

In the digital era, Information Seeking Behaviour of the Faculties of Centre of Education, Indian Institute of Teacher Education- A Study

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Abstract:

This article presents findings from a research study on how faculty members at center of education in Indian Institute of Teacher Education, seek information. The study gathered data through a questionnaire distributed across seven university faculties. Results indicated that a significant portion (58%) relied on consulting experts in their field for information. The primary purpose for seeking information, cited by 41 respondents (85%), was for lecture preparation. Additionally, 54% of faculty members primarily accessed information from book references. A prevalent trend was the use of reference books by 77% of faculty members, while 91% preferred reading materials in English and 52% in Gujarati. The Internet emerged as a widely adopted resource, with participants using it to access library materials. Google.com stood out as the preferred search engine, and email was a frequently used communication tool. Notably, 45% of respondents utilized the ERIC database. A common issue encountered by the majority was the lack of available information.

Introduction:

Today, we live in a time defined by a revolution in information and knowledge. Libraries now offer numerous electronic resources, and the vast expansion of online information has significantly altered how people seek knowledge. A multitude of information in various formats and from diverse sources is now accessible in one central location. In our contemporary society, the range of information types and the mediums presenting them have multiplied, providing both men and women with an extensive array of choices.

No matter the societal faction under consideration, every group operates using present data and disregards past information. Philosophies highlight firsthand learning in the tangible, physical realm as the most appropriate means of acquiring knowledge. Therefore, it's undeniable that knowledge and information hold immense importance.

People generally believe that humans are born without knowledge and it's essential for them to actively pursue information. Marchionini (1995) suggests that seeking information is an inherent and vital aspect of human life. Information seeking behavior involves purposefully searching for information to fulfill specific goals. During this process, individuals might engage with manual sources like newspapers or libraries, as well as digital systems such as the Internet (Wilson, 2000).

Seeking information involves personal motivations, the specific types of information sought, and the methods and places used to find that information (Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain, 1996). People exhibit this behavior in diverse ways, from reading printed materials to engaging in research and experiments. Scholars, students, and educators actively pursue up-to-date information through various library resources like encyclopedias, journals, and increasingly, digital media. Abels (2004) noted a significant rise in Internet usage between 1998 and 2000, while expenditures on books consistently grew during the same period.

Consequently, the library stands as the primary information hub for educated communities. Librarians need to understand the nature of the information sought and how to access it. With the increasing expenses of acquiring and storing printed academic journals and digital content, the library is entrusted with the responsibility to offer and sustain effective services.

Literature Review:

The extensive literature on the information-seeking behavior of faculty members covers a wide spectrum. It aims not only to explore information seeking behavior directly but also delves into associated subjects beyond its immediate applications. This comprehensive review encompasses areas related to information seeking, including the specific behaviors of faculty when seeking information.

Suriya, Sangeetha, and Nambi (2004) conducted a study focusing on the information-seeking habits of Faculty Members from Government Arts Colleges in Cuddalore District. They aimed to explore how these faculty members utilized the library for information acquisition. Their findings indicated that a significant portion, 61 individuals (38.12 percent), frequented the library multiple times weekly to fulfill their information requirements. Furthermore, the majority of respondents, 91 individuals (56.87 percent), conducted their searches based on subject categorization.

Shokeen and Kushik's (2002) research delved into the information-seeking habits of social scientists at universities in Haryana. Their findings indicated that the majority of these professionals visit the library daily. Their primary approach to finding information involves first utilizing indexing and abstracting periodicals, followed by searching through article citations. Current journals are the preferred resource, with books being used subsequently in their pursuit of the required information.

Challener's (1999) study explored educators in liberal arts colleges and universities, comprising artists and art historians. The findings revealed a distinct requirement for teaching-related information among these individuals. Nearly all participants were subscribed to art journals, with many also engaging with newspapers. They displayed a frequent presence in multiple libraries, a departure from earlier findings, demonstrating a greater willingness to seek assistance from librarians. Notably, a significant proportion of both artists and art historians

utilized computers as teaching aids. Additionally, all 27 participants extensively employed slides in their classroom sessions, often complemented by the use of textbooks.

Reneker (1992) observed 31 members from Stanford University's academic circle over two weeks in the 1990-91 academic year to delve into their information-seeking behaviors. Employing a naturalistic approach, she relied on qualitative methods, primarily conducting personal interviews for data collection. The participants viewed their information environment positively, correlating their understanding of this environment with the sources they utilized. Seeking information was intricately woven into their daily routines and interactions, spurred by the expression of necessity and the availability of information. A significant portion of their needs were met through self-created or organized sources and interpersonal information channels. The study's findings highlighted a diverse range of needs—personal, professional, and entertainment—that prompted these information-seeking actions.

Scope of the study:

The Indian Institute of Teacher Education houses 5 centers, yet the research focused solely on the Centers of Education. The Center of Education (COE) is utilized by 60 faculty members who require adequate resources. Seeking information is dynamic, and influenced by access, perceived quality, and trust in the information source (Boyd, 2004). This underscores the crucial need for consistent examination and enhancement of information systems and management services within the institute. This study aims to explore these aspects within the IITE library, serving as a model for the broader Indian Institute of Teacher Education:

1. Investigate the information-seeking patterns among faculty members within the Centers of Education at the Indian Institute of Teacher Education.
2. Identify the types and sources of information that faculty members commonly use.
3. Analyze the motives behind the information-seeking behavior exhibited by faculty members.
4. Assess the utilization and impact of information technology in the quest for information.
5. Examine the linguistic preferences in the reading materials used by faculty members.
6. Explore the challenges encountered by users of research units (IITE) during the process of seeking and utilizing information.

Need of the study:

Defining information presents a challenge due to its multifaceted nature. One prevalent definition characterizes it as recorded experiences utilized in decision-making. The swift evolution of information technology significantly alters information access and seeking behaviors. Librarians and staff must grasp users' information-seeking criteria to offer effective services, craft new systems, intervene in existing ones, and strategize service programs.

Researchers sought answers by probing the following questions:

1. Faculty members aim to acquire what specific information?
2. Through which approaches do they seek information?
3. How do faculty members employ information technology?
4. What languages do faculty members utilize?
5. What challenges exist in information retrieval and potential solutions for them?

Methodology, Limitations and Scope:

A survey was conducted across four departments at the Center of Education in the Indian Institute of Teacher Education. Questionnaires were distributed to 60 respondents, primarily consisting of faculty members from the B.A. B.Ed., B.Sc. B.Ed., B.Ed. M.Ed., M.Ed., M.Sc. M.A. M.Ed., and Research Program departments. Out of the distributed surveys, 48 faculty members participated, signifying an 80% response rate. These respondents encompass faculty members from various departments, including B.A. B.Ed., B.Sc. B.Ed., B.Ed. M.Ed., M.Ed., M.Sc. M.A. M.Ed., and the Research Program.

Table 1. Response from Faculty Members

Department	Questionnaire Distributed		Response Received	
	In No	In %	In No	In %
B.A., B.Ed.	20	33	17	28
B.Sc. B.Ed.	23	38	18	30
B.Ed. M.Ed., M.Ed., M.Sc. M.A. M.Ed.	17	28	13	22
Total	60	100	48	80

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

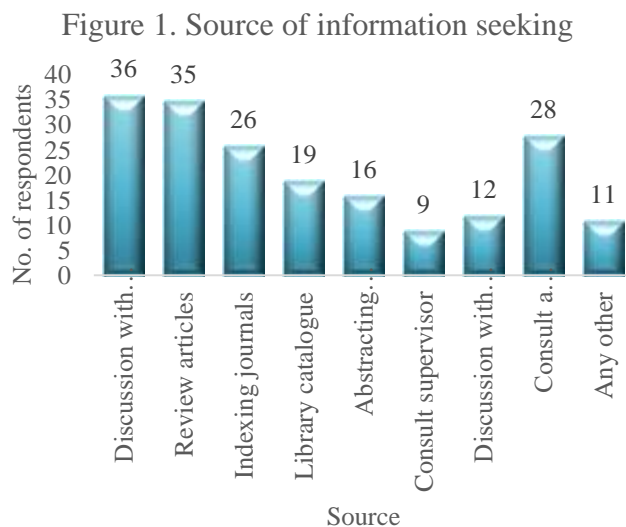
The information gathered underwent analysis through the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which was utilized to generate frequency tables for individual variables. Additionally, the open-ended inquiries underwent scrutiny through content analysis.

Findings:

⇒ **Source of information seeking**

Table 2. Source of information seeking

Method	No. of respondents	In %
Discussion with colleagues	36	75
Review articles	35	72
Indexing journals	26	54
Library catalogue	19	39
Abstracting journals	16	33
Consult supervisor	9	18
Discussion with staff of your library	12	25
Consult a knowledgeable person in the field	28	58
Any other	11	23



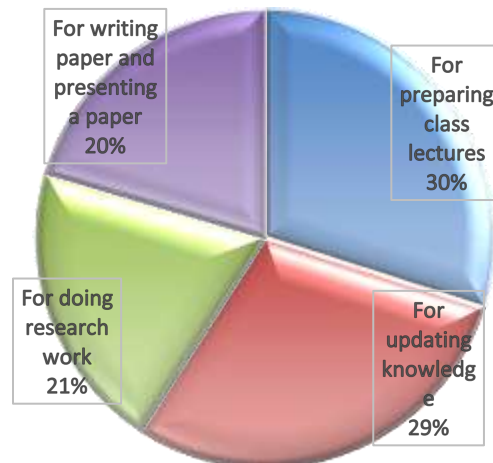
The object focused on how faculty members sought information. As per Table 2, 23% of faculty consulted experts in their field, 75% engaged colleagues in the discussion, 25% interacted with librarians or reference staff, and 39% utilized the library catalog for information retrieval.

⇒ **Purpose of seeking information**

In Table 3, it is evident that the respondents stated various purposes for seeking information. Specifically, 41 faculty members, constituting 85.4 percent of the total, sought information primarily for preparing class lectures. Additionally, 83.3 percent mentioned the purpose of keeping their knowledge up-to-date, while 58.3 percent indicated seeking information for writing and presenting papers

Table 3. Purpose of information-seeking

Purpose	No. of respondents	In %
For preparing class lectures	41	85
For updating knowledge	40	83
For doing research work	28	58
For writing paper and presenting a paper	28	58

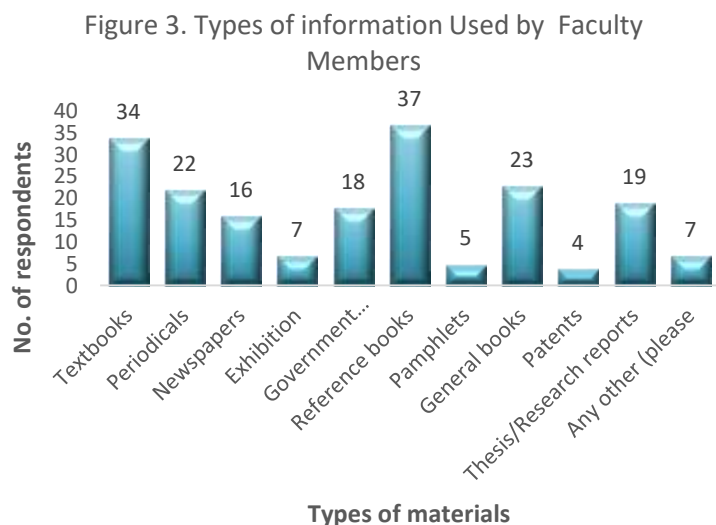


⇒ **Types of information Used by Faculty Members**

As shown in Table 4, faculty members were surveyed about the types of sources they typically use to find information. The results revealed that reference books were the most commonly used source among all faculty members, with 77.1 percent indicating they relied on them. Additionally, 70.8 percent mentioned using textbooks. Additionally, 45.8 percent of faculty members reported using periodicals for seeking information.

Table 4. Types of Information Used by Faculty Members

Types of materials	No. of respondents	%
Textbooks	34	70
Periodicals	22	45
Newspapers	16	33
Exhibition	7	14
Government Publications	18	37
Reference books	37	77
Pamphlets	5	10
General books	23	47
Patents	4	8
Thesis/Research reports	19	39
Any other	7	14

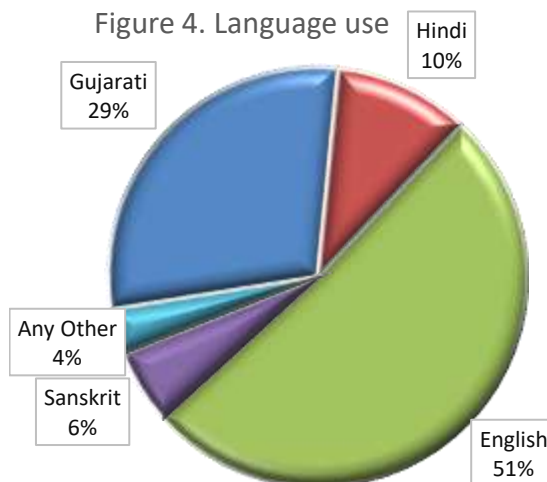


⇒ Language use

The analysis reveals that the majority of faculty members, comprising 44 individuals (91 percent), prefer reading materials in English. Gujarati is the preferred language for 25 faculty members (52 percent), Additionally, 9 (18 percent) use Hindi (see Figure 1), and only 5 faculty members (10 percent) preferred language for Sanskrit.

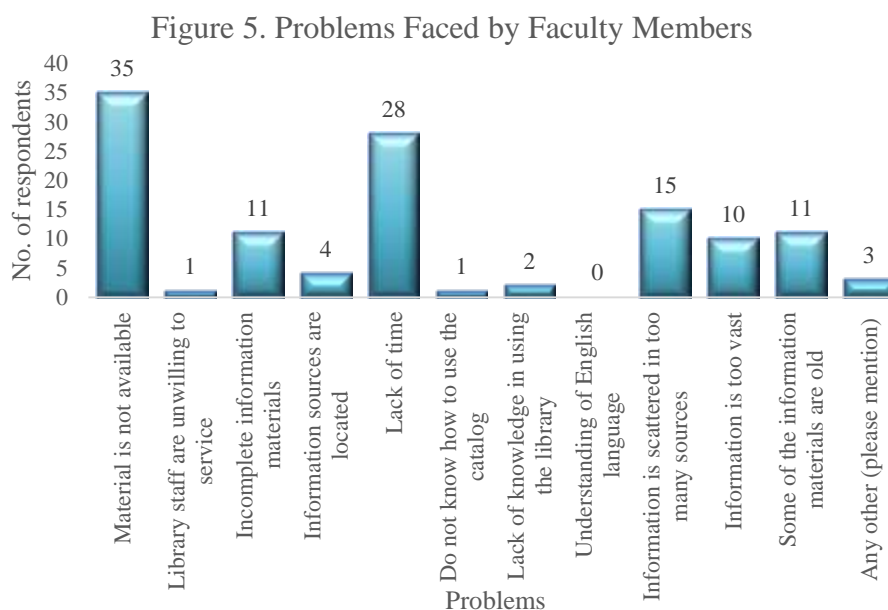
Table 5. Language use

Language	No. of respondents	%
Gujarati	25	52
Hindi	9	18
English	44	91
Sanskrit	5	10
Any Other	3	6



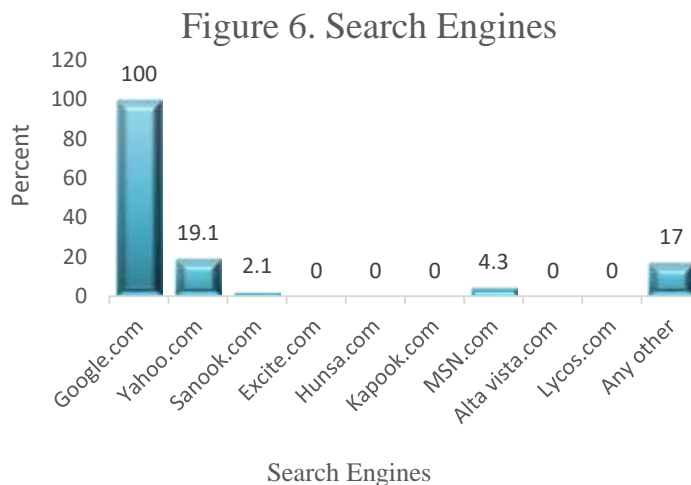
⇒ Problems with seeking information

Figure 5 indicates that the biggest issue encountered by faculty members, making up 35 faculty Members of the total, is the material is not available. Following closely behind, 28 faculty members struggle with a shortage of time for conducting searches. Additionally, 11 faculty members encounter challenges such as incomplete information materials and language barriers



⇒ **Internet search engines.**

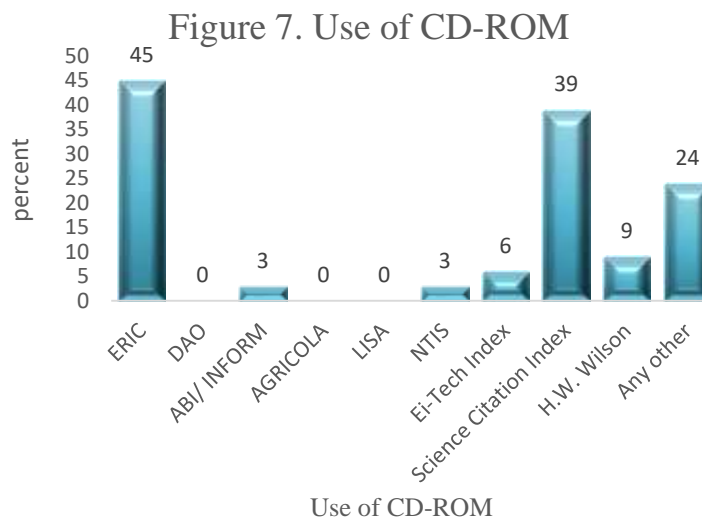
The majority of respondents, accounting for 100 percent, utilize search engines as their primary means of search, with Google being the most commonly used platform. 19.1 percent of respondents use Yahoo, while MSN.com and Sanook are used by 4.3 percent and 2.1 percent of



respondents respectively (refer to Table 6 for details).

⇒ **Use of CD-ROM**

In Figure 7 showing a question was asked about the use of CD-ROM. fifteen respondents (45%) mentioned that they use the ERIC database, whereas 39 percent use Science Citation Index, 9 percent use H.W. Wilson, and 6 percent use the Ei-Tech Index. And 24 percent use



any other.

Conclusions and Discussion:

The effectiveness of any library's operation relies heavily on the selection of its collections, which must align with the needs and demands of its users. Librarians need to understand how

faculty members seek information. Among their top preferences are textbooks, periodicals, and newspapers, primarily utilized for lecture preparation, staying updated, and research. Journals, according to Wales (2000), are the favored resource for staying current. Faculty members employ various methods for information retrieval, yet they notably prefer consulting experts in their field.

Concerning the information-seeking behavior of faculty members at center of education in Indian Institute of Teacher Education, Gandhinagar, it is suggested that library personnel, specifically reference librarians, could optimize their time by prioritizing user assistance. Reference librarians ought to aid users in enhancing their information-seeking skills and locating the diverse types of information they require. Additionally, librarians should support users in familiarizing themselves with OPAC, search engine navigation, email usage, and CD-ROM operations, and inform them about available websites across different networks. Consequently, the library must furnish adequate ICT resources, such as internet access, laser printers, scanners, fax machines, telephones, etc., enabling reference librarians to offer a spectrum of services within the library.

Users have highlighted the importance of expanding the range of periodicals offered, emphasizing the need to obtain both printed and electronic journals in English and Gujarati. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of available resources, orientation programs are essential. Consequently, it is recommended to initiate advanced training sessions for users at various proficiency levels.

In terms of public relations, IITE libraries are advised to promote their activities through various channels such as journals, bulletin boards, and their websites. These websites can include details about the library, its events, collections, online databases, and ways to access them. It's also suggested to incorporate engaging news for users. Suggestions for further research revolve around the limitations of the current study, notably the absence of data on "home use." Expanding the study could involve direct observation of students and teachers. Exploring how individuals who occasionally work from home transition between accessing information in different locations could be an intriguing avenue. Additionally, delving deeper into post-information-seeking behaviors and how people save, share, organize, and utilize web information after finding it at home could enrich the study's findings. Librarians are encouraged to stay abreast of technological and lifestyle shifts, adopting technology based on evidence that aligns with the information seeker's needs and perspectives.

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