

INFORMATION BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN FACULTY MEMBERS IN COLLEGES: AN ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the dynamics of information behaviour among women faculty members in colleges in Manipur have been evaluated by describing their information-seeking behaviour related to learning, teaching, and administrative processes. The study has been conducted using a mixed-methods approach and has achieved its aim of understanding how the faculties access, assess, and utilise information across different fields. The study has revealed that while technology has had a significant impact on academic research, traditional sources of information and personal networks still play an important role. Furthermore, it has been shown that faculty from different disciplines exhibit differences in information behaviour across institutions. Based on the findings, the study has recommended developing information literacy and information behaviour in the ICT era, as well as supporting digital transformation services, in higher education institutions in the state.

KEYWORDS: Information Seeking Behaviour, College Women Faculty, Digital Gadgets, Higher Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The term “information behaviour” has been considered as the manner in which a person searches, finds, evaluates, and uses information to fulfil their needs. Over time, different scholars have developed models that

explain this complex phenomenon, each pointing to different elements of interaction between human beings and information. The main models for understanding information behaviour include Wilson's, Ellis's, Kuhlthau's, and Tenopir and King's models. All these models allow for a comprehensive understanding of information behaviour of people in different contexts.

¹Wilson's (1999) information behaviour theory is considered to be the most important one. It shows that information seeking is not an isolated act but is influenced by social and environmental factors. According to Wilson, there are various barriers to their information finding including personal motivation, access barriers, and system-related factors. In this regard, there is an understanding that information behaviour is formed by both internal and external conditions. Using this information, ²Ellis (1989) introduced behavioural model, which looks at the different aspects of information-seeking activities and has identified the following concepts: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring and extracting. The model is practical because it makes it possible to identify the steps users take when seeking information. Moreover, it is important to mention that it demonstrates the non-linear character of the information-seeking behaviour, where users make lots of movements between the informationseeking stages. At the same time, ³Kuhlthau's (1991) model includes the psychological perspective, as it has analyzed the process of information searching in terms of feelings, thoughts and activities. She claims that information searching is not only a cognitive activity, but it also applies to emotions. Thus, people start their information search feeling anxious and uncertain about the information, and finally, they reach the stage when they know what to do.

The ⁴Tenopir & King (2004) model, on the other hand, concentrates on scholarly information specifically in the context of professional and scientific work. The findings of their work highlight the economic and practical importance of the information use, focusing on scientists' and scholars' acquisition, reading and implementation of journal articles. So, the model highlights how consuming information affects the impact and decision-making, focusing on the outcome of the information use and not on the one searching the information.

These models have shown information behaviour as a complex affair comprising of different aspects having influencing factors, observable actions, experience and practicabilities in the process.

As educators, researchers, and administrators, faculty members must effectively acquire and apply information to do their job in a knowledge-driven age and educational sector. The term "information seeking behaviour" describes the way people search for information and the way they use information. The college faculty members have various needs that range from lecture preparation, research undertaking and institutional service.

This study attempts to look at the dynamics of general information behaviour of college faculty and assesses the impact of digital transformation, disciplinary norms, institutional support, and personal preferences on their information behaviour.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A recent research study carried out by ⁵Waqas, Rafiq, Ya, & Wu (2026) has revealed that the use of mobile gadgets in educational context has become more significant, especially with regard to ensuring continuity in student learning. With the help of quantitative research design, the current study has applied five-point Likert scale, t-test, ANOVA, and correlation analysis to investigate MDU, MDSE, and OISB of 315 participants. According to the results, although participants used mobile technologies to a lesser extent in studying, they had high levels of MDSE and OISB, and there were strong correlations between the three constructs. Moreover, the analysis revealed that males and younger students made better results compared with older students and females.

In the study conducted by ⁶Elsayed et al. (2025) helps to understand the information needs of the nurses' who have been on the front lines against the dreadful coronavirus pandemic making every effort to save lives since the beginning of 2020. ⁷Jha Sharma and Kumar (2023) also conducted relevant research to investigate information needs and levels of awareness of Members of Parliament from educational point of view as it pertains to the education system of the given region. They set out to help Members of Parliament contribute to the implementation of financially supported educational programs in their territories through chief financing. ⁸Humbhi et al. (2022) conducted their research to study the needs of students in terms of library services offered by college librarians as the researchers noted that gathering information about needs of students and their behavior in a library proved to be useful for librarians in terms of reviewing their library programs. ⁹Jan and Khan (2022) examined the needs and behavior of undergraduate students from different universities.

¹⁰Jha and Kumar (2022) studied the information requirements of MPs in relation to art and cultural activities in their respective constituencies and discussed how communication processes are being used to access information related to art and culture. In study conducted by ¹¹Cohen (2020) highlighted the existing gaps in the information support being provided to the clinical teams and suggested ways of redesigning electronic record systems to meet the needs of the clinical teams.

In a study ¹²Motawah. et.al. (2020) investigated the information use, information needs, and information behaviour of graduate students at Kuwait University to gain deeper understanding of the supporting role of the university libraries for research. The study by ¹³Rajiv and Singh (2020) highlighted the information needs and information sources used by the farmers of Kurukshetra district and found that most of the farmers needed

information on availability and use of pesticides, fertilizers for the crop, disease, pest, weed control, knowing and selling market prices of crops. Studies which focused on information behaviour of women faculty at college level is quite minimal in number. There is still a research gap in this context.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The review of related literature has shown the sharp research gap in the area of women studies with reference to college faculty members in the very context of North East India. The study on the women faculty members of colleges in the area of their information behaviour is expected to provide many clues i.e. understanding their nature of needs, the library system which they use, the various inconveniences they encountered and many observations on the transformation and further improvement of the library and information system as a whole, etc. Therefore, there is high need for in-depth investigation on the issue. As such the present problem is stated as **“Information Behaviour of Women Faculty Members in Colleges: An Assessment of their Dynamics”** in the context of colleges of Manipur.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

- To comprehend and understand the working women faculty members in colleges of Manipur.
- To evaluate their handiness to make proper use of ICT tools and information skills in fulfilling their information requirements.
- To find out their mode and frequency of seeking information using different methods.
- To identify the frequency of library visit in obtaining their required information.
- To analyze the impact of information seeking behaviour with the usage of digital gadgets.

5. SCOPE, LIMITATION AND METHODS

In this study, data was collected from women faculty members of 40 colleges under government and government aided nature of management of the state Manipur and the faculty mentioned above belonging to the fields of Science, Arts, and Commerce. Using published reports, statistics, websites, etc. of the colleges and Manipur University the colleges have been identified and the working women faculty members have been selected to be included in the sample for study. A semi- structurally designed and pretested questionnaire was administered to 380 randomly selected women faculty members during February 2024 to December 2025 in order to collect data. The data so collected are analyzed, presented and interpreted using basic mathematical and statistical techniques,

tables and charts. Likert scale has been used to convert data into scores for some parameters used in the questionnaire. χ^2 -test has also performed to test the hypotheses formulated.

6. RATIONALE BEHIND THE STUDY

In this patricialsociety, studies focusing on women's issues are very rare and there are various reasons why we should study women faculty members in connection with their information behaviour. As such, the rationales for the study include:

- Understanding their unique obstacles to identify information behaviours and addressing the shortcomings;
- Upliftment of women in nation development;
- Improving support systems;
- Promoting equality and social inclusions;
- Informing about their role in society, policy and decision-making perspectives;
- Involving their role in institutional building/national development process.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

7. 1. SAMPLE SIZE

The present study has been taken up to assess the information behaviour of women faculty members of government and government aided colleges of Manipur covering 285 number of faculty members. Of the 380 questionnaires distributed, a total of 285 duly filled in questionnaires were returned making response rate of 75.00% as shown below in the chart.

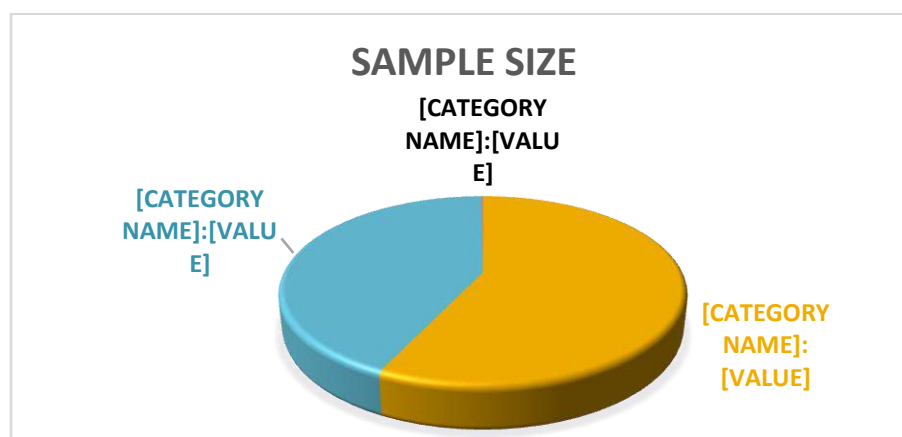


Fig.1: Pie-chart showing sample size of the respondents

7.2 FACULTIES BY DESIGNATION

As table 1 shows 83.16% women faculties are engaged in government colleges while the rest 16.84% in government aided colleges of Manipur.

Table.1. Designation of the faculties with respect to nature of college N=285

Designation	Nature of College		Total (%)
	Government (%)	Aided (%)	
Asst. Professor	205(81.03%)	48(18.97%)	253(88.77%)
Assoc. Professor	32(100.00%)	00.00	32(11.23%)
Total	237(83.16%)	48(16.84%)	285(100.00%)

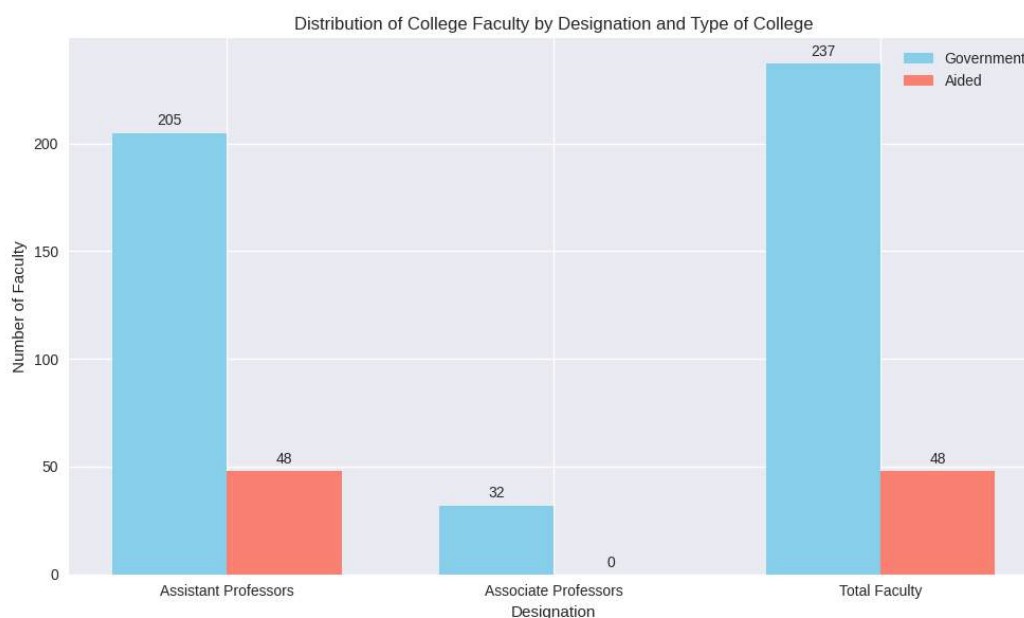


Fig.2: College women faculty distribution by designation and type of college

The above Fig.2 highlights the designations of faculty members at government and aided colleges. Of the 285 respondents under study, majority 88.7% are Assistant Professor and remaining 11.23% are Associate Professor. Among the Assistant Professors, majority, 81.03% are working at government colleges, while 18.97% are from aided colleges. Remarkably, all Associate Professor are from government colleges.

7.3 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

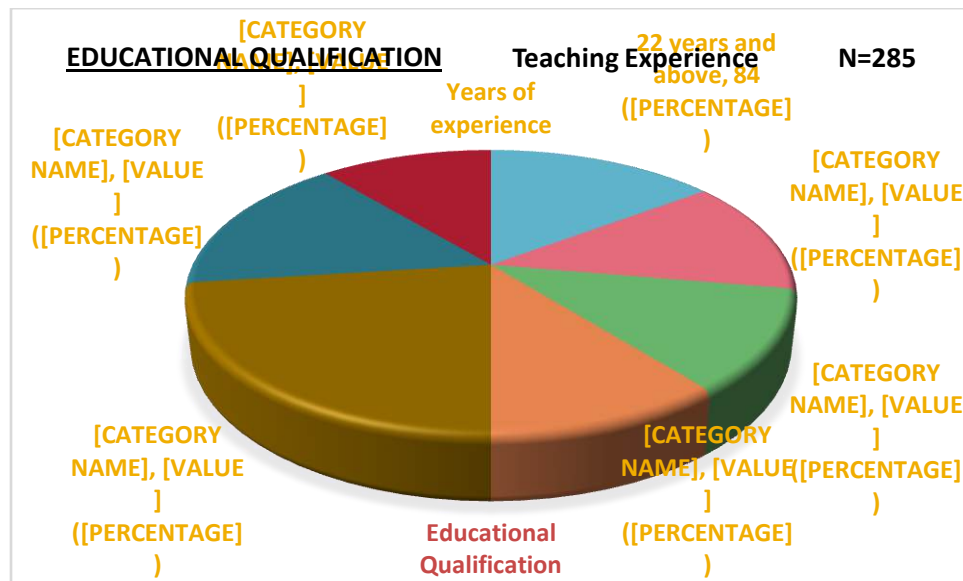


Fig.3: Pie chart showing Educational qualification and Teaching experience

As the fig.3 reveals, of the 285 faculties under study, 29.5% have teaching experience of 22 years or more, 26% have experience up to 10 years, and 21.4% having 18-21 years of experience. Regarding educational qualification, majority 46.0% of them hold a Master's degree (M.A./M.Sc.), while 31.9% hold Ph.D. degree. Additionally, 22.1% have a master's degree with an M.Phil.

7.4 HANDINESS ON ICT AND INFORMATION SKILLS

Table2. On ICT handiness and Information Skills N=285

Skills	Response	Designation				Total	%	P-value
		Asst. Professor	%	Assoc. Professor	%			
ICT Skills possessed	Yes	82	32.4	12	37.5	94	33.0	0.564
	No	171	67.6	20	62.5	191	67.0	
Internet browsing skills	Yes	213	84.2	26	81.25	239	83.9	0.67
	No	40	15.8	6	18.75	46	16.1	
Use of library resources skills	Yes	201	79.4	26	81.25	227	79.6	0.811
	No	52	20.6	6	18.75	58	20.4	
Use of library	Yes	68	26.9	8	25	76	26.7	0.821

services skills	No	185	73.1	24	75	209	73.3	
Access to different information channels/systems skills	Yes	61	24.1	1	3.125	62	21.8	0.007
	No	192	75.9	31	96.875	223	78.2	
Use of search engine skills	Yes	59	23.3	7	21.875	66	23.2	0.855
	No	194	76.7	25	78.125	219	76.8	

From the above table 2, it is seen that of the 285 respondents under study, only 94 (33.0%) possessed ICT skills, with no significant difference between the two groups ($p = 0.564$). It is also found that 83.9% of the respondents have Internet browsing skills. There is no significant difference in Internet browsing skills ($p = 0.67$) between Assistant Professors (84.2%) and Associate Professors (81.25%). While 79.6% of respondents have skills for using library resources, 26.7% for using library services. There is no significant difference between the groups for either of the skills ($p = 0.811$ for the library resource and $p = 0.821$ for the library services). In contrast, access to different information channels or systems reveals a significant discrepancy ($p = 0.007$). Only 3.125% of the associate professors have such skills as compared with assistant professors (24.1%). Search engine skills are relatively low in both the groups, having an overall percentage of 23.2%, and no significant difference was observed ($p = 0.855$).

7.5 MODE AND FREQUENCY OF SEEKING INFORMATION

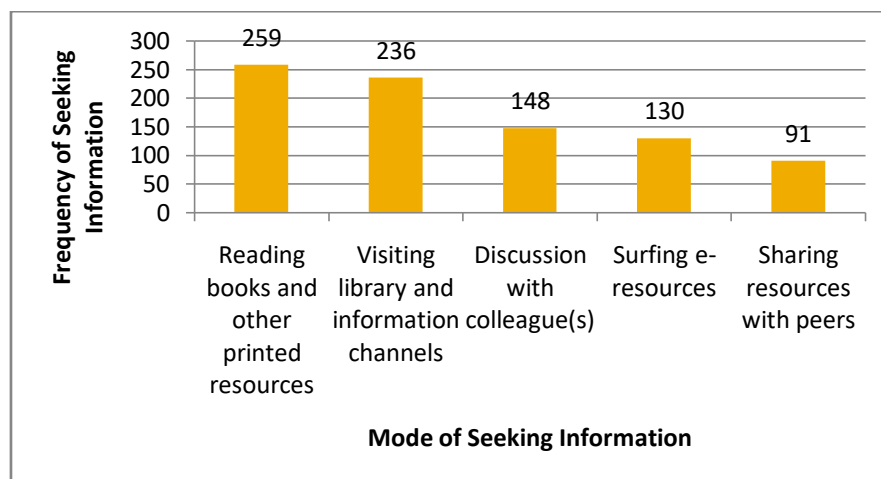


Fig.4: Mode and Frequency of Different Information-Seeking Methods

The above chart illustrates the mode and frequency of seeking information. The most common mode is for reading books and other printed resources, which is closely followed by for visiting libraries and utilizing information channels. Engagement in discussions with colleagues and browsing e-resources are also common, but to a lesser extent, indicating that both interpersonal interactions and digital platforms play a role in gathering information. The least common practice is for sharing resources with peers, which may suggest a gap in collaborative knowledge sharing.

7.6 FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY VISIT

Thefig.5 depicts the frequency of library visit which shows that majority of the women faculty members visit library when required (69%) followed by once a week (22%) and the least daily (9%) respectively.

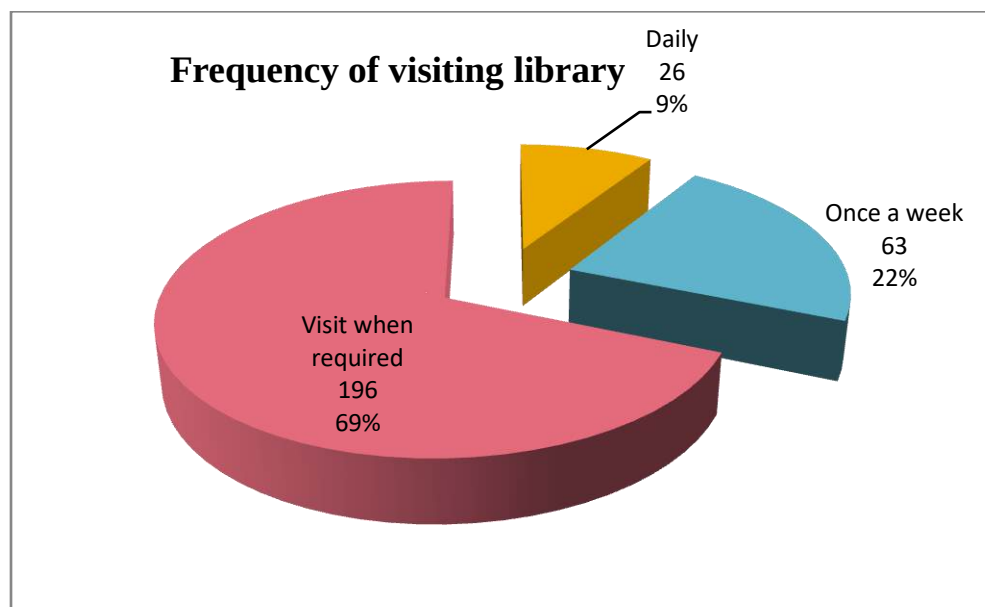


Fig.5: Frequency of visiting library

7.7 USE OF DIGITAL GADGETS

The extent to which the faculty uses various digital gadgets is shown in the table 3 below:

Table 3: Extent of use of digital gadgets N=285

		Designation				Total	%	P-value
		Asst. Professor	%	Assoc. Professor	%			
ISB influence by Smartphone	To some extent	65	25.7	7	21.9	72	25.3	0.640
	To a great extent	188	74.3	25	78.1	213	74.7	
ISB influence by Kindle	Not at all	78	30.8	7	21.9	85	29.8	0.123
	To some extent	157	62.1	25	78.1	182	63.9	
	To a great extent	18	7.1	0	0.0	18	6.3	
ISB influence by Tablets	Not at all	83	32.8	8	25.0	91	31.9	0.645
	To some extent	123	48.6	18	56.3	141	49.5	
	To a great extent	47	18.6	6	18.8	53	18.6	
ISB influence by Google	Not at all	22	8.7	4	12.5	26	9.1	0.391
	To some extent	37	14.6	7	21.9	44	15.4	
	To a great extent	194	76.7	21	65.6	215	75.4	
ISB influence by Yahoo	Not at all	66	26.1	10	31.3	76	26.7	0.609
	To some extent	148	58.5	19	59.4	167	58.6	
	To a great extent	39	15.4	3	9.4	42	14.7	
ISB influence by Bing	Not at all	172	68.0	22	68.8	194	68.1	0.996
	To some extent	73	28.9	9	28.1	82	28.8	
	To a great extent	8	3.2	1	3.1	9	3.2	
ISB influence by UC Browser Apps	Not at all	182	71.9	17	53.1	199	69.8	0.049
	To some extent	43	17.0	11	34.4	54	18.9	
	To a great extent	28	11.1	4	12.5	32	11.2	
ISB influence by Opera Mini Apps	Not at all	221	87.4	27	84.4	248	87.0	0.860
	To some extent	24	9.5	4	12.5	28	9.8	
	To a great extent	8	3.2	1	3.1	9	3.2	

It is observed that to some extent i.e., 25.7% of Assistant Professors and 21.9% of Associate Professors influenced by smartphones in their ISB. In contrast, 74.3% of Assistant Professors and 78.1% of Associate Professors are found to be influenced to a great extent. The p-value of 0.640 indicates that there is no significant difference in the impact of smartphones on ISB across the two groups. When looking at Kindle usage, it was

found that 30.8% of Assistant Professors and 21.9% of Associate Professors declared no effects whatsoever, while 62.1% of Assistant Professors and 78.1% of Associate Professors reported that they had been influenced in some way. The p-value of 0.123 shows that there are no significant differences as a result of Kindle usage. Nevertheless, the effect of UC Browser Apps is tremendous, as 71.9% of Assistant Professors said that they had not experienced any influence, while 53.1% of Associate Professors claimed they hadn't. As a result, the p-value of 0.049 is statistically significant at the level of 0.05. Thus, there is a considerable difference between the groups concerning the effect of UC Browser Apps on the ISB. As for the other applications such as Google, Yahoo, Bing, and Opera Mini Apps, the p-values indicated that the influences of these applications were not significantly different. Thus, it is possible to conclude that while most of the surveyed people said that they had some influence from the different digital resources, the only significant difference was found regarding UC Browser Apps.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In Manipur, there are both government and government-aided colleges, and women faculty members work around the clock in several fields of study. Presently they become an integral part of consumers and disseminators of information in the sector of higher education. Their study, particularly on information seeking behaviour throws us light on various aspects on their working environment, existing information system, nature of information needs, thrust areas of needs, impact on their nature of works, etc. Considering 285 women faculty members working in 40 different government and government aided colleges in Manipur, the study has provided us with certain important insights. Various aspects related to faculty demographics, qualifications, skills, and information-seeking behavior are examined in this study. In terms of employment patterns, it was found that a considerable number of Assistant Professors (81.03%) are working in government colleges and 18.97% in aided institutions. Interestingly, the study also noted the absence of Associate Professors in aided institutions. The educational qualification of the respondents has shown that 46% respondents had their Master's degrees, 31.9% had their Ph.D degrees and 22.1% had a Master's with M.Phil degree. Even if there is progress in the educational qualifications of faculty women, there is still a gap in terms of the number of Ph.D. holders. In terms of ICT skill in the study, it was found that 33% of the respondents had ICT skills while Internet browsing skills were found in 83.9% of respondents indicating a huge difference in these two aspects.

On the study of skills, it is observed that library resource skills are strong (79.6%), but library service skills are weak (26.7%), suggesting underutilization of available services. Access to information channels shows a significant difference ($p=0.007$), with Assistant Professors (24.1%) more adept compared to Associate Professors (3.125%), while search engine skills remain low overall (23.2%) and hence with no significant difference while Information-seeking methods highlight a strong reliance on traditional sources i.e., reading physical books and

visiting libraries being the most common followed by discussions with colleagues and browsing e-resources while peer sharing is at the least practiced considering to limited collaborative knowledge exchange. Women faculty members mostly visit libraries only when required by (69%), with fewer visiting weekly (22%) or daily (9%), reflecting pragmatic usage patterns. Digital technologies have a great impact on Information Seeking Behaviour (ISB), with mobile phones being used in the same way by both groups (74.3% Assistant Professors and 78.1% Associate Professors), with no significant difference noticed. The use of Kindle has mixed influence, since there is no difference found between groups. In the case of UC Browser Applications, a significant difference is found ($p=0.049$), with Professors being affected more than Assistant Professors. It is found that some of the most common and popular digital search engine platforms like Google, Yahoo, Bing, and Opera Mini shows no significant differences between the groups i.e., Assistant and Associate Professors. It can be drawn from the above study that there is a tendency of moving toward the domination of traditional sources in ISB, as opposed to digital ones, although advancements in the field of ICT and skills of using them would still be required. It is observed from the fact that Assistant Professors are in the majority reflects the general structure of academic manpower force as government colleges are still the leading employers for educators and also teaching experience takes into account several generations of teachers. Although educational background trends are visible, there are still some gap presents in ICT that require proper training and development programmes to bridge the gap.

Women Faculty still depends on libraries and printed resources, even though digital technology is just a supplement rather than a replacement of traditional tools. College Women faculty demonstrated a practical approach towards library use and that different groups are influenced by digital platforms differently, with UC Browser Apps being the only means that shows a significant difference. The studies confirm a necessity for enhancing ICT skills, advocating for collaborative sharing of knowledge, and supporting digital literacy, but still acknowledging the importance of traditional means in faculty lives.

9. CONCLUSION

Women faculty members use libraries for different practical as well as selective purposes as observed from their information seeking dynamics point of view. They rely on traditional sources of information heavily and use digital sources as well as technologies to a moderate extent. The major characteristics that are observed in them is that they have the behaviour of searching information in traditional sources i.e., printed materials at the maximum level while the least in technical skills i.e., limited use of ICT, limited collaboration with peers and under-utilisation of libraries. As a result of digital divide some of them are not in a position to get their required information through digital platforms. Getting information through mix traditional practices with modern technologies by them face obstacles and hence proper training of using modern technologies should be conducted

by their parent institutions with libraries from time to time to strengthen them and bridge the gap. Therefore, proper policies and programmes should be formulated to improve digital skills among women faculty members and also nurtured a culture of collaboration and knowledge-sharing towards improving access to library services to help them in adapting the changing world of higher education sector so that they can be both consumers and providers of information. Therefore, it is the right time to study and assess information needs and seeking behaviour of college women faculty members to play a significant role towards contribution of making higher education institutions a vibrant institution to render quality education.

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