

# A Study on Information Seeking Behaviour of Faculty Members of Private Engineering Colleges in and Around Chennai, Tamil Nadu

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**Abstract** – The purpose of this study is to investigate the information needs, seeking behavior, purpose of seeking information and barriers met during seeking information by the faculty members working in private engineering colleges in and around Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The questionnaire was distributed randomly those who are working in private engineering colleges. Among 600 faculty members 504 respondents responded. Analysis showed that majority of the faculty members prefers World Wide Web as main source for accessing of information. 201 faculties visited the library once in a week. Just 19.25% of respondents spend more than half an hour time in the library. 312 respondents depended on the World Wide Web as the main sources for various information. Majority of the staff i.e. 478 respondents seeking information for preparing class notes. 409 respondents are having membership in special library. The faculty faced the common problem while seeking information i.e. unavailability of resources and information overload on gathering information from World Wide Web.

**Keywords:** Information Seeking Behavior, Information Gathering

## I. INTRODUCTION

Now information plays an important role in everybody's life. Man born innocently for the development of his life he required information, without information there is no life so much value information has itself. Academic people like scholar's faculty members and students seeking current information from the various types of media which are available in the library. An encyclopedia, journals, magazine, news paper, hand book, year book and news letter are playing important role on providing latest information. Singh K.P. and Satija M P (2006) information seeking is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control over the afferent and efferent actions of the information seeker. Now electronic information and digitalized resources like CD, DVD and resources like World Wide Web are playing an important part for providing information on all subjects. This

growth of information technology has affected information seeking behavior of the user. Now the World Wide Web provides innumerable types of information. The printed and electronic resources are being used by information seeker to acquire the required information from various sources.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The surveys on information seeking behavior have been done in many studies. In this electronic information era World Wide Web will be the valuable sources for collecting information on various field from any part of the world. Majority of people are using the internet as the primary source for collecting the required information. Kingkaew Patitungkho and Neela J Despande (2005) carried out a research work on "information seeking behavior of the faculty members of Rajabhat university in Bangkok". Their aim of the research was to determine the information seeking behavior of the faculty members of the Rajabhat University. They found on their research that 82% of respondents seek information for preparing lecture. 57% of the respondent is using textbooks for their reference. The majority of the respondents faced the problem on seeking information i.e. unavailable of information

Jeyaraman, Srinivasaragavan and Dorisamy, (2011) had done a study on information seeking behavior among students and faculty found that majority of respondents are using textbooks for reading and reference books for reference. Nearly 31% of the respondents are visiting the library daily to seek information resources. The highest percentage (71%) of the total respondents are using library to refer the reference books and the lowest percentage 22% refer the news papers. 58% respondents are using the library to refer non-book materials.

Muhammad Tahir, Khalid Mahmood and Farzana Shafique(2008) conducted a survey on " information need and information seeking behavior of the Arts and Humanities teachers in the University of Punjab at Lahore, Pakistan.

They found that the reference books were the most important resources for teaching. The consultation with knowledgeable persons or experts in the field was the most important sources of information for the research work. Consulting face-to-face was the most-used channel of communication.

Muhammad Rafiq and Kanwal Ameen (2009) conducted a case study on “information seeking behavior and satisfaction of National Textile University instructor”. The aim of the study was to determine the information seeking behavior and satisfaction level of the teachers. They found that the books are still the most preferred information resources for teaching and research followed by communication with colleague and journal articles. A majority of the respondents visit the library twice in a week. Preeti Mahajan(2009) found through his study that the students need guidance and training for effective usage of library sources.

Rubina Bhatti (2009) studied about “Information needs and information seeking behavior of faculty members at the Islamia University, Bahawalpur. He reported that all the respondents use library resources for teaching purpose while a small number of respondents using various purposes. More than half of the respondents consider the colleagues as the primary informal information channel. They were not able to find the required materials on the shelf were a problem. They faced barrier on seeking information in internet is the shortage of computer and lack of internet access is the major problem. She concluded that the library operations are being depended on the choice of collections of the library.

Shakeel A Khan and Farzana Shafique (2011) conducted a survey on “information need and information seeking behavior of college faculty at Bahawalpur”. They found that the faculties prefer frequent discussions directly with the colleagues and friends to get information. The faculties prefer printed format resources for collecting information. They are using their personal collection or institutional library when they have urgent need of some information.

### **III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Information plays an important role in the entire life of the human beings. The people need the information which is required to solve their problems or to fulfill their requirements. The academicians need much more information for their academic and personal carrier.

This study aims to examine the information seeking behavior of the faculty members of the private engineering colleges in and around Chennai. As the academician depends on the library for resource on various topics he wants, it must be sound collection on all the topics or subject books. The information seeking behavior of the faculty members vary depending upon the place, time, required information, and the sources. By this type of study, the expectation and requirements of information seeker can bring to the light.

### **IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following objectives are framed for this study.

1. To know the sources for resources and information;
2. To examine the information seeking behavior, purpose of seeking information;
3. To determine the barrier meeting on seeking information, usage of internet, visiting the library and library services;
4. To find the sufficiency or insufficiency on the resources at the library;
5. To find the difficulties faced by the faculty members on seeking information.

### **V. METHODOLOGY**

A structured questionnaire was distributed among 600 faculty members who were randomly selected. Questionnaire distributed directly to the faculty members who were working in private Engineering Colleges in and around Chennai. Filled questionnaires were collected from 504 faculties only (i.e 84%). The data obtained under various questions were analyzed and interpreted as below.

### **VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Minimum specified chi-square value and maximum specified chi-square value were calculated for utilizing the main source of resources and level of sufficiency of library collection, also calculated the seasonal indices average method to rate the level of services provided by the college library. The faculty members working in private engineering colleges have been selected randomly for the distribution of the questionnaire 600 questionnaire were distributed and 504 (84%) were returned after the completion. Out of 504 respondent 330 were males and 174 were females.

As shown in table I, majority of (39.88%) respondents are visiting library once in a week and 48 (9.52%) respondents never go to library.

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TABLE I FREQUENCY OF VISITING LIBRARY

Frequency	Respondent	%
Daily	97	19.25
Once in two days	158	31.35
Once in a week	201	39.88
Never	48	9.52
Total	504	100

TABLE II UTILIZE THE MAIN SOURCE FOR RESOURCE

Name of the Sources	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Rarely	Never	Minimum Specified Chi-square Value	Maximum Specified Chi-square Value
College Library	267 (52.98%)	166 (32.94%)	24 (4.76%)	18 (3.57%)	29 (5.75%)	0.222	3.293
Department library	45 (8.93%)	33 (6.55%)	151 (29.96%)	244 (48.41%)	31 (6.15%)	0.382	3.000
Public Library	-	-	6 (1.19%)	281 (55.75%)	217 (43.06%)	0.074	3.466
Home Library	247 (49.01%)	190 (37.7%)	49 (9.72%)	18 (3.57%)	-	0.222	3.046
World Wide Web	312 (61.9%)	189 (37.5%)	-	3 (0.6%)	-	0.037	3.848

\*Figure in the parenthesis shows the percentage on 504 total respondents

\* Source: primary data

\*\*each percentage in the parenthesis is based on the total respondents

Nowadays information world is having huge growth. The sources play an important role on providing resources. In various types of sources the World Wide Web is being used by the majority of the respondents (61.9%). Nearly 267(52.98%) respondents are always utilizing the college library as main source of information.

TABLE III THE PURPOSE OF SEEKING INFORMATION

Purpose of Seeking Information	Respondents
For Preparing class notes	478
For self study	368
For the research work	341
For updating knowledge	504
For entertainment	140

\* Source: primary data

Majority of the respondents are seeking information for updating knowledge and class notes. 140 (27.7% ) Seeking information for entertainment. 341(67.6%) respondents seeking the information for their research work.

TABLE IV FREQUENCY OF USING INTERNET FOR INFORMATION

Frequency	Respondents	%
Daily	341	67.66
At least once a	107	21.23
At least once in a fortnight	34	6.74
At least once in a	19	3.77
Rarely	3	0.59

\* Source: primary data

In this information era internet plays an important role on providing lot of information. 341(67.66%) faculty members are using internet daily while 14(2.78%) of the respondents are using the internet rarely.

TABLE V INTERNET FACILITY AT LIBRARY AND RATE

Having Internet and can be Rated as				No facility
Excellent	Good	Bad	Very Bad	
98 (19.44%)	251 (49.8%)	44 (8.73%)	13 (2.57%)	98 (19.44%)

\* Source: primary data

Internet facilities are the most essential source in the library. It is making the way to acquire required information. Lot of information is being shared with the help of internet. Few colleges are not providing internet facilities in the library.

TABLE VI BARRIER MET ON INFORMATION SEEKING

Barrier	Respondents	%
Non-availability of	504	100
Resources are old	321	63.6
Lack of time	294	58.3
Inadequate knowledge about library system	35	6.9
Library located far away	23	4.5

There are many factors involved on seeking information. These factors are being affected the information seeking behavior of the respondents. Many times the respondent met the barrier of non-availability of required resources in the library. Few of them had given the response as library is located far away from their place.

TABLE VII BARRIER MET SEEKING INFORMATION IN INTERNET

Barrier in Seeking Information in	Respondents
Non availability of related information	6
Inadequate knowledge to utilize internet	121
System may not be available	496
Server error	315
The page under construction	201
Information overload	499

\* Source: primary data

The majority of faculty members (99%) met the barrier on information overload, in this the respondents finding difficulty to get or collect the exact information what they want. 496 respondents (98.41%) meeting the problem while trying to seek information in internet, sufficient systems are not available.

TABLE VIII LEVEL OF SUFFICIENCY OF LIBRARY COLLECTION

Collection on	Highly Sufficient	Sufficient	Fairly Sufficient	Slightly Sufficient	Insufficient	Minimum Specified Chi-Square Value	Maximum Specified Chi-Square Value
Text Books	257(51%)	124(25%)	13(3%)	45(9%)	65(13%)	0.090	1.78
Reference Books	44(9%)	80(16%)	23(5%)	112(22%)	245(49%)	0.159	1.69
Journals/Magazines	32(6%)	10(2%)	215(43%)	144(29%)	103(20%)	0.069	1.48
Online Resources	21(4%)	52(10%)	-	188(37%)	243(48%)	0.145	1.68
CD/VCD/DVD	-	-	139(28%)	164(33%)	201(40%)	0.962	1.39
News Paper	483(96%)	21(4%)	-	-	-	0.145	3.34
Old Question Paper	204(40%)	248(49%)	44(9%)	8(2%)	-	0.055	1.71
Project/Thesis Reports	-	33(7%)	115(23%)	248(49%)	108(21%)	0.228	1.71
Back Volumes	14(3%)	4(1%)	289(57%)	105(21%)	92(18%)	0.027	2.00

\*Figure in the parenthesis shows the percentage on 504 total respondents \*\*\* Source: primary data

\*\*Each percentage in the parenthesis is based on the total respondents

The library is the collection of resources and it depends on the courses offered by the institution. The collection might be varied between the institutions. The table shows clearly that the 49% respondents noted that the reference books are insufficient in their college while 51% respondents noted that the textbooks are highly sufficient.

## VII. SUGGESTIONS

There is a limited study done on information seeking behavior of the faculty members of educational institutions. This study did not attempt to compare the information seeking behavior of the faculty members who are working in different institutions. As the sample was selected randomly, further research can be done in this area. The visiting of library is being affected due to the development of information communication and technology (ICT). The non-availability of required sources can be rectified by providing a lot of collection. The lack of time to visit the library can be reduced on making modifications in library services. The adequate system made available for accessing the electronic resources. The training can be provided to give the key words for searching particular information.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This study is very useful to come to know the information seeking behavior of the faculty members of the private engineering college in and around Chennai. The study quantified the respondent's frequency of visiting library, time spending in the library, purpose of visiting the library and seeking information, main source of resources, membership having in other library, access to internet, barriers met on seeking information, level of sufficiency collection and

services in the library. To know the available resources in the library the user needs user orientation programs. All the types of information available in world wide web which is affecting the information seeking behavior of the faculty members. As we have entered into electronic information era, all the facilities should be provided for accessing the information in the form of electronics.

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