
Influence of Income on Information Behaviour

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Abstract - *Income as a socio-economic factor, predominantly influences human behaviour. However, the study attempted to assess the relationship between income and information behaviour. To this end, a survey was conducted during middle half of 2015 to May 2016. Results show income level predominantly influences and shapes information behaviour.*

Keywords: Information Behaviour, Information Seeking Habit, Income and Information Behaviour, Use of Information Sources, Media, Time Spent in Information Seeking

1. Introduction

Income, according to Merriam Webster dictionary, is “money that is earned from work, investments, business, etc.”. It is our observation that income being a social factor predominantly influence and thereby shapes human behaviour. People belonging to different income level have differences in behaviour. However, multiple attempts are there towards categorisation of people under different levels of income. Department of Housing, Govt. of W.B. vide Order No.498 (21) H1/1M-2007 (Pt) dated 6th Sept. 2010 has classified the earning groups into 5 different types according to their monthly income. They are:

- i. EWS (Economic Weaker Section)—uptoRs. 10,000/-
- ii. LIG (Low income Group)—Rs. 10,000-15,000/-
- iii. MIG (Middle income Group-Lower)—Rs. 15,000-25,000/-
- iv. MIG-U (Middle Income Group-upper)—Rs. 25,000-40,000/-
- v. HIG (High Income Group)—Rs.40, 000—Above

However, the purpose of the present study was to determine the influence of income on information behaviour. To achieve the purpose, an attempt had been made to keep the categorization simple and easy to understand for required data collection, their organization, analysis and interpretation. Accordingly, various income groups have been distributed under 03 (three) categories, namely:

- i. LIG (Low Income Group)-uptoRs. 15,000/-
E.g., Daily wage earner, Rickshaw driver, Maid, etc.
- ii. MIG (Middle Income Group)-Rs. 15,000-40,000/-
E.g., Govt. Group-C & D employee, Small scale businessman, etc.
- iii. HIG (High Income Group)-Rs.40, 000 and Above
E.g., Grade-A Govt. Officer, Professor, Large scale businessman, etc.

2. Methodology

To achieve the objective of the study, necessary and relevant data were collected using survey method. It is worth mentioning that the population with regard to this study should be the entire population of the World. But it was hardly possible and also inconvenient to cover such a large and heterogeneous population for an in depth study. The prime obstacle regarding data collection, thus, became the nature and characteristics of the population, which could not be handled by any other sampling technique than that of 'stratified random sampling technique.

In view of the above, the measurement of income impact on information behaviour was measured with a sample set of 150 people. Again, various income groups had been distributed under 03 (three) categories, viz low income group, middle income group, and high income group. Sample was selected systematically, from three districts namely, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Darjeeling covering 50 people from each of them. Choosing these three districts of North Bengal carries the reason of favoured country (Jurisdiction) principle of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, where the present researcher had been residing. The other two districts were adjacent districts which had been chosen just for convenience. Sample, consisting of people belonging to different strata of the society, was collected from most populated village, urban and sub urban areas of each of the three selected districts in equal proportion. In final course, the sample was chosen at random from them, and data were accordingly collected.

The tools and techniques used for data collection were a combination of both questionnaire, designed especially for the purpose, and interview for personified interactions. Data were collected during middle half of 2015 to May 2016. Interviews with the respondents were recorded in the questionnaire itself. In addition to the above, data were also collected from various documentary, institutional and human sources. The data gathered in the above manner were duly analyzed, tabulated and interpreted keeping in view the objective of the study.

3. Analysis and findings

The findings obtained from analysis of collected data are as follows:

3.1. Types of information need

Table-1 shows the types of information need according to income level.

Table-1 Types of Information Need according to Income Level

Option Group	Political		Business		Sports		Entertainment		Education		Agriculture		Industry		Other		Total	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Low	06	12	02	04	09	18	03	06	02	04	10	20	-	-	18	36	50	33.33
Middle	07	14	08	16	12	24	04	08	09	18	05	10	04	08	01	02	50	33.33
High	09	18	10	20	06	12	04	08	11	22	02	04	08	16	-	-	50	33.33
Total	22		20		27		11		22		17		12		19		150	100
%	14.67		13.33		18		07.33		14.67		11.33		08		12.67		100	

Table-1 reveals that, out of total respondents, majority of 18% collect sports information. It has been found that 12% of low income group respondents collect political information, whereas 14% of middle income group respondents, and 18% of high income group respondents collect political information. Besides, 04% of low income group respondents collect business information, whereas 16% of middle income group respondents and 20% high income group respondents collect business information. Again 18% of low income group respondents and 24% of middle income group respondents collect sports information, while 12% of high income group respondents collect sports information. Further, 06% of low income group respondents collect entertainment information, whereas 08% of middle group respondents collect entertainment information, and 08% of high income group respondents collect entertainment information. Furthermore, 04% of low income group respondents collect educational information, whereas 18% of middle income group respondents collect educational information, and 22% of high income group respondents collect educational information. It is also found that 20% of low income group respondents collect agricultural information, whereas 10% of middle income group respondents collect agricultural information, and 04% of high income group respondents collect agricultural information. None of low income group respondents collect industrial information, whereas 08% of middle income group respondents collect industrial information, and 16% of high income group respondents collect industrial information.

On the other hand, 36% of low income group, and 02% of middle income group prefer other types of information. So, it is clear that, income status influences information behaviour.

3.2. Time spent for information seeking

Table-2 shows the duration of time spent daily for information seeking according to income level.

Table-2 Time Spent Daily for Information Seeking according to Income Level

Option Group	Below 30 minutes		30-60 minutes		61-120 minutes		121- above		Total	%
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Low	33	66	12	24	05	10	-	-	50	33.33
Middle	10	20	29	58	07	14	04	08	50	33.33
High	07	14	13	26	23	46	07	14	50	33.33
Total	50		54		35		11		150	100
%	33.33		36		23.33		07.34		100	

Table-2 reveals that out of total respondents, majority of 33.33% spend 30-60 minutes for information collection. It has been found that 66% of low income group respondents spend below 30 minutes, while 20% of middle income group respondents spend below 30 minutes, and 14% of high income group respondents spend below 30 minutes for information collection. Besides, 24% of low income group respondents spend 30-60 minutes, while 58% of middle income group respondents spend 30-60 minutes, and 26% of high income group respondents spend 30-60 minutes for their information collection.

Further, 10% of low income group respondents spend 61-120 minutes for information collection, whereas 14% of middle income group respondents spend 61-120 minutes, and 46% of high income group respondents spend 61-120 minutes for information collection.

None of low income group respondents spend above 121 minutes, while 08% of middle income group respondents spend more than 121 minutes for information collection, and whereas 14% of high income group respondents spend more than 121 minutes for information collection. So, it is clear that high income group spends more time than low and middle income groups for information collection.

3.3. Sources of information

Table-3 shows the use of sources of information according to income level.

Table-3 Sources of Information Used according to Income Level

Option Group	Human Sources		Documentary Sources		Institutional Sources		All of These		Total	%
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Low	34	68	05	10	07	14	04	08	50	33.33
Middle	10	20	17	34	18	36	05	10	50	33.33
High	04	08	21	42	19	38	06	12	50	33.33
Total	48		43		44		15		150	100
%	32		28.67		29.33		10		100	

Table-3 reveals that out of total respondents, majority of 32% have chosen human sources for information collection. It has been found that 68% of low income group respondents prefer human sources, while 20% of middle income group respondents prefer human sources, and whereas 08% of high income group respondents prefer human sources for information collection. Besides, 10% of low income group respondents have chosen documentary sources, while 34% of middle income group respondents have chosen documentary sources, and whereas 42% of high income group respondents have chosen documentary sources for information collection. Further, 14% of low income group respondents have chosen institutional sources, whereas 36% of middle income group respondents have chosen institutional sources, and while 38% of high income group respondents have chosen institutional sources for information collection. Furthermore, 08% of low income group respondents use all the sources, while 10% of middle income group respondents use all the sources, and whereas 12% of high income group respondents use all the sources for information collection.

So, it is clear that low income group prefers human sources, middle income group prefers institutional sources and high-income group prefers documentary sources.

3.4. Media usage

Table-4 shows the usage of media for information seeking according to income level.

Table-4 Media Usage for Information Seeking according to Income Level

Option Group	Oral-Verbal		Recorded		Non-Verbal		Observation		All of These		Total	%
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Low	34	68	09	18	02	04	04	08	01	02	50	33.33
Middle	29	58	17	34	03	06	01	02	-	-	50	33.33
High	05	10	22	44	06	12	11	22	06	12	50	33.33
Total	68		48		11		16		07		150	100
%	45.33		32		07.33		10.67		04.67		100	

Table-4 reveals that out of total respondents, majority of 45.33% have chosen oral-verbal media in collecting information. It has been found that 68% of low income group respondents prefer oral-verbal media, while 58% of middle income group respondents prefer oral-verbal media, and 10% of high income group respondents prefer oral-verbal media for information collection. Besides, 18% of low income group respondents prefer recorded media, 34% of middle income group respondents prefer recorded media, whereas 44% of high income group respondents prefer recorded media for information collection. Further, 04% of low income group respondents prefer non-verbal media, while 06% of middle income group respondents prefer non-verbal media, whereas 12% of high income group respondents prefer non-verbal media for information collection. Furthermore, 08% of low income group respondents prefer observation media, while 02% of middle income group respondents prefer observation media, and whereas 22% of high income group respondents prefer observation media for information collection. On the other hand, 02% of low income group respondents prefer all the media, while none of middle income group respondents prefer all the media, and whereas 12% of high income group respondents prefer all the media in collecting information. So, it is clear that low and middle income groups prefer oral-verbal media and high income group prefers recorded media.

3.5. Level of satisfaction

Table-5 shows the level of satisfaction according to level of income.

Table-5 Level of Satisfaction according to Level of Income

Option Group	Fully Satisfied		Partially Satisfied		Not Satisfied		Can Not Judge Satisfaction		Total	%
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Low	08	16	04	08	26	52	12	24	50	33.33
Middle	21	42	14	28	11	22	04	08	50	33.33
High	32	64	11	22	07	14	-	-	50	33.33
Total	61		29		44		16		150	100
%	40.67		19.33		29.33		10.67		100	

Table-5 reveals that out of total respondents, majority of 40.67% are fully satisfied using different types of information sources and media for collecting information. It has been found that 16% of low income group respondents are fully satisfied, whereas 42% of middle income group respondents are fully satisfied, and while 64% of high income group respondents are fully satisfied to use different sources and media in collecting information. Besides, 08% of low income group respondents are partially satisfied, whereas 28% of middle income group respondents are partially satisfied, and while 22% of high income group respondents are partially satisfied to use different sources and media in collecting information. Further, 52% of low income group respondents are not satisfied, whereas 22% of middle income group respondents are not satisfied, and while 14% of high income group respondents are not satisfied to use different sources and media in collecting information. Furthermore, 12% of low income group respondents, 04% of middle income group respondents, and none of high income group respondents cannot judge their satisfaction level to use different sources and media in collecting information. So, it is clear that people under low income group are not satisfied, middle income group are partially satisfied, and high-income group are fully satisfied using sources and media for information collection.

4. Inference

It may be inferred here that information behaviour is influenced by level of income. High income group spends more time than low and middle-income groups for information collection. Low income group prefers human sources, middle income group prefers institutional sources and high-income group prefers documentary sources. Low and middle income group prefer oral-verbal media and high income group prefers on recorded media. As to level of satisfaction, Low income group is 'not satisfied', middle income group is 'partially satisfied' and high income group is 'fully satisfied' with respect to use of sources and media for information collection.

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