionals Mean score = 1.75 with 1.265 standard deviation) and followed by Maps, Atlas (Newspaper's media professionals Mean score = 2.53 with 1.071 standard deviation and News Channel's media professionals Mean score = 2.83 with 1.078 standard deviation).The reason for these information sources are not used frequently by the media professionals is because thesis and disssertation provide very detailed and comprehensive information on a particuler topic and media professionals needs pinpointed and quick information for their professional usage. Timely and accurate information in a very limited time is considered as power news due to the big publishing and broadcast competition in the news world. The reason behind the low usage of printed maps, atlas and almanac is found that, with the help of the Google maps, GPS system enables the media professionals to know the way, location, weather of every place in the world that's on their finger tips with the help of the Internet.

Conclusion and suggestions

Availability of timely and reliable information is one of the necessities for the media professionals who are associated with newspapers and news channel industry. Media professional's uses a wide variety of information sources (Table 1), to acquire the needed information. The study confirms that journalists and media professionals of Delhi- NCR place more emphasis on the Internet and on Television and Radio to fulfill their information needs. They seem to be more satisfied with the information sources that they prefer. It is very interesting to note that these respondents use thesis and dissertation very minimally in the process of their information seeking patterns. A good number of respondents use online databases, broadcast news stories of particular events, back issues of newspapers and other mention sources, i.e. text and reference books, Journals and periodicals, news magazines, encyclopedias, handbook and yearbook, dictionaries and directories, Research reports and conference proceedings in the questionnaire are searched and used by the media professionals as per their information needs. The sources

which are used by both types of media professionals equally includes are Internet, TV & Radio, Conference proceedings, Dictionaries and Directories, Government Publications, Back issues of newspapers, broadcast stories on particular events, parliamentary debates and Political leader's speech.

The study highlighted the information sources which are mostly used by the media professionals that the majority of the media professionals are using online sources for retrieving information and offline sources such as books; reviews and thesis and dissertations are less used information sources. The study has implications for media professionals that online sources may save time and efforts, but they should also check the authenticity of the sources as all the information available on the internet or on social media website are not reliable all the time. Sometimes the information available on the internet or other online sources are outdated. Media professionals should also maximize the use of book reviews ; theses and dissertations as they are the genuine, reliable sources and these are the outputs of some deep research so that can be beneficial for them while writing stories or news making. The news, which is knowledge based and required some fundamentals or conceptual work need to be prepared through thesis and dissertations. Media library professionals should improve the library services and initiate some user oriented /literacy program for their media professionals which can create awareness about latest's available information sources of libraries, and also provide in-service training to improve information searching techniques. The use of internationals and national electronic information sources by media professionals using in-depth interviews needs to be investigated.

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