The Everyday Life Information Behaviour of Immigrants: A Case of Bangladeshi Women

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Immigrants need information at various stages of their settlement. Lack of timely, relevant information before and after arrival may lead to social isolation, depression, and dissatisfaction with their lives in their host countries. Several studies, such as Caidi and Allard 2005, Caidi, Allard and Quirke 2010, Quirke 2001, Esses, et. al. 2013, recognize the need for timely information for immigrants to reduce their worries during settlement as well as to ensure their inclusion in host countries. In order to design suitable information services for various immigrant groups with diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and religious backgrounds it is important to know their individual needs and their information seeking behaviour. The pilot study was conducted to acquire information on various aspects of Bangladeshi immigrant women’s lives including everyday life information behaviour in Bangladesh and in Canada, their settlement information needs, political participation in Canada, public library use, and awareness about their rights in Canada. This poster illustrates the everyday life information behaviour of Bangladeshi immigrant women in Canada.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

- Qualitative, semi-structured interviews as primary data collection method.
- Audio-recorded, translated, transcribed interviews (average time = 44 minutes; 522 pages of transcription).
- 22 face-to-face interviews with Bangladeshi women immigrants living in Toronto in March 2015.
- Voluntary participation, mixture of convenience and snowball sampling.
- Inclusion criteria: lived at least 12 years in Bangladesh before moving to Canada; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; 50% of participants had been in Canada for at least 2-5 years.
- Data organized using NVIVO 10 and thematically coded.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Demographic Background

Information Sources

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the pilot study, we propose an Everyday Life Information Behaviour Model to capture the everyday life information behaviour of immigrants and to hypothesize the connection between everyday life information behaviour of immigrants and their social integration and settlement. Everyday life practices of Bangladeshi women immigrant cannot be separated from their everyday life information needs. The results of my pilot study indicate that those having high social interactions, access to various information channels (e.g., friends and family members, government agencies, internet) are more connected with the Canadian system than those having low interactions, heavy dependence on informal information networks and problems with English language proficiency. It is also evident in our study that everyday life information behaviour of Bangladeshi immigrants is quite different than their ELIB back home. For example, some respondents indicated that they were not worried about searching for information in Bangladesh as someone was always there to help them doing various things.

We also identified several factors that may affect newcomers’ information practices including how they seek information and from which sources. Factors such as home country culture and religion are not often found in information behaviour research as important factors affecting information behaviour of humans. We find conservative Hindus and Muslim immigrants heavily depend on their husbands for their day to day information and other needs because of the cultural and religious practices. Especially, Muslim immigrants wearing "burkas" tend to always stay home and involved in household work and may not interact with the Canadian system. They even do not meet people outside of their families resulting in a serious lack of information regarding what is happening outside and lacking necessary skills to utilize the new system. We will be elaborating this model for our subsequent work with immigrants. We believe that offering time sensitive, tailor made information services to the newcomers Canada would help them integrate into Canadian society more smoothly.