CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

Information Seeking Behaviour is one of the important areas in user studies. The motives of users give raise to information needs and requirements. To quench the thrust for information users adopt numerous ways and means to access the various channels of communication of information.

Information explosion has paved the way to seek information in an increasing variety and diversity at different levels, frequency, volume and use. This situation appears to be ambiguous and heterogeneous in character so that information needs of a particular group of users and information flow from a specific situation / organisation are different to determine.

The use of information is so complex that there cannot be a single system to cope up with the task of effective retrieval without assessing their specific needs. This situation has paved the way to the concept of information search and the manner of determining the pattern of search has been considered as Information Seeking Pattern.

1.2 INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Information Seeking Behaviour is the human behaviour with respect to searching various sources, channels including use of those information. The process of searching information through various channels of communication is termed as Information Seeking Pattern. The terms Information Seeking Behaviour and Information Seeking Pattern are synonymous terms.

- Information Seeking Behaviour is mainly concerned with the type of information that the user needs.
- It is an activity of an individual in pursuit of information.
- It is closely related to the personal characteristics and traits of the users.
- It is an act of searching or finding or locating information needed by an individual, be a professional, academician, researcher, and consultant and so on.

The information seeking has been built on the three major factors such as social factors, system factors and information factors. All these three factors depends on the method of introducing, exploring, integrating, diffusing, and exploiting it. The same is shown in Figure 1.1.

![Diagram](image)

**Fig 1.1 Understanding the information seeking.**

1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Few definitions will enable to understand the conceptual understanding of the study.

**Information:** It may be data, text, images, sound, voice code, microfilm, microfiche or computer generated program, software, and database that convey meaningful facts ideas, condition, or knowledge whether the output may be tangible or intangible Njoku(2004)\(^1\)

**Information seeking:** It is a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in one’s knowledge.(Case D O 2006)\(^2\). Information seeking is a form of human behavior that involves seeking for information by means of the active examination of information sources or information retrieval system to satisfy the information need, or to solve a problem. (Ingwersen and Jarvelin, 2005)\(^3\)

**Information seeking Behaviour:** It refers the methods that are used by the people to retrieve or discover and gain access to information resources. It is broad terms, encompassing the ways individuals articulate their information needs, seeks, evaluate, select and use information. In others 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 systems or with computer-based information system. (Wilson T D, 2000)\(^4\), Information and documentation defines user study as an “Investigation of the needs and quality of the users of a library or a documentation service”. Elsevier’s Dictionary of library science\(^5\). Information seeking behavior is a broad term, encompassing the ways individuals articulate their information need, seek, evaluate, select and use information. 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, or a manual information system, or with computer based information system.
Individual’s information gathering behaviour 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. (Wilson, P, 1977)

1.3.1 Information sources

Information sources can be defined as the physical (or digital) entities in a variety of media providing potential information (Ingwersen & Järvelin 2005:387). From an engineers’ point of view, information sources could contain relevant information (Byström & Järvelin 1995). Sources of engineering information can also be classified in various ways, namely technical or non-technical, oriented to project or to profession, public or private, printed or generated on site, and of continuing or ephemeral value (Gralewska-Vickery 1976). Information sources can also be distinguished as external and internal sources, human and documentary sources, or formal and informal sources of information.

Information is accessed through various channels (e.g. colleagues, and the Internet) from various sources (e.g. colleagues, and text books). An information source contains relevant information whereas a channel guides the user to pertinent sources of information (Byström & Järvelin 1995).

1.3.2 Information requirements

The terms “information needs” and “information requirements” are often used for the same concept. Information requirements are however user specifications that apply when information is requested or exchanged and include aspects such as
accessibility and relevance of information. These aspects further influence the consulting engineers’ awareness of information. This study will use the term information needs.

Faculties information needs can be determined by studying the situation, work roles, type of work roles and tasks they are engaged in, or have to be completed.

1.3.3 Information needs

An information need arises when an individual senses a problematic situation or information gap, in which his or her internal knowledge and beliefs, and model of the environment fail to suggest a path towards the satisfaction of his or her goals (Case 2007)\(^\text{10}\). Such an identified information need may lead to information seeking and the formulation of requests for information (Ingwersen & Järvelin, 2005)\(^\text{3}\). The term “information need” therefore does not necessarily imply that people are “in need of” information as such but that the use of information can lead to the satisfaction of a more basic need (Wilson 1981)\(^\text{11}\).

When considered from a task performance point of view, information needs are the requirements for information as they are necessary to fulfil a task (International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) in Blom 1983)\(^\text{12}\).

1.3.4 Information-seeking

An information need may lead to a decision to seek information. Information seeking is a form of human behaviour that involves seeking for information by means of the active examination of information sources or information retrieval systems to satisfy the information need, or to solve a problem (Ingwersen & Järvelin 2005)\(^\text{3}\). In order to acquire information the user has to select information from a particular source, system, channel or service. According to Ellis (2005)\(^\text{13}\) the information-seeking process involves the activities of
In this study the concept information-seeking also refers to the engineers’ use of information services and systems, such as, libraries and computerised databases as well as personal and formal sources of information, such as, textbooks and technical journals. The concept also refers to the consulting engineers’ use of informal information sources such as personal contacts through telephoning or sending emails to colleagues or suppliers to find information, seeking personal files, conferences attendance, searching the Internet, and visits to construction sites or similar installations to see what others have done.

1.3.5 Information behavior

Information behaviour is the term which best encompasses the focus of the current study. Ingwersen and Järvelin (2005)\(^3\) define information behaviour as the “human behaviour dealing with generation, communication, use and other activities concerned with information, such as, information-seeking behaviour and interactive IR [information retrieval].” According to this definition, information behaviour will include all aspects of human behaviour (such as work roles and tasks) that require users to generate, communicate and seek information that is relevant to their information needs. This term also embraces information retrieval activities.

1.4 HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

The quantitative development of higher education to the post independence period has been apparently very impressive. Unlike the pre-independence the benefits of higher education are now reaped by a sizable number of youth even from under privileged section of the society. At present, on an average, there is one college for every 11,000 persons and one university for every 4.7 lakh persons in the relevant age
group (18-23 years), but reality it seems that only about 6-7% of the eligible age group are getting the benefit of higher education.

It seems on date India has 431 universities of which private 130 deemed universities, and 16885 institutions where 99.54 lakhs students were enrols and they were taken care of by 4.57 lakhs teachers.\textsuperscript{15}

There exist domain specific universities. The Indian higher education decentralize the regulations and responsibilities with separate councils. The Figure 1.1 indicates different councils and the delegated responsibilities.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{Indian Higher Education and Various Councils}
\end{figure}
1.4.1 Higher Education in Tamil Nadu

The institutional framework of higher education in Tamil Nadu is now complex. There are several types of institutions: universities, institutions, institutions of national importance, post-graduate institutions and polytechnics. Only the universities are authorised to grant degrees. By special acts of Parliament, the institutions of national importance, however, have been authorized to grant degrees. Post-graduate institutions and polytechnics can grant diplomas and are to be recognized by the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE).

There exist domain specific universities. The Indian higher education decentralize the regulations and responsibilities with separate councils. The Figure 1.1 indicates different councils and the delegated responsibilities.

Out of 53 universities in Tamil Nadu, there are 17 universities were exclusively concentrating courses on Arts and Science and 15 multiple domain universities are also imparting Arts and Science. Out of the 17 universities that are concentrating on Arts and Science education there are 6 state universities and rest are deemed universities. Under the six state universities there are nearly 554 engineering institutions. Out of these 554 engineering institutions, there are 490 self-financing engineering institutions these self-financing institutions were distributed in all 32 districts in Tamil Nadu. These self-financing institutions are further grouped into minority and non-minority institutions. In this study the Arts and Science institutions that are affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University alone taken up for the study.

1.5 NEED FOR THE STUDY

User and use studies, primarily for evaluating collections (Broadus, 1977, 1980; Christiansen, Davis, & Reedscott, 1983; Subrahmanyam, 1983), later aimed at discovering useful information about the information seeking habits of individuals or groups to design an appropriate systems and services that could facilitate the information seeking habits. (Belkin, Oddy, & Brooks, 1982a, 1982b, Ellis, 1989, 1993; Kuhlthau, 1993; Marchionini, 1995). In response to calls in
the mid-1980s for more focus on the user rather than the system, this field experienced a major shift both in conceptualization and research design (Dervin & Nilan, 1986). Most use and user studies evolved into examination of information-seeking behavior employing more holistic approaches to the study of information seeking behavior (Fidel, 1993; Pettigrew, Fidel, & Bruce, 2001; Wang, 1999).

Now a day’s Information seeking behavior of the faculty becomes an important area of research in library information science since the information providers and libraries not able to understand the user’s information needs and the means of fulfilling their needs. Their exist number of studies that has examined the factors that are involved to find the information seeking behavior of faculties of higher educational academic institutions. This study investigates the information seeking behavior of the faculty members of arts and science colleges associated with Madurai Kamaraj University in Tamil Nadu.

1.6 STATEMENT OF THE TITLE

"Information Seeking Behaviour of Faculty Members Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University: An Empirical Study".

1.6.1 Information Seeking Behaviour

Information Seeking behaviour, a totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information-seeking, and information use. (Wilson, 2000). Information seeking behaviour can also be described as a purposive seeking of information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. Information Seeking behaviour is the micro-level of behaviour employed by the searcher in interacting with information systems of all kinds, be it between the seeker and the system, or the pure method of creating and following up on a search.
1.6.2 Faculty Members

Faculty is the academic staff of a university: senior teachers, lecturers, and/or researchers. It generally includes professors of various rank: assistant professors, associate professors, and (full) professors, usually tenured (or tenure-track) in terms of their contract of employment. Members of university administration (e.g., department chairs, deans, vice presidents, presidents, and librarians) are often also faculty members. In this study faculty members include Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors working in Arts and Science colleges in the affiliated colleges of Madurai Kamaraj University. In other words the persons who were handing class for under graduate and post graduate courses along taken up for the study.

1.6.3 Madurai Kamaraj University

Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU) is a State university in India located in Madurai city in southern Tamil Nadu, India. It was established in the year 1966 and has about 130,000 students in 18 schools comprising 72 departments, and more than 60 affiliated colleges.

1.6.4 Empirical Study

Empirical Study is a way of gaining knowledge by means of direct and indirect observation or experience. Empirical evidence, the record of one's direct observations or experiences, can be analyzed quantitatively or qualitatively. Through quantifying the evidence or making sense of it in qualitative form, a researcher can answer empirical questions, which should be clearly defined and answerable with the evidence collected.
1.6.5 **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study has been framed with the following objectives;

1. To study the information seeking behavior of faculty members working in colleges affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University.
2. To identify the information needs of faculty members in Madurai Kamaraj University.
3. To survey and analyze the Information Seeking Behaviour of faculty in Madurai Kamaraj University.
4. To identify the level of satisfaction with the resources of the library
5. To find out the reasons for seeking information from the library
6. To know the number of hours the users are using the library
7. To analyse the materials the faculties are referring for their need

1.7 **HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses were formed based on the objectives.

i. There exists uniformity in the Information needs and Information Seeking Behaviour among Faculty members working in colleges affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University.

ii. Madurai Kamaraj University faculty members mostly depends on Parent Institution’s library for information searching.

iii. Faculty members are satisfied with the resources of the respective institution’s library and also depend on more than one channel of information.

iv. There is heterogeneity in searching of information by the faculty members.

v. Formal and Documentary sources dominate the informal and interpersonal sources in the Information Seeking Behaviour by the faculty members.

vi. The degree of relevance and dependence on the nature and types of information differs among the faculty members.
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The type of resources and various activities can be determined while seeking information by the faculty members. This will help to identify and development to be considered information gathering system that could meet the information needs of the academicians.

This study will enable to answer the problems such as

- How does the individual faculty member trying to get the information thus needed.
- What are characteristics of academicians information needs?
- To determine the factors related to various type of information sources and information seeking behaviour and information resources.
- To determine the awareness of information sources, perception of the value of the information sources and the type of information required.
- To determine the use of social network media in information seeking among the faculties.

Further this study provides the State-of-the-Art of colleges affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University in Tamil Nadu (India). It also highlights the Information Seeking Behaviour of the faculty members, which would influence the authorities of the colleges affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University to develop the library services from the present status.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study covers only the faculty members working in colleges affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University in Tamil Nadu (India).
2. The study does not include the faculty members of University, evening colleges and University constitution institutions.


1.10 METHODOLOGY

Methodology refers to the processes, principles and procedures by which one approaches a problem to seek solutions. The methodology adopted in the for studying the research problem has been enumerated.

Step 1: Review of Literature

The literature on Information needs, Information seeking behaviour, Information use pattern in higher education in India etc., have been studied. The review facilitated the construction of the questionnaire.

Step 2: Questionnaire Construction

Step 2.1: Higher Educational Institutions in Madurai Kamaraj University

It deals with the information about the Resource of higher educational institutions of Madurai Kamaraj University such as, its collection, services, and other infrastructure facilities available were ascertained through internet sources and with personal interviews.

Step 2.2: Questionnaire

Based on the review of literature a structured questionnaire has been designed to collect data from the faculty members in affiliated colleges affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University in Tamil nadu (India). The Questionnaire covers the Information such as General Information about Respondents, Library Use, Nature and type of Information required, Motivating factor for Information Seeking Behaviour, Use of Library Services, Methods and means for Information Collection, and Extent of dependence and satisfaction over library collection. In general the components of the questionnaire were on Information Seeking – purpose and type, Awareness on
library, Awareness on Library Products, Awareness on Library services and Usage of Website and Social Media Tools in Library Services

Step 3: Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with a sample of 100 questionnaires from various faculty members of arts and science colleges and the results were tested. Based on the study, the questionnaire was further modified and developed to suit the stated objectives. Accordingly, revised version of the questionnaire was finally administered among the faculty members.

Step 4: Administration of Questionnaire

The revised questionnaire was administered to all the faculty members working in 3 Government colleges, 26 Government aided and 29 Self financing colleges which are affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University in Tamil Nadu. Out of 4107 faculty members, 2889 have responded and the response rate is 70.34%.

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the questionnaire have been analysed and interpreted to test the hypotheses framed and to fulfill the stated objectives. For this purpose, SPSS Software Package has been used in the analysis of data. Statistical analysis techniques such as frequency distribution, percentage analysis, Weighted Arithmetic Mean, ANOVA, Chi Square Test, Likert Scale Analysis, Cluster Analysis, Multi-dimensional Scaling and Wilcoxon Signed Rank test etc., have been employed depending on the nature of the data collected from the respondents.
1.12 CONSPECTUS

The thesis has been presented in six chapters.

Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the problem of study, discusses different means for dynamic capability among professionals. 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, methods and techniques of research including research design, analysis and interpretation of data.

In Chapter 2 an attempt has been made to review briefly the important published and unpublished literature and studies on dynamic capability.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of Information Seeking Behaviour in general and specifically to faculty members.

Chapter 4 traces the overview and the historical growth and development of Colleges Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University.

Chapter 5 deals with analysis, tabulation and interpretation of the collected data through questionnaires collected from different category of Library professionals.

Chapter 6 provides the summary of the major findings and observations of study.

The thesis concludes with a list of bibliographic references and appendices.

References


5. Elsevier’s Dictionary of library science


15. Official Website of Ministry of Human Resource Development


