CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

Information is being considered as a useful commodity for the routine life of every one. Information is available in various forms of resources in sources. Libraries play an important role on providing the right information to the right person at the right time. Now, new information technology has involved in library and information center service has changed from traditional to electronic based services. This is an information era. We are living in the informatics society. Information is felt like an important tool which is helping for the developments of an individual and society. Libraries have become as an organized information center with more informative resources.

Vast and fast developments of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are changing the library environment, infrastructure and accessing points. Libraries were acting like share house of printed materials but now they have become an information center for providing the various information to the information seekers. By understanding the various types of requirement of the user, high quality of services can be provided to the user for acquiring the required information.

Today, an information center is an important part of our community life. It is essential for the professionals, especially faculty members, and it is considered as one of the important agents for communication of knowledge.
1.2 INFORMATION

The information is so vital to human life. An in-depth study has to be made to know and how the information is generated. Though it in a difficult task, it can be easily concluded that research is one of the better known areas where information takes root. Most of what one knows anything today is a result of past research. The work of experts in the fields of science, technology, social science and the humanities continue to give birth to information that is beneficial to the whole society. The government, understanding the major role that Research and Development plays, also continues to pour funds into these fields as a result of which more and more information is generated - so much so that the world is being bombarded with information leading to the phenomenon termed ‘information explosion’.

In this information era, access the information has become cheap and rapid. One can enter into the library, information centers, center for documentation or an organization with the help of ICT environment. Tidline (2002)\(^1\) The total volume of information generated worldwide annually is approximately 2 Exabyte of information.

When governmental and non-governmental organizations perform their routine duties, they are also generating information whether or not they are aware of the fact. For example, the police department provides vital information about such burning topics and terrorism, corruption like, in the course of carrying out its routine duty of maintaining law and order. In the same way, other government departments are also responsible for lot of information available to us. Business and industrial information are generated by the activities of business and industrial organizations. Social and political information are made available through the
recordings of the people (historians, critics, political commentators etc.) who lived in different ages or areas.

1.2.1 Nature of Information

The information always not in printed or in voice format, it occurs in the forms of artwork, colors, gestures, facial expression and body language. Information having economic value will be treated as a commodity. Information is the substance of cultural enrichment and amusement Cawkell (2003). It is a process oriented in that movement from source to destination is to both sender and the receiver, Debone and Croneweth (1988).

1.2.2 Format of Information

The information used for the development of an individual and the society are available in various format. The internet is the primary source which has various format of the information itself. The information is available in the web as text, picture, graph, table, audio, video etc.

Basically, the information is available in four types of format which are being used to store, retrieve and share the information by the information seeker. The various formats are,

a) **Book or Print format** : This includes the printed materials like books, journals, magazines, notice etc

b) **Non book format**: It includes the resources which is not in the forms of books, like maps, atlas, motion picture, globe, audio, microforms like microfilm, microfiche card etc.
c) **Computerized format:** In the evaluation of the information technology now all the information are being generated, stored, retrieved and shared in the digital form. Now the computer is used for retrieving the information from the digital resources. All the electronic format information could be stored in the computer.

d) **Advanced electronic format:** Advanced electronic forms have diminished the geographical barriers on searching, referring, comparing, selecting, storing, retrieving and sharing the information. The advanced electronics forms are e-mail, facsimile transmission (fax), voice mail, teleconferencing, videotext, teletext, electronic document delivery and video conferencing.

The information is being stored in the computer as the databases. The database can be accessed with the help of electronic devices.

Jennifer Hyams and Abigail Sellen (2003)^4 have defined for information gathering as purposefully finding and collating information about a specific topic or theme. Generally the information is being stored in four types. They are Book format, Non book format, Computerized format and advanced electronic format in this information is being stored magnetically or optically.

- Magnetic storage devices are like hard disk, floppy disk and magnetic tapes, mini DV stripe (the back side of debit and credit card) etc.
- Optical storage devices like CD, DVD the information stored and received by electro-mechanical unit.
1.2.3 Source of Information

The generated information cannot just float in air or just as water contained in a vessel. It is being carried to the users with the help of the sources. Information finds its way into the following types of sources:-

- **Primary Sources**: Periodicals, research reports, conference proceedings, patents, standards, trade literature and theses.

- **Secondary Sources**: Indexing and abstracting periodicals, reviews of progress, reference books (encyclopedia, dictionaries, handbooks, tables and formularies), treatises, monographs and textbooks.

- **Tertiary Sources**: Yearbooks, directories, bibliographies, guides to literature, lists of research in progress, guides to libraries and guides to organizations. There are also audio – visual sources such as filmstrips, slides, video and audio – tapes. Most of the printed sources are also available in online now. Further, these sources are found in bookstores, libraries and information centers.

Electronic resources are defined as resources that users access automatically via a computing network from inside the library or remote from the library. They include online database, electronic journal, E-Books, CD-ROMs and OPAC. Shim et al (2001)⁵

It can be defined as the physical (or digital) entities in a variety of media providing potential information. Information sources can also be distinguished as external and internal resources, human and documentary sources, or formal and informal sources of information. Ingwersen and Jarvelin (2005)⁶
1.2.4 Types of Information

According to Shera\(^7\) the information can be classified into six types,

(a) **Conceptual information** : It is relating to ideas, theories and hypotheses about the relationship which exists among the variables in an area.

(b) **Empirical information** : It is relating to data and experience of research which may be drawn from oneself or communicated through others.

(c) **Procedural information** : This is the data obtained, manipulated and tested through investigation.

d) **Stimulatory information** : It is motivated by oneself or the environment.

(e) **Policy information** : It is focused on the decision making process.

(f) **Directive information** : It is used for coordinating and enabling effective group activity.

1.2.5 Information Use

The uses of information primarily depends on how it has been used. Few of them are,

- **Information as a process**: When someone is informed, what they know earlier is changed. The information process has been explained by the Oxford English Dictionary as, “The act of informing; communication of the knowledge or ‘news’ of some fact or occurrence; the action of telling or fact of being told of something”
• **Information as knowledge**: Information is also used to denote the “knowledge communicated concerning some particular fact, subject or event; that of which one is apprised or told; intelligence, news.”

• **Information as thing**: The term ‘information’ is also used attributively for objects, such as data and documents.

### 1.2.6 Role of Information

The information plays a vital role on the development of an individual as well as the society. The world is changing constantly due to the evaluation of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The growth of information technology will be the backbone of the socio-economic growth.

The importance and role of the information is not predictable and not defined because it plays a vital role on the information seeker. It is strengthening the one who knows the accurate information on any fact in the information world.

The effective use of the information resources in the knowledge center like institution will help to lead the learned society to the high level. The development of the ICT is increasing the interaction between the individual and the society.

### 1.3 INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Information seeking behaviour is defined as any activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need. Information seeking begins when someone perceives that the current state of possessed knowledge is insufficient to deal with some issue problem. The process ends when that perception no longer exists. People seek information in a variety of circumstances and from a variety of sources.
The developments in information storage, retrieval and derived dissemination methods affect the information scientists. The individual seeking information need not be concerned with how much information is stored and what kind of information is stored. One will be concerned about the comprehensiveness of retrieval mechanisms, but most of all one will be affected by the delivery mechanisms. In relation to basic human needs the new technology is likely to have some effect on the information seeking habits of those concerned with empirical knowledge and for corporate human experience and entertainment.

Bigdeli (2004)\(^8\) given definition for information seeking behavior as it is included the totality of activities done by information seeker to obtain the required information from different resources and through various channels. Information seeking behavior refers the way people search information from the resources in various sources for and utilization of their need.

In the short term it is not likely to have a major effect on the seeker for personal human experience or on those seeking corporate human experience. In the longer term, more information may be stored in all types of format as the community recognizes the wide range of material encompassed by corporate human experience. Then there will be a considerable change in user habits.

Information seeking behavior is an area of active interest among many librarians, information scientists, communication scientists, sociologists and psychologists. Information seeking behaviour results from the recognition of some need, perceived by the user, whom a consequence maker depends upon formal system such as libraries; information centers, on-line services, or some other persons in order to satisfy the perceived need. Information seeking behaviour is
influenced by a number of factors. It is directly linked with effectiveness of library and information services as they aim at satisfactions of user needs.

Ellis (2005) had explained the information seeking process involves the following activities.

**Figure 1.1 Ellis model of Information Seeking Process**

- **Starting:** This is the beginning activity of an information seeking. It means all activities those are related to initial starting activity. The identification of the sources for the information or resources from which seeker getting information.

- **Chaining:** Following footnotes and citations in known material or “forward” chaining from known item through citation indexes”. Footnotes and bibliographic citation cited in an article or book referred to sources relevant to the topic make a chain. This chain can be backward or forward. Chain enhances the search process.

- **Browsing:** The user or seeker looks through table of contents, titles, key words. Searching the resources in the shelf also can be called as browsing. In other words searching the required resource from the listed or arranged one.
• **Differentiating**: Making difference between the gathered information sources. After the browsing the seeker filters and select the sources that are according to his need or are recommended by anyone review.

• **Monitoring**: In this activity the user keep themselves aware about the current and latest knowledge of their interest.

• **Extracting**: The seeker search a particular source or resource to identify the material of his interest. Selectively identifying relevant material in an information source for gathering a specific information.

• **Verifying**: After extracting the relevant information it should be verified the accuracy of information which is sought.

• **Ending**: After verification of the information the process it comes to end.

The different stages of information search process were identified by Kuhlthau (2005) in the information seeking process. The various stages which involves in the searching process are :

• **Initiation**: The user becomes aware of the need or the requirement of the information. Uncertainty and apprehension are the common feeling at this initial stage of information seeking process. The users are wondering about the information and what need.

• **Selection**: In this stage the user is identifying and selecting the general topics for seeking information which are related with the requirement.

• **Pre-focus explorations**: This stage involves the seeking and investigation of information on general topics of the information
need. Feeling of uncertainty, confusion, and doubt increasing frequently in this stage to the information seeker.

- **Focus formulation:** Now the user able to structure the problem which needs to be solved. Feeling of uncertainty diminish as user confidence increases.

- **Collection:** The pertinent information is being collected for the focused topic by the user.

- **Search closure or presentation:** This is the final stage of searching information or use the information which has been gathered by him.

### Table 1.1 Kuhlthau’s Information Search Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Search formulation</th>
<th>Information Collection</th>
<th>Search Closure</th>
<th>Starting writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Sense of Direction/</td>
<td>Relief</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td></td>
<td>confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td>or dissatisfaction</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doubt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts</td>
<td>Ambiguity</td>
<td>Specificity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Seeking Relevant Information</td>
<td>Seeking pertinent information</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Information seeking behavior refers to the variety of methods are used by the people for gaining access to information resources. Some definition have been used in this study for understanding the meaning.

- **Information:** Njoku (2004)\textsuperscript{11} Data, text, images, sound, voice code, microfilm, computer generated microfiche, computer program,
software, and database that convey meaningful facts, ideas, condition, or knowledge whether tangible or intangible

- **Information Seeking**: Case (2006) A conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in one’s knowledge. Wilson (2000) in terms encompassing the ways individuals articulate their information needs, seeks, evaluate, select and use information. In other words the information seeking behavior is a purposeful seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goals. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with people, with manual information systems or with computer-based information system.

In other words, information seeking behavior is a purposeful seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goals. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with people, manual information system, or with computer based information system. Information seeking behavior of the academicians is an important area of research in library information science. All the information providers and libraries not able to understand the user’s information needs and what can be done to fulfill their needs. There are lot of studies have been examined which are involved to find the information seeking behavior of professional in higher education.

Wilson (1977) states an individual’s information gathering behavior is a function of the information discovered to be available, the ability to use information based on effort and the usefulness of information based on experience. Information seeking is the natural and necessary mechanism as human existence. Seeking means searching something he wants to utilize for solving the need.
This is the process of getting information from the resources with the help of the sources. In order to fulfill the required information, the user actively undergoes the Information Seeking Process (ISP). The attempt of the user in obtaining the needed information is described as the information seeking behaviour.

Ernest, Level and Culbertson (2005) defines information-seeking behaviour as “the complex patterns of actions and interactions that people engage in when seeking information of whatever kind for whatever purpose.

1.4 NEED OF THE STUDY

Information seeking behavior is influenced by the number of factors. It is directly linked with effectiveness of library and information services as they aim at satisfactions of user’s needs. Most of the previous research efforts and model development in information seeking by faculty members did not include Internet usage as a factor in these activities. Without including this new technology, the observations and research models will remain flawed, and they will not provide a total picture of the information seeking behavior and activities of faculty members. Hence this research is the need of the hour.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research will add to the existing understanding of the users i.e., the faculty members mainly of the Internet which aid in their research, teaching, and service roles in higher education institutions. Most of the previous research efforts and model development in information seeking by faculty members did not include Internet usage as a factor in these activities. Without including this new technology, the observations and research models will remain flawed, and they will not provide a total picture of the information seeking behavior and activities of faculty members.
1.6 STATEMENT OF THE TITLE

The study has been done in the title of “INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF THE FACULTY MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITIES IN TAMIL NADU: A STUDY”.

1.6.1 Explanation of the Concepts in Title

The diagrammatic representation of statement of the study shown in Figure 1.2 provides brief methodology of approach.

![Diagram of concepts in title](image-url)
1.7 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In view of the identified aspects requiring research the purpose of this study is to find the information needs and information seeking behavior and the role of various sources in meeting information need of the faculty members of universities in Tamil Nadu.

Studying the information seeking behavior of the faculty members of universities in Tamil Nadu is an important for number of reasons. Mainly they have great internet accessing habit for updating of their knowledge. By updating their knowledge they lead students and research scholars, give sound lecture in class rooms, make clear the doubt from academic pupil and analyze the subject in depth for becoming expert. The people who are working in higher education institution gathering information from various type of resources that are available in various sources.

The type of resources and various activities can be determined in seeking information required. This will help us to give the recommendation for the development of information gathering system that could meet the information needs of the academicians.

The following problems can be formulated:

- How does the individual trying to get the information needed?
- What are characteristics of academicians information needs?
- To determine the factors related to various types of information sources and information seeking behavior and information resources.
• To determine the awareness of information sources, perception of the value of the information sources and the type of information required.

• An analysis of information seeking behavior is an important subject matter in the context of revaluation in the field of ICT. Accessing information and utilization of information are most important criteria to judge the academic performance of the faculty members of universities in Tamil Nadu.

1.8 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The information seeking behavior is the fundamental of the development of the knowledge. As, information plays a vital role on the development of the society, it should be accurate and complete. The academician needs the subject related information for giving lecture to the pupils. They required lot of various resources for referring to collect information.

In the academic organization the information centers like library having main role on providing various forms of the resources. One user trying to seek, evaluate, select and use the information these process commonly known as information seeking behavior.

This study took steps to determine the information seeking process, needs, sources, resources and seeking behavior of the faculty members of the universities in Tamil Nadu.

The finding of the study will be more helpful to the information provider as well as the consumer. Various forms of the information sources and resources will be brought the light for usefulness of the information seekers.
1.9 OBJECTIVES

This study has been framed with the following objectives;

- To identify the respondent’s quantum of time spent in the library.
- To find out the respondent’s Purpose and methods of information seeking.
- To identify the respondent’s level of satisfaction of utilization of resources in the library for information seeking.
- To explore the usage of e-resources in purpose of information seeking.
- To examine the hindrances that interferes with Information seeking attitude of the respondents.
- To identify the benefits of using ICT in information seeking.
- To suggest some measures to increase the utilizations of e-resources.

1.10 HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated, based on the framed objectives:

i. There is a significant inter institutional variation with respect to the respondent’s frequency of library visit and quantum of time spent in the search of information.

ii. There is a significant variation among the designation, gender status with respect to the respondent’s purpose of seeking information.
iii. There is a significant variation among the respondents with respect to the respondent’s source of finding digital resources and mode of learning Internet.

iv. There is a significant association between the designation and gender status of the respondent’s with respect to the preference of search engine for information seeking.

v. There is significance inter institutional variation with respect to the respondent’s views on the benefits using of ICT in information seeking

1.11 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research will add to the existing understanding of the users i.e., the faculty members mainly of the Internet which aid in their research, teaching, and service roles in higher education institutions. The resource will add depth or breadth to the existing collection. An analysis of frequency of using digital resources is an important aspect of this study. This is about, “A STUDY ON INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF THE FACULTY MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITIES IN TAMIL NADU”. The target of the present study is the faculty members of universities in Tamil Nadu. An analysis of frequency of using digital resources is an important aspect of the study. The impact of internet on teaching and research purpose among the faculty members is analysed hence it will be to level of satisfaction.

The findings of this study are applicable only to the selected 6 state universities in Tamil Nadu. Study on the Information Seeking Behaviour of the faculty members of all the universities in Tamil Nadu is a very complicated task, since many factors are involved and would not be possible for an individual
researcher. This study is mainly undertaken based on analytical orientation with certain degree of caution.

1.12 CONSPECTUS

The thesis has been organized in six chapters,

Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the problem of study, discusses different means for information seeking behavior of the faculty members of universities in Tamil Nadu. The chapter provides the need and purpose of the study besides stating the research project problem, delineating the objectives of the study. Further this chapter highlights the hypothesis, scope and limitations.

Chapter 2 Analyzes the historical growth and development of information seeking behavior. In general, it provides an overview of information seeking behavior of the users. The important published and unpublished literatures had been reviewed briefly in this chapter.

Chapter 3 it deals with research, research design, pre-test, population and sampling, collection of data and data analysis.

Chapter 4 it deals with profile of universities under study includes the about the university, library, courses offered, services and collection of the library.

Chapter 5 it deals with analysis, tabulation and interpretation of the collected data through questionnaires collected from the respondents.

Chapter 6 it provides the summary of the major findings and observations of study. The thesis concludes with a list of bibliographic references and appendices.
REFERENCES


