Information Gathering Habits of Engineering College Students in Chennai, Tamil Nadu: A Study

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Abstract – **Information is the very basis of human existence. Information is essential element for the progress of higher education. The main aim of this study was to find out the information gathering habits of students from different disciplines of Velammal Engineering College in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. A well-structured questionnaire was circulated to collect the needed information from 9 Undergraduate engineering branches. This study examines several aspects of library use, including frequency of visiting the library, satisfaction with library hours, library collection and level of user satisfaction from library services, and cover the use of reference sources in the library. The study was conducted through survey by distributing questionnaires among 270 students and 91% of students responded.**

Keywords: **Engineering College Students, Information Gathering Habits, Information Sources, User Study**

I. INTRODUCTION

The word information is used in the context of user studies research, to denote a physical entity or phenomenon (as in the case of questions relating to the number of books read in a period of time, number of journals subscribed to etc), the channel of communication through which messages are transferred (as when we speak of the incidence of oral versus written information), or the factual data, empirically determined or presented in a document or transmitted orally. Within the field of user studies the investigation of 'information needs' has presented seemingly intractable problems. The essential components of libraries are documents, users and librarian. The main goal of library is to provide pin pointed information to users. User studies play a vital role in any type of library. The User is the key person in any information system. All the luxuries of information revolution and problems of information explosion are centered on the user and his convenience. Understanding the user's needs is half the battle won in providing information services. These studies are also essential to know the difference in satisfaction among the different categories of

users. Necessary measures can be taken up in case the users are dissatisfied with the library collection, services and facilities by finding the reasons for their dissatisfaction.

II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The concept of information has proved to be elusive one and difficult to define what initiates the information need has received more attention from research than definition of itself. Today information technology has developed rapidly and has had a huge impact on access to information and on information gathering habits. The librarian and library staff have to know and examine the criteria of information gathering and information utility by users for providing information services. More and more people deliberately and consciously gather information and it has become an integral part of human activity especially in the area of education, research and development. The users of information are finding it difficult to identify and physically locate the relevant information when it is required. In this context, the libraries, being the reservoirs of knowledge and the centers of learning, have a greater responsibility in providing the right information to the users at the right time, in the right form so that user studies are one of the interdisciplinary areas of research in library and information science.

III. INFORMATION GATHERING HABITS

Information Gathering Habit is the behavior with respect to searching various sources, channels including use of those information. The terms information gathering habits, information seeking behavior, information searching behavior and information using behavior are synonymous. The study of information gathering habits can stand on its own as an area of applied research where the motive for investigations is pragmatically related to system design and development. According to Wilson information seeking behavior results from the recognition of some needs perceived by the user that behavior may take several forms the user may make demands upon formal systems that are

customarily defined as information systems such as libraries, on line services. Information centers or upon system which may perform information function in addition to a primary non-information function such as estate agents offices or car sales agencies that give current information of their field viz, prices and models etc.,

IV. Literature Review

S.A. Fazlur Rahman, and M. Tamizhelvan [1], in their study have found that the digital library infrastructure is to be improved along with digital resources, and improve the web OPAC facility overnight issue system, book bank system and photocopy facility have to be improved. Majority of the students are satisfied with the availability of number of newspapers, books and periodicals. Jogender Singh [2] have examined that academics have welcomed the automation of library. It may also be motivated by a variety of needs, including personal, professional, entertainments etc. It is recommended that library staff focus on assisting users to develop a better image for the library. R. Lakshmi Sankari, K. Chinnasamy and A.M. Venkatachalam [3] have pointed out that users are satisfied with library collections and services, but who want training in the use of online information. Although document delivery service is being provided on demand, the researchers pointed out that it would be worthwhile if the library could provide them with indexing, abstracting and interlibrary loan service as well user education about library using must and should be carried out as a seminar or workshop training. Rajeev Kumar Gaba and Krishan Gopal [4] have revealed that Internet is the most important method of getting information. Periodicals are the first preference of the engineers' for getting their information and government documents is the last preference source of information. Above description shows that library staff is very cooperative and helpful. Tradasal and Matesheela [5] have revealed that books, newspapers, popular magazines class notes of senior are the most useful sources of information and conducted that the personal attributes, viz gender, year of study medium of institute, area of habitation, stay at hostel marital, status and frequency of visits of the university library have no bearing on the use of the specific sources of information.

V. Information About The Institution

The Velammal Engineering College is one of the best of its established during the academic year 1995-96. The institute has 9 undergraduate programmes in Engineering Technology and 11 Post graduate programme and management. The Velammal Engineering College Library has 72,000 volumes of books, 150 Indian and foreign printed journals, 4000 back volumes. 4500 project reports and online journals publishers of IEEE, ELSEVIER, ASME, ASCE, MCGRAW-HILL, SPRINGER, ASTM, J-GATE ENGG. , J-GATE MGT, EBSCO MGT. AND DELNET database searching, And also stacks nearly 3500 non book materials which include CDs, DVDs and Audio/Video Cassetes, Anna Edusat live programme, NPTEL video courses and internet facilities are available in this library.

VI. Objectives

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the use of information by the student community;

2. To present an overview of the Velammal Engineering College;

3. To identify the information gathering habits of Velammal Engineering college students;

4. To understand students level of satisfaction about the respective library services;

5. To compare the information gathering habits of students belonging to various departments of this institution;

6. To offer suggestions if any for the improvement of library and information services in the institute.

VII. Hypothesis

Based on the above mentioned objectives the following hypotheses were framed:

- The frequent visit to library more number of students updating their knowledge currently;

- More number of information access pattern leads to acquiring more knowledge;

- Student community is more satisfied with resources of institution library, the more number of students used institutional library and they are highly satisfied;

- Student community gets more knowledge from the bibliographical information;

- Institutional library provides high knowledge to the students and more number of students get high rate of user satisfaction.

VIII. Methodology

In Order to study the use and satisfaction of the library collection, services, and facilities in Velammal Engineering College Library, this survey conducted among nine undergraduate branch students,   Accordingly the questionnaires were administered to the users of the library and responses of users were solicited.   A total of 270 questionnaires were distributed to the student community of Velammal Engineering College Chennai. A well designed questionnaire has been administered by the researcher directly to the students and collected data from the respondents. The data was checked and analyzed according to the objectives.

IX. Data Analysis and Interpretation

A sample of 245 students from whom the respondents out of 270, under different departments has been considered in this study drawn from first year students to final year of Velammal Engineering College.   Distribution of Questionnaire and responses received are shown in Table I, from the Table it can be seen their response rate is 90.74%.

TABLE I Distribution of Questionnaire and Responses Received

Sl. No.	Department	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires received	Percentage
1	CSE	30	29	96.67
2	ECE	30	28	93.33
3	EEE	30	26	86.67
4	IT	30	27	90.00
5	MECH	30	28	93.33
6	E I E	30	28	93.33
7	CIVIL	30	27	90.00
8	PROD.ENGG	30	28	93.33
9	AUTOMOBILE	30	24	80.00
	Total	270	245	90.74

The above Table I shows that the distribution of samples by Department wise i.e., Undergraduate Engineering Students. The majority of the respondents are CSE Students (96.67 %).

TABLE II Classification of Respondents Visit to The Institution's Library

Sl. No.	Description	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Once in a day	26	10.61
2	2-3 times in a day	89	36.32
3	Once in a week	84	34.29
4	Occasionally	46	18.78
	Total	245	100

It is evident from Table II that the students using the library once in a day (10.61%), and   2-3 times in a day (36.32%), once in a week (34.29%), and occasionally using the library (18.78%).

TABLE III Purpose of Using The Library

Sl. No.	Purpose	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	To read Books	26	10.61
2	To borrow books	48	19.59
3	To borrow periodicals	19	7.76
4	To photocopy	13	5.31
5	To access online	42	17.14
6	To prepare assignment and notes	15	6.12
7	To read news paper	32	13.06
8	To improve General knowledge	26	10.61
9	To read journals and magazine	24	9.80
	Total	245	100

It is evident from Table III that students mainly using the library for the purpose of borrowing books (19.59%). The next purpose is to access online purpose (17.14%). These two are followed by to read newspaper (13.06%), to improve General knowledge (10.61%), to read books (10.61%) to read journals and magazine (9.80%), to borrow periodicals (7.76%), to prepare assignment and notes (6.12%), to photocopy (5.31%). Hence, it can be concluded that students are mainly using the library for borrowing books and access online.

TABLE IV Adequacy of Library Resources

Sl. No.	Library resources	Adequacy	Inadequacy	Percentage
1	Text books	164 (66.94 %)	81 (33.06 %)	245 100 %
2	Reference books	212 (86.53 %)	33 (13.47 %)	245 100 %
3	Journals	196 (80.00 %)	49 (20.00 %)	245 100 %
4	Magazines	208 (84.90 %)	37 (15.10 %)	245 100 %
5	CD-ROM	157 (64.08 %)	88 (35.92 %)	245 100 %
6	Video and Audio cassettes	194 (79.18 %)	51 (20.82 %)	245 100 %

It is evident from Table IV that 66.94 % students are satisfied with regard to text books collection while 33.06 % are not satisfied follows 86.53 % students are satisfied with reference book collection while 13.47 % are not satisfied, 80 % students are satisfied with journal collection while 20% are not satisfied, 84.90 % students are satisfied with magazine while 15.10 % are not satisfied, 64.08 % students are satisfied with CD-ROM collection while 35.92 % are not satisfied, 79.18 % students are satisfied with Video and Audio cassettes collection while 20.82 % are not satisfied,

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TABLE V SATISFACTION OF LIBRARY PHYSICAL FACILITIES

| Sl. No | Facilities | Level of satisfaction | | Total |
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	
1	Seating for reading	167 (68.16%)	78 (31.84%)	245 (100 %)
2	Drinking water	161 (65.71%)	84 (34.29%)	245 (100 %)
3	Lighting	170 (69.39%)	75 (30.61%)	245 (100 %)
4	Ventilation	194 (79.18%)	51 (20.82%)	245 (100 %)

Hence it can be concluded that students are highly satisfied with adequacy of library resources.

Table V reveals that satisfaction of library physical facilities that 68.16% students are satisfied with Seating for reading facilities while 31.84% are not satisfied, 65.71% students are satisfied with Drinking water while 34.29% are not satisfied, 69.39% students are satisfied with lighting facilities while 30.61% are not satisfied, 79.18% students are satisfied with Ventilation while 20.82% are not satisfied. It is concluded that most of the students are satisfied with physical facilities of library.

TABLE VI SATISFACTION ON THE INSTITUTION'S LIBRARY SERVICES

| Sl. No | Library services | Level of satisfaction | | Total |
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	
1	Lending services	201 (82.04%)	44 (17.96%)	245 100%
2	Reference services	193 (78.78%)	52 (21.22%)	245 100%
3	Reservation services	137 (55.92%)	108 (44.08%)	245 100%
4	CAS	149 (60.82%)	96 (39.18%)	245 100%
5	SDI	157 (64.08%)	88 (35.92%)	245 100%
6	Reprographic services	142 (57.96%)	103 (42.04%)	245 100%

As per the above Table VI, it can be seen that satisfaction level of the students in the institution's library services that 82.04% students are satisfied with Lending services while 17.96% are not satisfied, 78.78% students are satisfied with Reference services while 21.22% are not satisfied, 55.92% students are satisfied with Reservation services while 44.08% are not satisfied, 60.82% students are satisfied with CAS services while 39.18% are not satisfied, 64.08% students are satisfied with SDI services while 35.92% are not satisfied, 57.96% students are satisfied with Reprographic services while 42.04% are not satisfied. It is concluded that most of the students are satisfied with library services.

X. CONCLUSION

Librarian must understand information gathering habits of users to re-engineer their services and provide information efficiently. The results of this study reveals users are highly satisfied with library collection and services of inter library loan, reference, lending. User education about library usage must and should be carried out as a seminar or workshop training. Therefore the library authorities should conduct user education programmes to educate the users about library resources and services. These user education programmes will help the students use the library resources and services to the maximum extent.

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