

# **A Study on Information Seeking Challenges Faced by Police Officers in Workplace in Mumbai West Region**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the information-seeking challenges faced by police officers of Mumbai West Region. The study focused on accessibility & availability issues, time constraints, external pressures, technical barriers and technical support. The study used a quantitative approach to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that most of the police officers adequately accessed and located necessary information. However, a subset of respondents highlighted that there were persistent issues including information organization, time constraints due to workload, the technical skills gap in technical support and the non-availability of internet facilities. Recognizing the importance of efficient information access the police officers emphasized developing new skills and effective time management. The study recommended improvement in organization of information, workload management targeted technical training and infrastructure enhancement to have better information access.*

**KEYWORDS:** Information Seeking, Police Officers, Mumbai Police, Challenges.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The law enforcement field is majorly dependent on access to accurate and timely information. The police officers have to deal with a variety of cases at a time. They face high-pressure situations where they have to make rapid decisions. Navigating enormous available data including internal databases, public records and real-time field information creates unique challenges. Unlike for other professions information seeking may be a matter of convenience or efficiency but for police officers, it is often a matter of public safety, legal accuracy and personal well-being.

Police officers encounter various challenges in information seeking. They require data spread across various platforms and systems, which lack smooth integration. Police officers may have to consult multiple sources. The nature of law enforcement requires them to assess not only the accuracy but also the sensitivity and confidentiality of the information. The police officers require quick access to accurate and relevant information. But which may not

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be available readily and easily. The issues are technological barriers such as inadequate training, outdated software, and lack of technological knowledge hinders the timely acquisition and application of information in the field.

The study aimed to explore the specific information-seeking challenges police officers face and strategies adopted to overcome the challenges.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Harkin et al. (2018) investigated the challenges encountered by police cyber-crime units. The study revealed that lack of organizational commitment to cyber-crime, the lack of investigation expertise, requisite skills and career progression within specialist units were the major challenges faced by the cyber-crime units. The study suggested that continuous investment in training, resources and collaboration were solutions to the growing problems of cyber-crime.

Nunn (2001) in the study “Police technology in cities: Changes and challenges” focused on privacy impacts of machine systems, its effects on the everyday life of urban citizens, legal ramifications and increasing automation of machine systems. Jamil & Mohyuddin (2015) focused on several social, personal and psychological problems faced by women police due to numerous reasons including insufficient transportation and infrastructure facilities.

Hoggett et al. (2019) identified the importance that shared identity and credibility in police leadership relationships. It argued the direct entry police leaders faced credibility issues connected to police identity. The theoretical and empirical approach theory was developed. Ali Shah & Hussain (2020) studied the challenges faced by police officers in forensic criminal investigations. The study revealed that many police officers were facing numerous problems in conducting forensic criminal investigations including forensic training on crime scenes, untrained investigators, physical damage of evidence and lack of crime scene mobile van. Also, the DNA lab was not properly operated and lack of coordination from other agencies like NADRA and KMC.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- ✓ To identify the main challenges encountered by Police officers
- ✓ To explore the strategies and solutions adopted by Police officers to overcome the challenges

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The structured questionnaire was designed to collect data for the study. The study used a random sampling method to collect data. A total of 58 police officers including Police Sub Inspectors (PSI) and Assistant Police Sub Inspector (ASI) working in the western region of Mumbai police responded to the questionnaire. The data was collected from Airport, Amboli, Andheri, B.K.C, Bandra, D.N. Nagar, Jogeshwari, Juhu, Kherwadi, Meghwadi, MIDC, Oshiwara, Powai, Sahar, Sakinaka, Vakola & Versova police stations. The study used a percentage approach to arrange and display the results.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Gender Wise Respondents**

**Table 1:** Gender Wise Respondents

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	50	86.21%
Female	8	13.79%

The table 1 depicted that the majority of the respondents (86.21%) were male and 13.79% were female. This indicated that male respondents were more than female respondents.

**Age Wise Respondents**

**Table 2:** Age Wise Respondents

<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-30	3	5.17%
31-40	32	55.17%
41-50	12	20.69%
51-60	11	18.97%

Table 2 indicated that 55.17% of respondents were from the 31-40 age group, 20.69% ranged in age from 41 to 50, with 18.97% falling between 51 to 60 and 5.17% of respondents were from the 18 to 30 age group. This showed that the majority of the respondents were early middle age group.

**Designation Wise Respondents**

**Table 3:** Designation Wise Respondents

<b>Designation</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Police Sub Inspectors (PSI)	28	48.28%
Assistant Police Sub Inspector (ASI)	30	51.72%

The table 3 showed that quite a significant portion of respondents were Police Sub Inspectors (PSI) (48.28%) and Assistant Police Sub Inspector (ASI) (51.72%).

**Challenges Faced by Police Officers**

**Access & Availability Issues**

**Table 4:** Access & Availability Issues

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Unavailability of confidential information	4	5	12	30	7
	6.90%	8.62%	20.69%	51.72%	12.07%
Limited access to existing information	4	5	21	24	4
	6.90%	8.62%	36.21%	41.38%	6.90%
Insufficient resources for information access	6	10	12	27	3
	10.34%	17.24%	20.69%	46.55%	5.17%
Missing information	3	7	17	27	4
	5.17%	12.07%	29.31%	46.55%	6.90%
Lack of support from seniors for information gathering	3	2	19	23	11
	5.17%	3.45%	32.76%	39.66%	18.97%
Inadequate communication infrastructure	5	5	15	22	11
	8.62%	8.62%	25.86%	37.93%	18.97%

**Unavailability of Confidential Information**

The majority of the respondents (51.72%) disagreed with the statement that the unavailability of confidential information is a challenge and 12.07% strongly disagree. This indicated that most of the respondents had sufficient access to confidential information. However, a small portion of respondents (6.90% and 8.62%) indicated that they strongly agree and agree that the unavailability of confidential information is a challenge. This indicated that it is still an issue.

**Limited Access to Existing Information**

The opinions of the respondents were somewhat divided. 41.38% of the respondents disagreed and 36.21% of respondents remained neutral, implying that many respondents could access existing information. However, a small portion of respondents (6.90% and 8.62%) said that there was limited access to existing information. This highlighted that there was a gap in information availability for specific cases.

**Insufficient Resources for Information Access**

The majority of the respondents (46.55%) disagree that there were insufficient resources. This indicated that respondents had adequate resources for investigation. However, 17.24% of respondents agree that there were insufficient resources. However, 29.31% of the respondents were neutral.

**Missing Information**

A large portion of respondents (46.55%) disagree that there was missing information. They were confident about the completeness of the available information. 12.07% believed that information was an issue. This suggested that some information sources could have complete information.

**Lack of Support from Seniors for Information Gathering**

The majority of the respondents 39.66% indicated that there was enough support from seniors for information gathering. 32.76% of respondents indicated that there was inconsistency in support levels and 5.17% indicated that there was a need for improvement in guidance and encouragement from seniors.

**Inadequate Communication Infrastructure**

The majority of the respondents 37.93% disagree that there was inadequate communication infrastructure whereas 8.62% of respondents indicated that there was a need for satisfactory communication infrastructure.

**Information Overload**

**Table 5:** Information Overload

Challenge	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Information is scattered, and difficult to locate	6	4	23	22	3
	10.34%	6.90%	39.66%	37.93%	5.17%
Unorganized information	5	8	18	24	3
	8.62%	13.79%	31.03%	41.38%	5.17%

**Scattered Information and Difficult to Locate**

A total 37.93% of the respondents said that there was no information scatteredness and difficulty in locating information. Whereas, the majority of the respondents (39.66%) were neutral about information scatteredness and difficulty in locating information. This indicated that scatteredness may not be an obstacle but there could be instances where locating information is challenging.

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### **Unorganized Information**

The majority of the respondents (41.38%) indicated that there was no unorganized information. 13.79% of the respondents agreed that there was unorganized information. This suggested that organization was a problem. Whereas, 31.03% of respondents indicated that organization was not a major issue but may still be an area for improvement.

### **Time Constraints and External Pressures**

**Table 6:** Time Constraints and External Pressures

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Insufficient time to search information due to too much work pressure	7	9	23	17	2
	12.07%	15.52%	39.66%	29.31%	3.45%

### **Insufficient Time to Search Information Due to too Much Work Pressure**

The majority of the respondents (39.66%) were neutral about the time constraints and external pressure. Whereas, 29.31% of the respondents disagreed that there was insufficient time to search for information due to too much work pressure. 15.52% agreed that there was work pressure which limited their time to search for information.

### **Technical Barriers**

**Table 7:** Technical Barriers

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Lack of awareness to locate appropriate and required documents	4	4	13	24	13
	6.90%	6.90%	22.41%	41.38%	22.41%
Lack of knowledge of online search strategies	2	8	13	29	6
	3.45%	13.79%	22.41%	50.00%	10.34%
Lack of technical knowledge	1	3	15	26	13
	1.72%	5.17%	25.86%	44.83%	22.41%
Lack of support from technical staff	5	6	7	30	10
	8.62%	10.34%	12.07%	51.72%	17.24%
No internet access in police stations	7	1	6	29	15
	12.07%	1.72%	10.34%	50.00%	25.86%

**Lack of Awareness to Locate Appropriate and Required Documents**

The majority of the respondents (41.38%) disagreed that there was a lack of awareness to locate appropriate and required documents. This indicated that the majority of the respondents believed that they were adequately aware of where to find necessary documents. However, 6.90% respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there was unawareness among them. They may benefit from guidance or training on document locations and categorization.

**Lack of Knowledge of Online Search Strategies**

Half of the respondents (50.00%) disagreed that there was a lack of knowledge of online search strategies. 22.41% of respondents were remained neutral which indicated that some respondents had knowledge of online search strategies but there was a need for advanced training in search techniques to improve efficiency and precision.

**Lack of Technical Knowledge**

The majority of the respondents (44.83%) disagreed that they had a lack of technical knowledge. This indicated that the majority of the respondents were somewhat technically experts. They were confident about their technical knowledge. A very small portion of respondents agreed that they lack the necessary technical knowledge.

**Lack of Support from Technical Staff**

The majority of the respondents (51.72%) disagreed with the statement that they lack support from technical staff. This indicated that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the support provided by technical staff. A very small portion of the respondents (8.62%) strongly agreed that had a lack of support from technical staff. This indicated that the support from technical staff can improve overall satisfaction.

**No Internet Access in an Office**

Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that there was no internet issue in police stations. 12.07% of respondents indicated that there was no internet in police stations, due to which they had to face technical issues. This suggested that the proper internet facility in police stations will be beneficial to ensure uninterrupted workflow.

**Strategies to Overcome Challenges**

**Table 8:** Strategies to Overcome Challenges

Strategies	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Contact the concerned authority to obtain information	12	11	28	6	1
	20.69%	18.97%	48.28%	10.34%	1.72%
Learn new technology and skills	14	8	30	5	1
	24.14%	13.79%	51.72%	8.62%	1.72%
Proper time management	12	11	30	4	1
	20.69%	18.97%	51.72%	6.90%	1.72%

### **Contact the Concerned Authority to Obtain Information**

The majority of the respondents (48.28%) remained neutral about approaching the concerned authorities to obtain information. 20.69% of respondents strongly agreed that the contact concerned authority to obtain information. This suggested that contacting higher authorities is a valued strategy for information access but it may not be the first choice for everyone due to personal preferences in other sources of information.

### **Learn New Technology and Skills**

The majority of the respondents remained neutral about learning new technological skills. This indicated that they might be sufficiently skilled but there should be openness to developing skills and adapting technology. 24.14% of respondents strongly agreed that they learned new technological skills for smooth investigation and accessing information.

### **Proper Time Management**

The majority of the respondents (51.72%) remained neutral about managing time properly. 20.69% of respondents strongly agreed that they manage their time for accessing a variety of information. This implied that there is a general understanding of time management's importance. Some of them can benefit from guidance and resources to strengthen their time management.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The overall conclusion of the study suggested that the majority of the respondents felt supported in accessing and locating information because there were adequate systems and resources in place. However, some challenges remained specifically a small group of respondents who faced problems with information organization, time constraints due to workload, the technical skills gap in technical support and the non-availability of an internet facility. The police officers recognized the value of accessing information, developing new skills and managing time effectively. The study recommended that enhanced document organization, workload management, targeted training in search and technical skills and improved infrastructure can improve the efficiency of work. The significant enhancement of information access can improve the efficiency of locating, accessing and utilizing the information they need without unnecessary obstacles.

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