

INFORMATION ACCESS BEHAVIOUR AND SATISFACTION OF MEDICAL COLLEGE GRADUATES IN CHENGALPATTU DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

Sasikumar, M

Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science,
Annamalai University, e-mail: smslib80@gmail.com

Sathiyamurthy, M G

Assistant Professor, Department of Library and Information Science,
Annamalai University, e-mail: sathyam.mg@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examines the information access behaviour and satisfaction of medical college graduates in Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu, with particular reference to their use of library services. Data were collected from students across six medical colleges in the district SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Government Chengalpattu Medical College Hospital, Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute, and Bhaarat Medical College & Hospital. For this study using a structured questionnaire covering awareness, purpose and frequency of use, search strategies and skills, infrastructure adequacy, barriers encountered, and overall satisfaction with information resources and services. Of 1,500 questionnaires distributed (250 per college), 1,397 were returned, yielding an overall response rate of 93.13 per cent. The findings reveal 714 (51.11%) were male and 683 (48.89%) were female, indicating a fairly balanced gender representation in the sample with a marginal predominance of male respondents. Regarding the library visit twice a week (23.6%) is the most preferred frequency of library visit among the respondents, closely followed by weekly visits (21.9%) and bi-weekly visits (21.5%), while fortnightly visits (12.2%) are the least preferred pattern across all five years of study,. the majority of respondents (54.26%) are satisfied or fully satisfied with the library facilities, the majority of respondents (62.06%) feel that needed information is available either consistently or intermittently through online resources, the considerable proportion (37.94%) reporting the pattern indicates that financial/access barriers (subscription cost) and technical/infrastructural constraints (network and hardware/software) are the dominant obstacles to e-resource use among medical college library users in Chengalpattu District..

Key words: Information Access pattern, Information seeking behavior, Medical College Graduates, Medical College libraries, User satisfaction, Chengalpattu District, Satisfaction level of users.

1. Introduction

Access to timely and reliable information is fundamental to medical education, clinical training, and research. Medical college libraries function as the principal gateway through which students and graduates acquire the print and electronic resources necessary for coursework, clinical decision-making, and evidence-based practice. With the rapid expansion of digital publishing and

consortium-based subscription models such as HELINET (Health Sciences Library and Information Network), medical college libraries in Tamil Nadu have progressively supplemented their print collections with e-journals, e-books, bibliographic and full-text databases, and clinical decision-support tools. However, the extent to which graduates are aware of, access, and derive satisfaction from these resources depends on a range of factors, including infrastructural adequacy, information literacy skills, institutional support, and individual information-seeking behaviour.

Chengalpattu District, located in the vicinity of Chennai, has emerged as a hub for medical education, hosting several government and self-financing medical colleges. Understanding how graduates of these institutions access, use, and evaluate information resources provides valuable insight for library professionals, institutional administrators, and policymakers seeking to strengthen information services in support of medical education and healthcare delivery.

2. Review of Literature

Ch.Srinivasa Rao and Sivaraman P (2025) made a study on user perception and opinion on Engineering College students in Telengana State and found that 34.69% of the respondents are using their libraries less than one hour due to technological development of libraries like remote access and so on. The study explores majority of the Respondents 32.57% using their library for the purpose of preparing their examination and 32.1% of the respondents opined their library is comfortable environment when they are studying. Trivedi et al. (2020) argued that the quality of digital library services in academic libraries has come under increasing scrutiny, noting a conceptual shift wherein libraries are viewed less as physical spaces and more as providers of quality online services, underscoring the growing relevance of digital service dimensions to overall user satisfaction. Mahalakshmi (2024), in a case study of Stella Maris College, Chennai, examining users' satisfaction with library information resources, services, and facilities, found that the primary purposes for which students visited the library were borrowing books, seeking assignment-related help, and studying in a quiet environment, with the findings intended to help the college library formulate more effective strategies for improved service delivery.

3. Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing availability of e-resources through institutional subscriptions and consortium arrangements, medical college libraries in Chengalpattu District have not been systematically studied with respect to how their graduates access information and how satisfied they are with the resources and services provided. This gap limits the ability of library administrators to make evidence-based improvements to collection development, infrastructure, and user-support programmes. The present study addresses this gap by examining information access behaviour and satisfaction levels among graduates of six medical colleges in the district.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the awareness levels of medical college graduates regarding available print and electronic information resources.
2. To assess the purpose and frequency of information resource use among the respondents.
3. To identify the adequacy of infrastructural facilities supporting information access.
4. To determine the barriers encountered by graduates in accessing information resources.

5. To measure the overall satisfaction of graduates with library resources and services.
6. To offer suggestions for improving information access and services in medical college libraries in the district.

5. Scope of the Study

The study is confined to examining the information access behaviour and satisfaction of medical college graduates in Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu, and covers six medical colleges located within the district, SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Government Chengalpattu Medical College Hospital, Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute, and Bhaarat Medical College & Hospital. It focuses specifically on graduates' awareness, purpose and frequency of use, search strategies and skills, infrastructural adequacy, barriers to access, and satisfaction with respect to both print and electronic information resources, including institutional subscriptions and consortium-based (HELINET) access. The study is limited to the perspectives of medical graduates as end-users and does not extend to library staff, faculty, or administrative viewpoints, nor to other categories of health-science institutions such as nursing, dental, or pharmacy colleges outside the specified sample.

6. Limitations of the Study

1. The study is geographically restricted to Chengalpattu District and therefore its findings may not be generalisable to medical colleges in other districts or states with differing infrastructural and institutional contexts.
2. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which relies on respondents' self-reported perceptions and may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias.
3. The study covers only graduates from the six selected medical colleges and does not include faculty, or research scholars.
4. The study concentrates on library-mediated information access and does not comprehensively examine informal or non-library channels (e.g., peer networks, social media, open-access repositories) that graduates may also use.

7. Methodology

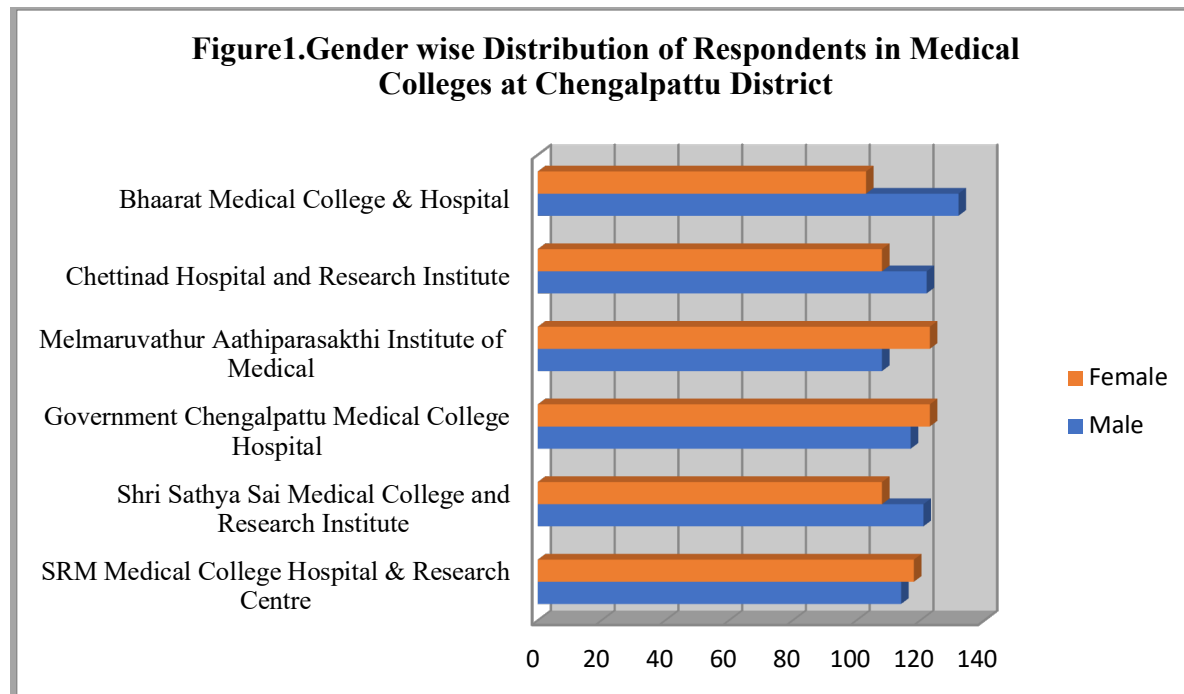
The study adopted a survey research method using a structured questionnaire administered to graduates of six medical colleges in Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu: SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Government Chengalpattu Medical College Hospital, Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute, and Bhaarat Medical College & Hospital. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed at each institution (1,500 in total). The questionnaire covered respondent demographics, awareness of resources, purpose and frequency of use, preferred resource types, search strategies and skills, infrastructure adequacy, barriers to access, and overall satisfaction, supplemented by an open-ended section for suggestions.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 8.1: Gender wise Distribution of Respondents in Medical Colleges at Chengalpattu District

Sl. No	Name of the College	Male	%	Female	%	Total Respondents	%
1	SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre	114	15.97	118	17.28	232	16.61
2	Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute	121	16.95	108	15.81	229	16.39
3	Government Chengalpattu Medical College Hospital	117	16.39	123	18.01	240	17.18
4	Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences	108	15.13	123	18.01	231	16.54
5	Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute	122	17.09	108	15.81	230	16.82
6	Bhaarat Medical College & Hospital	132	18.49	103	15.08	235	16.46
		714	100.00	683	100.00	1397	100.00

Figure1. Gender wise Distribution of Respondents in Medical Colleges at Chengalpattu District



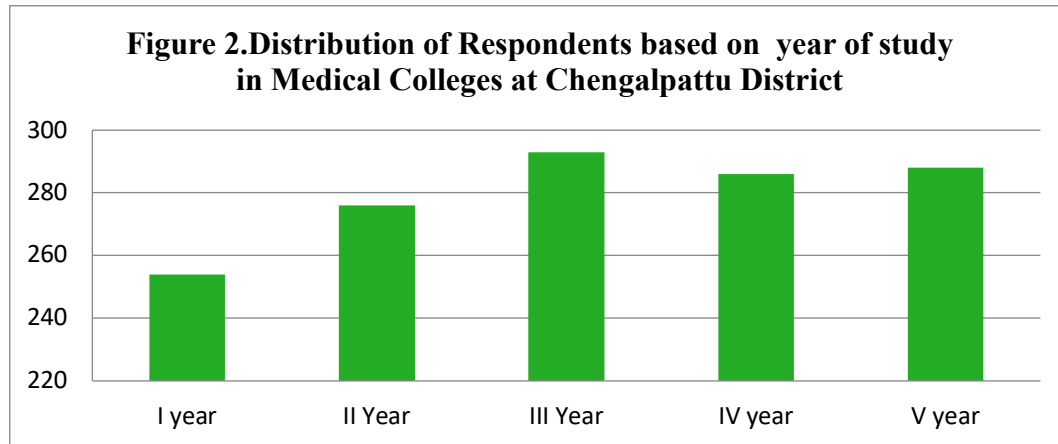
8.1. Gender wise Distribution of Respondents in Medical Colleges at Chengalpattu District

Table 8.1 presents the gender-wise distribution of respondents drawn from the six medical colleges surveyed in Chengalpattu District. Out of the total 1,397 respondents, 714 (51.11%) were male and 683 (48.89%) were female, indicating a fairly balanced gender representation in the sample with a marginal predominance of male respondents.

College-wise analysis reveals that female respondents outnumbered male respondents in three institutions like SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre (118 females, 17.28% as against 114 males, 15.97%), Government Chengalpattu Medical College Hospital (123 females, 18.01% as against 117 males, 16.39%), and Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (123 females, 18.01% as against 108 males, 15.13%). Conversely, male respondents outnumbered female respondents in the remaining three institutions, namely Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute (121 males, 16.95% as against 108 females, 15.81%), Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute (122 males, 17.09% as against 108 females, 15.81%), and Bhaarat Medical College & Hospital, which recorded the highest male share among all colleges (132 males, 18.49%) and correspondingly the lowest female percentage (103 females, 15.08%).

Table 8.2: Distribution of Respondents based on year of study in Medical Colleges at
Chengalpattu District

Sl. No	Name of the College	I Year	II Year	III Year	IV Year	V Year	Total
1	SRM Medical College	40 (17.42)	45 (19.40)	51 (21.98)	47 (20.26)	49 (21.12)	232
2	Shri Sathya Sai Medical College	39 (17.03)	45 (19.56)	47 (20.52)	52 (22.71)	46 (20.09)	229
3	Government Chengalpattu Medical College	44 (18.33)	50 (20.83)	49 (20.42)	46 (19.17)	51 (21.25)	240
4	Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences	45 (19.48)	47 (20.35)	50 (21.65)	48 (20.78)	41 (17.75)	231
5	Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute	43 (18.70)	44 (19.13)	46 (20.00)	47 (20.43)	50 (21.74)	230
6	Bhaarat Medical College	43 (18.30)	45 (19.15)	50 (21.28)	46 (19.57)	51 (21.70)	235
	Total	254	276	293	286	288	1397



8.2. Distribution of Respondents based on year of study in Medical Colleges at Chengalpattu District

Table 8.2 shows the year-wise distribution of respondents across the six medical colleges surveyed in Chengalpattu District. Of the total 1,397 respondents, III year students formed the largest group with 293 respondents (20.97%), followed closely by V year students with 288 respondents (20.61%), IV year students with 286 respondents (20.47%), II year students with 276 respondents (19.76%), and I year students, who formed the smallest group, with 254 respondents (18.18%). The percentage spread across the five years is narrow, ranging from 18.18% (I year) to 20.97% (III year) a variation of less than three percentage points indicating that the sample is nearly evenly distributed across all years of study rather than being concentrated in any particular academic year.

At the individual college level, at Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, IV year students recorded the highest share (22.71%), while I year students recorded the lowest (17.03%). At Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, III year students recorded the highest share (21.65%), while V year students recorded the lowest (17.75%). In the remaining four colleges (SRM, Government Chengalpattu Medical College Hospital, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute, and Bhaarat Medical College & Hospital), the year-wise percentages remained fairly close to one another, mostly in the range of 17–22%, without any single year dominating.

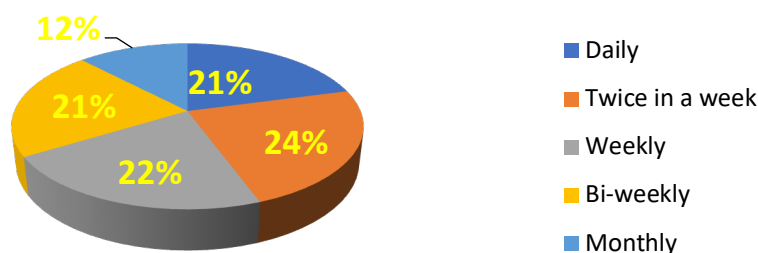
Table 8. 3: Distribution of Respondents based on Year wise Vs Frequency of Visiting their Library

Sl. No.	Year of Study	Daily	Twice a Week	Weekly	Bi-weekly	Fortnightly	Total
1	I Year	65 (25.6)	61 (24.0)	51 (20.1)	46 (18.1)	31 (12.2)	254 (100%)
2	II Year	56 (20.3)	63 (22.8)	67 (24.3)	61 (22.1)	29 (10.5)	276 (100%)

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3	III Year	61 (20.8)	67 (22.9)	71 (24.2)	64 (21.8)	30 (10.2)	293 (100%)
4	IV Year	53 (18.5)	65 (22.7)	58 (20.3)	69 (24.1)	41 (14.3)	286 (100%)
5	V Year	56 (19.4)	73 (25.3)	59 (20.5)	61 (21.2)	39 (13.5)	288 (100%)
	Total	291 (20.8)	329 (23.6)	306 (21.9)	301 (21.5)	170 (12.2)	1397 (100%)

Figure 3. Distribution of Respondents based on Year wise Vs Frequency of Visiting their Library



8.3 Distribution of Respondents based on Year wise Vs Frequency of Visiting their Library

Table 8.3 reveals, First Year students show the highest proportion of daily visitors (25.6%) among all the years, considerably higher than the overall average (20.8%). This may be attributed to their recent entry into the medical college environment, greater dependence on the library for foundational textbooks and reference material, and comparatively lighter clinical/practical workload compared to senior years. Second Year and third Year students display a fairly balanced pattern, with weekly visits emerging as their single largest category (24.3% and 24.2% respectively), suggesting a more routine and moderate pattern of library use as they settle into their academic and pre-clinical/clinical curriculum. Fourth Year students record the highest percentage of bi-weekly visitors (24.1%) and the highest percentage of fortnightly visitors (14.3%) among all years, coupled with the lowest proportion of daily visitors (18.5%). This decline in visit frequency may be explained by their increasing involvement in clinical postings, ward duties, and practical training, which leaves them with less time for regular library visits. Fifth Year students show the highest percentage of "twice a week" visitors (25.3%), along with a relatively low daily-visit percentage (19.4%), possibly reflecting a shift towards focused, purposeful library use such as consulting reference material for internship preparation, seminars, or examinations rather than routine daily browsing.

It is concluded that, on the whole, twice a week (23.6%) is the most preferred frequency of library visit among the respondents, closely followed by weekly visits (21.9%) and bi-weekly visits (21.5%), while fortnightly visits (12.2%) are the least preferred pattern across all five years of study. Overall, the data indicates a declining trend in daily library visits and a corresponding rise in fortnightly visits as students progress from junior to senior years, reflecting the changing

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academic demands and clinical responsibilities of medical students at different stages of their course.

Table 8.4: Analysis of Respondents' Satisfaction Level about Library Facilities

Sl.No	Respondents	Satisfied	Fully Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Partially Satisfied	Total
1	I Year	81 (31.89%)	71 (27.95%)	26 (10.24%)	19 (7.48%)	57 (22.44%)	254 (100%)
2	II Year	84 (30.43%)	65 (23.55%)	45 (16.30%)	21 (7.61%)	61 (22.10%)	276 (100%)
3	III Year	81 (27.65%)	79 (26.96%)	53 (18.09%)	22 (7.51%)	58 (19.80%)	293 (100%)
4	IV Year	79 (27.62%)	75 (26.22%)	66 (23.08%)	20 (6.99%)	46 (16.08%)	286 (100%)
5	V Year	74 (25.69%)	69 (23.96%)	58 (20.14%)	31 (10.76%)	56 (19.44%)	288 (100%)
6	Total	399 (28.56%)	359 (25.70%)	248 (17.75%)	113 (8.09%)	278 (19.90%)	1397 (100%)

8.4 Analysis of Respondents' Satisfaction Level about Library Facilities

The table 8.4 reveals that out of the total 1,397 respondents, the largest proportion, 399 (28.56%), expressed that they were satisfied with the library facilities, closely followed by 359 respondents (25.70%) who were fully satisfied. Together, satisfied and fully satisfied respondents account for 54.26% indicating that a majority of the respondents hold a favourable opinion of the library facilities. A smaller share, 278 respondents (19.90%), reported being only partially satisfied, while 248 respondents (17.75%) remained neutral. Only 113 respondents (8.09%) expressed dissatisfaction, the lowest among all categories across every year of study suggesting that outright dissatisfaction with library facilities is minimal.

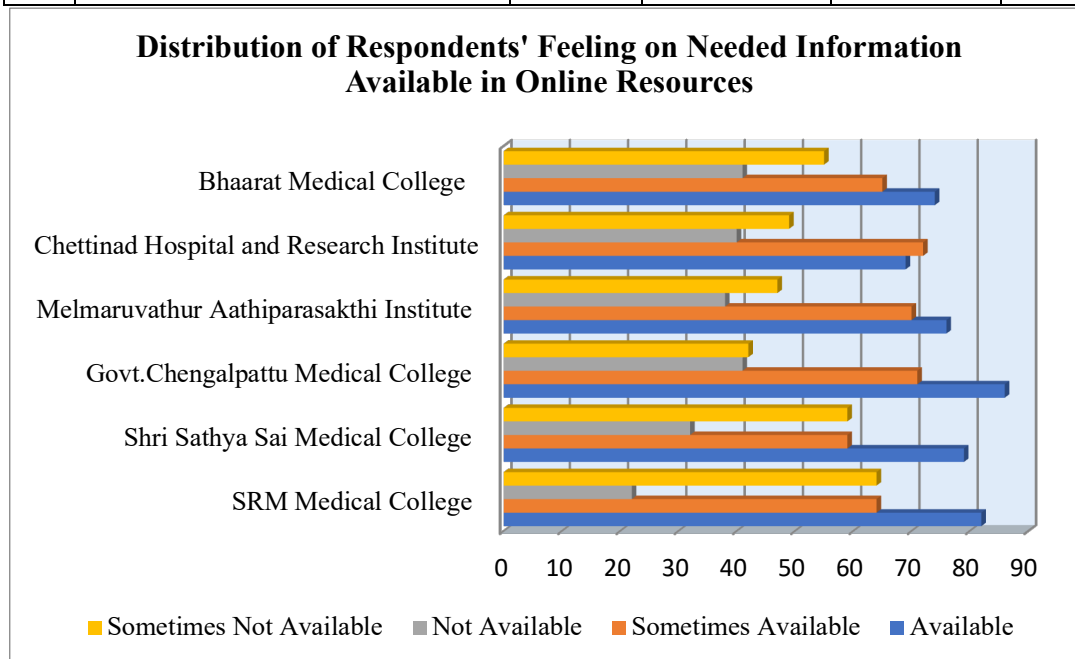
It is concluded that the majority of respondents (54.26%) are satisfied or fully satisfied with the library facilities, the declining trend in satisfaction and the rising trend in neutral/dissatisfied responses among senior-year students points to a need for the library administration to periodically reassess and upgrade facilities particularly resources catering to advanced-level academic and research needs to sustain user satisfaction across all years of study.

Table 8. 5: Distribution of Respondents' Feeling on Needed Information Available in Online Resources

Sl. No	Colleges	Avai lable	Sometimes Available	Not Available	Sometimes Not Available	Total
1	SRM Medical College	82 (35.34)	64 (27.59)	22 (9.48)	64 (27.59)	232 (100)

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2	Shri Sathya Sai Medical College	79 (34.50)	59 (25.76)	32 (13.97)	59 (25.76)	229 (100)
3	Government Chengalpattu Medical College	86 (35.83)	71 (29.58)	41 (17.08)	42 (17.50)	240 (100)
4	Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences	76 (32.90)	70 (30.30)	38 (16.45)	47 (20.35)	231 (100)
5	Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute	69 (30.00)	72 (31.30)	40 (17.39)	49 (21.30)	230 (100)
6	Bhaarat Medical College	74 (31.49)	65 (27.66)	41 (17.45)	55 (23.40)	235 (100)
	Total	466 (33.36)	401 (28.70)	214 (15.32)	316 (22.62)	1397 (100)



8.5. Distribution of Respondents' Feeling on Needed Information Available in Online Resources

From the table 8.5 SRM Medical College: With 35.34% of respondents indicating information was "available" and an equal 27.59% reporting it was "sometimes available," this college shows a fairly strong positive response overall. However, the notably high "sometimes not available" figure (27.59%), matching the "sometimes available" category, points to inconsistency. Shri Sathya Sai Medical College: The college records a relatively strong "available" response (34.50%), yet it also has the highest outright "not available" percentage among all colleges (13.97%). This suggests that while general resource availability is reasonably good, there are specific and persistent gaps in subject coverage or database subscriptions that leave a section of users without access. Government Chengalpattu Medical College: This institution shows the most favourable pattern, with the highest combined "available" and "sometimes available" response

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(65.41%) and the lowest "sometimes not available" figure (17.50%). This indicates comparatively better-organized and more comprehensive online resource provisioning, giving users more consistent access to needed information.

Melmaruvathur Aathiparasakthi Institute of Medical Sciences: With 32.90% "available" and 30.30% "sometimes available," this college shows a moderately positive trend (63.20% combined). However, the "sometimes not available" response (20.35%) suggests occasional shortfalls that could be addressed through better resource updates or awareness of existing subscriptions. Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute: This college shows the weakest overall performance, with the lowest "available" percentage (30.00%) and the highest combined negative response "not available" (17.39%) and "sometimes not available" (21.30%) totalling 38.69%. This points to a comparatively inadequate online resource base and highlights an area requiring urgent attention in terms of database subscriptions and content coverage. Bhaarat Medical College: With 31.49% "available" and 27.66% "sometimes available" (59.15% combined), this college falls in the mid-range of the sample. The relatively high "sometimes not available" response (23.40%) suggests intermittent gaps in resource accessibility, warranting periodic review of subscribed online resources to ensure consistency.

It is concluded that the majority of respondents (62.06%) feel that needed information is available either consistently or intermittently through online resources, the considerable proportion (37.94%) reporting unavailability, whether occasional or outright, highlights an evident gap between information needs and actual resource provisioning. This is particularly pronounced in colleges like Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute and Shri Sathya Sai Medical College. The finding underscores the need for medical college libraries to reassess their online subscription packages, expand database coverage, and ensure more consistent access to full-text and subject-specific e-resources to bridge this gap.

Table 8. 6: Distribution of Respondents' based on problems facing when accessing the E-resources

S N	Problem	SRM	Sri Sathya Sai	Govt. Chengal pattu	Melmar uvathur	Chettin adu college	Bharat Medic al college	Total
1	Network Problem	38 16.38	33 14.41	43 17.92	50 21.65	42 18.26	44 18.72	250 17.90
2	Technical problems (software & hardware)	45 19.40	40 17.47	39 16.25	39 16.88	45 19.57	42 17.87	250 17.90
3	Unable to identify where it is	32 13.79	38 16.59	35 14.58	28 12.12	31 13.48	31 13.19	195 13.96

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4	Unable to get assistance (manpower)	30 12.93	32 13.97	39 16.25	36 15.58	29 12.61	30 12.77	196 14.03
5	Library does not have particular information	31 13.36	36 15.72	35 14.58	31 13.42	35 15.22	41 17.45	209 14.96
6	Unable to pay for some kind of information	56 24.14	50 21.83	49 20.42	47 20.35	48 20.87	47 20.00	297 21.26
	Total	100.0	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	1397 100.00

8.6 Distribution of Respondents' based on problems facing when accessing the online resources.

Across all six medical colleges, "unable to pay for some kind of information" emerged as the single most frequently reported problem (21.26% overall), suggesting that a considerable proportion of users encounter e-resources or documents that are paywalled or otherwise require payment/subscription access they do not have. This problem was most pronounced at SRM (24.14%) and least at Bharath Medical College (20.00%), though it remained the top-ranked issue at every institution.

"Network problem" and "technical problems (software & hardware)" were tied as the second most common difficulties, each accounting for 17.90% of responses overall. Network issues were reported most acutely at Melmaruvathur (21.65%), while technical (hardware/software) issues were highest at Chettinad (19.57%) and SRM (19.40%) pointing to infrastructure-related gaps (bandwidth, outdated systems, compatibility) as a substantial barrier alongside affordability.

"Library does not have particular information" (14.96%), "unable to get assistance from manpower" (14.03%), and "unable to identify where the resource is" (13.96%) were comparatively less frequent but still non-trivial, together accounting for close to 43% of all reported problems. Notably, the "unable to identify" problem was elevated at Sri Sathya Sai College (16.59%), and "unable to get assistance" was elevated at Govt. Chengalpattu College (16.25%), which may point to library-specific gaps in signage/OPAC navigation and in trained support staff availability at those institutions respectively.

Overall, the pattern indicates that financial/access barriers (subscription cost) and technical/infrastructural constraints (network and hardware/software) are the dominant obstacles to e-resource use among medical college library users in Chengalpattu District, while human and bibliographic-access barriers (staff assistance, resource discoverability, and collection gaps), though present, are comparatively secondary.

9. Suggestions

1. Strengthen promotional and orientation programmes to raise awareness of HELINET and other consortium-based e-resources.
2. Organise regular information literacy and database search-skill training sessions for students and graduates.
3. Improve infrastructural facilities, including bandwidth, terminal availability, and remote/off-campus access mechanisms.
4. Expand the availability of trained library staff for personalised user support.
5. Periodically assess user satisfaction to guide continuous improvement of collections and services.

10. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that while medical college graduates in Chengalpattu District are increasingly reliant on electronic information resources for academic, clinical, and research purposes, gaps remain in awareness, search proficiency, and infrastructural support that constrain the full realisation of these resources' potential. Addressing these gaps through targeted training, promotional outreach, and infrastructure enhancement can meaningfully improve information access behaviour and overall satisfaction among this user group, thereby supporting stronger academic and clinical outcomes.

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