

PREFACE

Indian businesses face many challenges in today's competitive environment consisting of global players, highly demanding customers and shortage of skilled manpower. It is a complex environment that they operate in with 'information' becoming a critical component of their strategy and operations. Right information to the right person at the right time for right business actions is the greatest challenge that businesses face. Need for information exists at all levels, from the in-the-market executives to middle management and up to the top management in the organization. The type of information required may be different at different levels or it may be the same information with a different context and objective but all aligned towards the organizational mission. This may also be determined by the job one does or the sector one operates in.

The type of information required would determine the sources of information, the media preferred, the technology used to access this information, the providers of information to be approached, the purpose of information searching and qualities of information required.

In this context, understanding the information need and its various aspects from the managers working in the industry is a useful exercise. This not only facilitates provision of right information to the right person at the right time but also helps in designing information systems and information culture of an organization. This helps in building ecology of information for the organization so that systems are in place to address

information needs of its managers.

It would be easier, through this understanding, for companies and organizations to meet the information needs and design systems that take care of explicit needs at the basic level. The tacit needs can also be addressed by the study of information seeking patterns and behavior among its managers.

It is in this context that the present research study is attempted to explore the information needs of the Indian corporate sector. The study in its own small way looks at the data collected from 303 middle level managers working 185 manufacturing and service sector companies from various cities of India. The data was analyzed to look at the type of information required, sources used, media preferred, information providers used, purpose of information search and qualities of information that are relevant and important. The study also looks at the variations in results between managers in manufacturing sector and services sector to enhance the understanding of business information needs in the Indian context.

The study attempts to provide useful insights into these aspects and may prove to be useful in designing information systems and centres to effectively cater to the business information needs of the managers. In addition to this the study may provide useful insights to the information providers in understanding their clients in various businesses.