

Information Seeking Behaviour of Members of Parliament in Tanzania

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Abstract

This study examines information seeking behaviour, needs, and patterns of members of parliament (MPs) in Tanzania; including information sources they use and problems they encounter when seeking information. Primary data was collected through self-administered questionnaires and interviews. Secondary data was collected through document review and library research. Key findings revealed that MPs need information for preparing parliamentary debates and speeches, and that their key sources of information include government newspapers, official publications, and the internet among others. Findings further revealed that MPs encounter problems when seeking information due to the lack of information search skills and the lack of cooperation from government ministries and departments. In view of the fast changing information and ICT environment, it is recommended that MPs should be trained in computer and information literacy and search skills; and should be exposed to a wide variety of databases and search engines. Since MPs spend most of their time in their constituencies, it is recommended that each constituency should have a small, but up-to-date, reference

library/information centre; and each MP should have a research assistant to help them find the information they need. These facilities should be properly maintained and sustained.

Key words:

Information, information seeking behaviour, information need, information sources, information literacy, member of parliament