The habit of Reading is the only enjoyment I know in which there is no alloy. It lasts when all other pleasures fade. It will be there to support you when all other resources are gone. It will be present to you when the energies of your body have fallen away from you. It will make your hours pleasant to you as long as you live.*

— TROLLOPE

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

ROLE OF TEACHING FACULTY IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Indian Education is currently planning for radical changes. In the light of recent trends, the stress on academic excellence and increased focus on the quality, Engineering Education is gaining momentum day by day. The New National Policy on Education 1986\(^1\) and Review Committee Report on National Policy on Education 1990\(^2\) (Acharya Ramamurthy Report 1990) have emphasized this aspect at length. The country has reached a stage in its economic and technical development where a major effort must be made to derive the maximum benefit from the assets already created and to ensure that the fruits of change reach all sections of the Society. Education is the highway to that goal and having this clear cut aim in view, the Government of India announced the New Education Policy\(^3\). The sum and substance of it is that the higher education provide people with an opportunity to reflect on the social, economic, cultural, technological, moral and spiritual issues facing the humanity. It contributes to the national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills. It is therefore a crucial factor for survival. Being at the apex of the educational pyramid, it also plays a key role in producing the able teachers for carrying the task of imparting education.

Research in the Universities, colleges has been given an enhanced support and steps have been taken to ensure their high quality. Consequently "Explosion of Knowledge" has become a common phenomenon.
The National Education Policy also stresses the reorganization of Technical Education which should be taken into account the anticipated scenario at the end of the century, with specific reference to the likely changes in the economy, social environment, production and management processes, the rapid expansion of knowledge and the advancement in Science and Technology.

More effective procedures have been adopted in the recruitment of teachers, career opportunities, service conditions, consultancy norms and other pre-requisites have been improved. Teaching faculty will have multiple role to perform in teaching, research, consultancy, development of learning resource material, extension and managing the institution. Initial and in service training will be made mandatory for faculty members and adequate training reserves will be provided. Staff development programmes will be integrated at the state and co-ordinated at Regional and National levels.

The curricula of technical education is targeted on current as well as the projected needs of industry or user systems. Active linkage of information and interaction between technical institutes and industry is enhancing the programme planning and implementation, exchange of personnel, training facilities and resources, research and consulting and other areas of natural interest. Thus the teaching faculty members play a key role in the implementation of educational policy and thus help in building the nation.
The "Teaching Faculty", a vital ingredient of the higher education system is the focal point of the present study. The study is primarily aimed at evaluating the performance of a teacher in the form of information consumer as well as producer in addition to his teaching, consultancy and research activities. Further, the study concentrates on the impact of helpful and unhelpful situation and information technology factors on information seeking process and procedures and communication pattern in the present environment, by the teachers of Regional Engineering Colleges in India.

1.1 ROLE OF TEACHING FACULTY IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES

Teaching is the complex activity involving many variables. It is the unique professional, rational and human activity in which one creatively and imaginatively uses himself and his knowledge to remote learning. The teaching and learning process involves complex interactions between the teaching faculty and the learner. Each individual student is different and has not only a variety of needs wants and abilities but also certain anxieties, perceptions, intelligence, knowledge, motivation, skills and personal problems.

The role of today's teacher consists not only of imparting knowledge in the classroom but involves a number of activities including diagnosing students with learning difficulties, selecting appropriate learning resources, supervising research activities, stimulating research interactions, using and administering the educational media. The
teaching in Regional Engineering Colleges involves many variables such as recognizing the complexity of the Engineering Teaching role. The primary focus of this study is on the information seeking and communication aspect of the teaching activity which is more important activity of the teaching faculty in most of the Regional Engineering Colleges.

The Regional Engineering Colleges are believed to be the model Institutions which are pacesetting institutes to other engineering colleges in their states. The role of faculty members, is to train the budding engineers in national reconstruction and developments, who can successfully tackle the problems of industrial reconstruction. Engineering faculty are one of the most important factors in any programme of training engineers and technologists, with all their experience specialised in their field, technically competent in their subjects. Faculty in these colleges are both 'Academic' and 'Professional' persons. The engineering faculty are 'academic' because they carry on the work of teaching at a relatively high academic level. They are academicians because, by virtue of their being a faculty/teacher they are interested in education in general and engineering education in particular. Their role as a teacher makes him develop and improve a scholarly attitude and he strives to accumulate more and more advanced knowledge in his own field and other related academic subjects. By acquiring latest information, modern techniques and by updating knowledge he tries to imbibe/pass on to students the skills and knowledge of engineering subjects. They have also a task before them,
making the students to develop the ethos and moral values of the engineering profession and mould a good citizen of the nation. He is also a 'professional' in the sense that as 'Doctors' and 'Lawyers' etc. He has passed engineering examination in distinction by virtue of which he joins the profession of Engineering teaching faculty. He has imbibed the ethics of the noble profession besides acquiring the technical knowledge and skills of a given branch of engineering. He is a professional because he has developed a professional outlook by providing consultancy services as an engineer and by acquiring modern and latest technological information by associating in various professional bodies, societies and referring number of information sources etc. Their outlook is modified by, how their views, values and respects change the profession.

The faculties need to be constantly educated by seeking latest information, so that they can be effective in bringing the desired changes, especially in the context of their changing roles in the fast changing dynamic society. They are not only expected to be thorough and upto date in their knowledge and comprehension of their chosen disciplines but also as facilitators or managers of learning and they are expected to be competent in the planning, organising, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the teaching, learning process.

Keeping in view the importance of the teacher, the selection committees of the Colleges used to search for well talented and learned persons. The common criteria for selection being eminence in a specialised field, ability to pursue
independent research and ability to inspire students with enthusiasm for study.

According to Caston (1977) rewards and prestige will go to those faculties who distinguish themselves in research. Teaching is viewed as a less visible activity. Caston viewed education as the discipline for the adventures of life, research is intellectual adventure; and the colleges should be homes of adventures shared in common by young and the old.

Possession of the Ph.D. is considered as a pre-requisite for teaching profession and at the same time it is viewed as a prestigious degree. This ultimately influences the graduates and diverts their activities towards research and specialization in their fields. Research projects single handed or team research have begun to gain momentum in Regional Engineering Colleges. Goffman (1970) states that the 'Knowledge explosion' has meant the fragmentation of knowledge, the triumph of specialization under the guise of professionalism... It has turned the academics away from the Colleges and University, made them over into men of affairs and entrepreneurs for whom the College is merely a base, a part-time employer, and a focus of partial allegiance." The teacher of today will be more specialised than ten years ago and certainly than twenty years ago. His department will be larger and more self contained. His relations with other departments and with the central administration will be more formalised than previously. A consequence of this process of specialization and formalization is often the growth of what can be called professionalization and he identifies with the
discipline and not with the university.

The UNESCO\textsuperscript{6} accounts the following factors contributing to the changing role of the faculty:

1. Changes in the social context of higher education.
2. Changes in the content of the discipline, the emergence of new disciplines and inter-disciplinary,
3. Changes in the characteristics of students,
4. Changes in technology, particular changes in communication and information technology,

Kerawalla (1991)\textsuperscript{7} has elaborately dealt with the societal changes and demands on teacher role of the present day on the following grounds.

1. Role in student development.
2. Role in institutional effectiveness.
3. Role in attaining the goals of the educational system.
4. Role in national development, and
5. Role in the development of the discipline.

Engineering College academicians are not only the teachers but also Engineers and scientists. Before the two World Wars, the activity of the teacher was confined to teaching. But the Post-War period began to see a researcher and scientist in the College & University teacher. The effect of the Wars on the government alerted to accelerate the development in various fields viz., science and technology, agriculture, industry, defence etc., to build up the power of the country in the world.
In most of the countries, universities and Colleges are being under the direct control of the government, the impact of the Wars was also seen on their objectives and goals. The activities of the colleges began to change from mere teaching to teaching and research. From this era the college faculty was not only considered as a teacher but also as scientist. The teacher realised and began to see the social problems and needs of the nation and spread his research activities to solve them. This led to the generation of new information, useful for the welfare of the society.

Now in Indian Colleges and Universities the publication of articles, research outputs were taken into account while considering a teacher for promotion to higher position. The teacher without any creativity to his credit was forced either to be in the same position or to leave the job.

"Publication indeed had become a guiding interest of new academician. Each book, each article was a notch pegged in the way to promotion... This form of academic accountability not only had its public relations purposes but it served as a prod to the slow performers. It made clear who was to be promoted, when and why. 'Publish or perish', the slogan became, and by the late 19th Century at the University of Pennsylvania professors who insisted on pouring time and energy into teaching at the expense of research were told to go elsewhere" Rudolph, F (1968)8.

Research activities were considered as the primary duty
of the teaching community, while teaching occupied the second position. Gross and Grambsch (1974) express that "one of the cost publicized issues in American education system has been that of teaching versus research. The doctrine of 'Publish or perish' typifies the controversy. The term 'productivity' has been generally interpreted as research output and not as a balance of teaching, research and service." They further added that "it is difficult to measure productivity, even using our narrower definition, when taken as a whole." The measures they have chosen are:

1. Volume of contract research;
2. Percentage of graduate student body; and
3. Number of doctorates awarded.

Lehrer (1970) comments that "when hard pressed, the educator in many instances, will have his teaching load substantially reduced to cope with the publishing race. Administrators will often gladly agree to this urge in him for his crowned efforts will be reflected in the College's dearly cherished 'College image'. The educator then will rely more upon assistants to do his teaching, so that he may do research leading to publication... On the one hand, one realizes that 'he who rests, rusts', that competition is the father of all achievement, that scholar, in addition to sharing his knowledge should enrich it by investigation, and the results ought to be made known to the largest possible number of interested scholars. On the other hand, one cannot deny that a full teaching schedule, with its many demands on the faculty, rarely allows a man to indulge in thorough research to be displayed in learned treatise and books."
It is truism that there are research scholars who are both excellent teachers and authors."

This impulse towards quantity of publications tends to be particularly evident in India, owing to the system of tenure adopted in the universities. "The 'up-or-out' rule insists that university staff in the lower ranks should only be allowed a fixed number of years to show their ability, if not promoted by the end of this period, they are required to be unpromoted to next cadre." Meadows, (1974)\textsuperscript{11}. Thus the conditions force the academic community to work more and more with their subjects and publish relatively to fulfill the conditions. The allocation of grants among various departments which is based on the performance also makes them publish more, for more funds. It is natural that the urge to produce more and as quickly as possible can lead to plagiarism.

On account of the complexity of teaching at engineering college, one recognises that the Engineering Faculty are faced with tremendous responsibility and that there are needs for information if teachers are to function effectively in their jobs. Teachers require a variety of information as they perform their professional activities among which teaching being the basic one. The provision of the right information at the right time is vitally important if teachers are to effectively taught their students.

The increase in the quantity of information related to engineering and technology is being phenomenal. Additionally,
the quality of information communication and generation has improved and is available in various forms and formats. As underlying premise of this study Engineering Teaching Faculty must deal effectively and efficiently with these aforementioned factors, quality, quantity and form of information in order to productively instruct their students. The above mentioned activities of the engineering faculties are directly depends on the information seeking behaviour and communication skill they adopt for their effective teaching.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The present study focuses on the communication pattern and Information seeking behaviour of teachers of the Regional Engineering Colleges in India. The study attempts to know the information requirements of teachers and how these are met with satisfactorily. The factors affecting the teaching faculty in the selection of information sources are also examined, in addition to this, the teachers were asked to describe the ideal environment to meet their information needs. This investigation has paved the way for obtaining the knowledge on how the engineering teaching faculty communicate the information. Empirical data thus collected is used to plan, design and maintain the effective and efficient information systems.

The growth of Engineering and Technological literature is tremendous. The subjects of Engineering and Technology are gaining much importance. It is stated that, "Our time is an age of Science, science affects all aspects of our lives"12.
Therefore, Science and Engineering Education are being given a top priority in the developing countries like India.

The major objectives of education are teaching and learning. Effective teaching is essential for effective learning. Subsequently this calls for good exposure of the teachers and the taught to the variety of information. Infact the information must be made available and accessible in the minimum possible time. It is a well known fact that the information-based society invests large funds annually for developing and acquiring sophisticated systems and services. Some of the largest and most expensive of these services are designed to facilitate and enhance scientific and technical communication which results from commitment by business and industry, universities and colleges, scientific societies and government agencies. Such efforts are indicated on the belief that these institutions and industries know, how scientists and engineers actually seek information and how they wish to access it. Some of the earlier user studies have investigated by scientists and engineers covering broad users groups concentrated on specific disciplines such as science, engineering, geo-science or social science. These have illustrated time difficulties in producing generalised models of information seeking behaviour and communication pattern. The theme of this thesis is to analyse the information seeking behaviour of engineering faculty. The main focus is to describe and analyse the faculty members information seeking behaviour and communication pattern in Regional Engineering Colleges which are located in 17 different
1.3 NEED FOR THE STUDY

There is enormous work done at the macro level, especially, on user studies. The most neglected aspect is in the engineering field where no single comprehensive study which brings in one place the findings together.

'Use and user needs research' has been carried out at different levels and with different perspectives under different names such as 'information behaviour studies', 'communication behaviour studies', 'scientometrics', 'knowledge dissemination' and 'utilization studies' etc. It is pointed out in the last decade that the information industry lacks rigorous customer behaviour studies, market research and behavioural model studies. There appears to be a laps in library and information science field in understanding the multifaceted nature of the approach of the user. This is due to the systems that are designed and implemented, which are often fail to be friendly user.

Research in Library and Information Science is more meaningful if the findings increase the efficiency and effectiveness of information flow. To achieve this, the emphasis should be given to 'user oriented research'. Considerable research is being conducted in the area of 'users behavioural aspects' in USA and UK, but compared with other countries including India practically nothing substantial is done.
This study makes an humble beginning and gives an emphasis on engineering teaching faculty and provides the base for the research at the national level. Teaching faculty as engineers and scientists have multi-dimensional role to exhibit. Taking into consideration the communication pattern and information seeking behaviour, efforts are made to design an intensive model for the researchers in making future studies more worth while.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objectives of this study are:

1. to examine the information transfer process,
2. to determine the information seeking behaviour,
3. to know the communication pattern taking into consideration the various characteristics and variables of their information seeking behaviour,
4. to relate the selected characteristics on their information seeking behaviours,
5. to study information seeking behaviour among various cadres and to find out the difference in the information communication pattern,
6. to assess the impact of teaching experience on the information communication,
7. to examine the influence of faculty environment, financial assistance and recognition of the work on information generation and communication,
8. to study the impact of academic and official factors viz., headship, teaching activity, research guidance; problems from colleagues and higher officials etc., in obstructing the process of information communication,
9. to find out the information agencies used in collecting the information required for teaching and research activities, and
10. to identify the awareness of various library sources and services.

The intention of this study about the engineering faculty will directly be concerned with the design of information retrieval systems. Implications for such designs may be implicit in the analysis, and further comparative work may be carried out at a later date with this in mind. The analysis of this research thus aims to allow a meaningful correlation of results to be generated.

1.5 METHODOLOGY:

Multiple investigation methods and data collection tools and techniques are employed in the study. Different methods are applied in a helpful sequence so as to supplement and complement the preceding method. At the same time all methods are directed towards the core problem so as to depict different perspectives. The three main methods viz., 1) Interview, 2) Questionnaire and 3) Observation are used for collecting the data.

There has been a wealth of documentary sources giving the details of the user studies in the field of Library and Information Science. These studies have been comprehensively reviewed in the second chapter. In contrast to many quantitative studies centered on the use of a particular information sources for example, the use of library services (Walker, 1976; Saracevic, 1988; Salas & Cedar, 1985) or the use of library effective information sources (Murphy, 1981; Hancock and others 1987), this study preferred a qualitative methodology to
describe the overall information seeking behaviour of engineering faculty. The selection of suitable technique of qualitative analysis was the key to try a different research design from that of previous user studies in engineering. The GROUNDED THEORY approach, a technique of qualitative analysis developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967)\textsuperscript{18} was chosen. That approach was first applied in the field of information studies by Ellis (1987)\textsuperscript{19} to develop a behavioural model of the information seeking behaviour of social scientists.

1.5.1 GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH :

Grounded Theory is a style of qualitative analysis that focuses on generating a theory and grounding that theory in data. This theory provides an interpretation of phenomenon inductively derived from qualitative data collected as it occurs in the real world. Therefore it is a suitable technique to develop an interpretative of users information-seeking behaviour grounded on the users descriptions of that behaviour and inductively derived from individual information seeking events.

At the working level, grounded theory analysis is a process of constant comparison of incidents. Originally Glaser called this approach the constant comparative method\textsuperscript{20}. The comparison of incidents is guided by systematic coding of data. In grounded theory, coding is the process of generating concepts from the data and a code is the concrete result of that process whether a condition, an activity or a relation between the former. There are three stages of coding: Open coding, axial coding and Selective coding Strauss, (1987)\textsuperscript{21}. Open coding is
the initial stage of analysis and no prior set of categories are imposed on the data. These codes are broad and provisional ones.

In order to be systematic and meaningful, comparison and coding of incidents and categories follow a coding paradigm. The coding paradigm as it is used in this analysis of data outlined defined conditions, strategies, interactions and consequences. This coding is focused on strategies as the core category and developed a model of the information seeking behaviour as developed by Ellis (1989) as behavioural model of the information seeking behaviour of social scientists.

1.5.2 ELLIS's MODEL OF INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR:

In 1989 Ellis derived a behavioural model of the information seeking for pattern of academic social scientists. The characteristics which constituted the principle generic features of the patterns were identified and considered to provide a flexible behavioural model for information retrieval system design. Six basic categories of information seeking behaviours: Starting, Chaining, Browsing, Differentiating, Monitoring and Extracting have been described. The model does not attempt to specify either the interrelationships of the activities or the order in which they are undertaken except at a very general level. This recognises the exact interrelationship and the interaction of these behaviours depend on the exact circumstances associated with the information seeking behaviour.

The Ellis model highlights key features of the perceptions of academic social scientists concerns their generation, communication and utilization of information. It may
be seen that this model represents an empirically designed framework for further research into the academic communication processes. Ellis, used his model of the information seeking behaviour of social scientists as the basis of a series of recommendations for the design of information retrieval systems. He concluded that one way to implement the features of the behavioural model was to use a hypertext system. This Ellis model of information seeking behaviour of social scientists is tested in this study adopting grounded theory method in context of engineering faculty.

1.6 INTERVIEW METHOD:

Ellis (1989) considered the interview method would be capable of providing "detailed accounts of the perceptions of academic social scientists of their own information seeking activities from their point of view and as a whole". Open-ended interviews were held with the interview guide approach interviewing the samples. The approach employed to ensure that the areas of information seeking behaviour and communication pattern considered relevant would be discussed with the respondents. The issues to be explored were therefore, outlined in advance and interview organised in a systematic manner.

The interview guide employed was fundamentally similar to that used by Ellis (1989), with the addition of communication pattern questions (see appendix 2). This was for comparison purpose. It was essential to ensure that the activities were described as fully as possible and that the responses were
relevant.

The methods of sample selection was based on Glaser and Strauss, (1967) technique of theoretical sampling. In reality this meant that the subject chosen for interview are selected according to perceived theoretical and comparative requirements of the research as it progressed.

1.7 QUESTIONNAIRE METHOD:

There are 17 Regional Engineering Colleges spread all over India mostly in each state. Due to vastness of the area it was decided to cover the samples for collection of data by means of Questionnaire as well as interview method. The details of the samples selected under both method are mentioned in Table 1.1.

1.7.1 PILOT SURVEYS:

To test the techniques for reliability and relevance, the first draft of the questionnaire was sent to 20 faculty members at KREC and REC Calicut, (Pilot Survey 1). The questionnaire was then adequately and suitably modified and sent to a sample of 40 faculty members in REC Calicut, REC Tiruchinapalli, and REC Warangal (Pilot Survey 2). After analysing the responses of the two pilot surveys, the questionnaire was then finalised and mailed to the selected samples (See appendix 3). A follow up of this was done through respective R.E.C. librarians and for non-respondents repeated reminders were sent from time to time.

The total faculty, in all 17 REC's put together is 1872. Table 1.1 shows that the theoretical sampling of total surveyed faculty was 800 (43%), of which is 620 sample selected for the
questionnaire method (i.e. 33%) and of which 574 have been responded (31%) including both the methods. Given relatively high response of 700 (37%) of both methods, it is found that it is reasonable to assume that the answers are representative for the whole population. The descriptive statistical methods have been applied in a helpful sequence such that each tries to gain from and supplements the preceding method of interview.

Table 1.1
RESPONSE RATE OF POPULATION SURVEYED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Selected for Survey</th>
<th>Sample Selected for Interview method</th>
<th>Actual Interview conducted</th>
<th>Sample Selected for Questionnaire method</th>
<th>Usable response received</th>
<th>Population surveyed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.8 DISCUSSIONS AND MEETINGS:

Notes from discussions were taken and meetings with the faculty members, Deans and Principals of the Colleges and also Library Advisory Committees were held on different occasions. The personal experience of the researcher as a Secretary and Member of Library Advisory Committee, and also the member of Academic Council of the College has helped a lot in the process of analysis of the data. These notes of the meetings are taken into consideration as and when needed while analysing the data.
1.9 LIMITATIONS:

The study of information seeking behaviour and communication pattern can stand on its own as an area of applied research where the motive for investigation is pragmatically related to system design and development. This study was limited to Regional Engineering College faculty employed in 17 REC's in India. This is an area of basic research, and although resulting knowledge may have practical consequences, there is no necessity that it should formulate the information system.

The purpose of this work is not to evaluate the quality of the means used by the faculty members for locating and discovering information and expressing the knowledge gained.

1.10 CONSPECTUS:

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter introduces the problem of study in its full form. Chapter two presents a review of related studies in this field. It also highlights about environmental interpersonal systems influence upon information seeking behaviour among scientist, engineers, and scholars. Chapter three gives a description of the technical education in India and the development of Regional Engineering college systems, and points out their place in total national higher educational and research systems. The chapter four is defining the information seeking behaviour and it provides the basis for understanding the context of the faculty members and their behaviour on information seeking. Chapter five
presents findings concerned to the communication systems which influence upon the faculty members and their communication pattern. Chapter six presents the survey of the data and analysis concerning the information seeking behaviour. Chapter seven deals with the data analysis of communication pattern. Chapter eight outlines designing a model for information seeking behaviour and information retrieval. This chapter also covers the comparative analysis of the similar types of research elsewhere. In addition to this chapter offers possible and feasible suggestions for further research in this field of activity. Chapter nine concludes the research work.

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