CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
1.0. INTRODUCTION

Agricultural libraries in India have been playing important role in supporting the research, teaching and extension mission of the agricultural universities and institutions. They provide scientific information, support and function as the nerve centre for research and teaching activities. The agricultural libraries have served the nation since the inception of agricultural universities and institutions.

The libraries and library management are undergoing significant changes today not only in their outlook but also in functions, services, methods and techniques for collection development, processing and dissemination of information. Agricultural libraries in tune with other libraries have to keep in pace with technological development emerging in management of library resources. They should have an eye not only on catering to the requirements of the present generation by providing uptodate library services but also contemplate upon development steps/strategies for shaping the libraries for the future generation. Various factors like emergence of digital collection, electronic sources of information, library automation and networking, reorganizing of official position etc. have posed challenges before the agricultural library professionals to keep pace with the complexities of present requirements.

The agricultural libraries have been little slow in adopting the new technologies due to lack of funds, staff training, motivation etc. There is need for the library professionals to look at agricultural library resource development in wider perspective to
cope with the changing role of library services. There is also a need to adopt the various tools and techniques of Information Technology, Communication Technology, and Library Networking etc. to make library and information services user centred and relevant to the parent organization.

Information needs refers to the individual information needs of users, which have to be fulfilled by library and information centre. The study of information needs of users has assumed importance in the recent years either at a particular information system level or at discipline level or by a specified group of users. This concept made the investigator to study the information gathering habits of specialized group of users attached to an institution.

1.1. SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The scope of the present study is to evaluate and examine the various components of the agricultural college libraries in Andhra Pradesh viz., limited to acquisition, technical processing, storage and services, circulation, e-resources, online services reference and information services for its effective utilization.

To draw and design a comprehensive system for information system and sub-system of the agricultural college libraries located in Andhra Pradesh.
1.2. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Progress of modern society depends, a great deal, upon the provision of the right kind of information in the right form at the right time. As information is valuable, it must be put to proper use. In order to serve the users efficiently and effectively, one must ascertain the needs of users in terms of information requirements.

Special libraries have been recognized to be the information disseminators of scientific and technological development. The functions of the special library are to select, evaluate, organize, and disseminate specialized information as soon as they are available. In a special library, the needs of the users vary according to the nature and levels of specialization. Systematically ascertaining the needs of the users is therefore a key element. Therefore understanding the information needs as well as use pattern and making available the information to the users appropriately are very essential.

In the recent years the impact of information technology has influenced the nature of collection building information services provision and has had an overall impact in the library setup. Similarly the information needs of the users is also changing from time to time with the introduction of IT; in the library and information centres.

Librarians are becoming increasingly aware of the needs of the users as a means of making more informed decisions about library services. Such studies seem more relevant when precious library budgets have to be stretched as far as they could be. User
studies have now been well accepted and are performed by various methods. There is considerable accumulation of literature in user studies and more and more is being generated.

Agricultural information services are the keys to the development of agricultural education, research and extension education in India. The information services are rendered from various sources to the students, academic staff, researchers, scientists, industrialists, cultivators and other grass root users by the university and ICAR institute libraries in India. The main aim and object of agricultural libraries is to collect, process and disseminate the much needed information to the various types of users to fulfill the aims and object of the institutions. Agricultural information services are the keys to the development of agricultural education, research and extension education in India. The information services are rendered from various sources to the students, academic staff, researchers, scientists, industrialists, cultivators and other grass root users by the university and ICAR institute libraries in India. The main aim and object of agricultural libraries is to collect, process and disseminate the much needed information to the various types of users to fulfill the aims and object of the institutions.

Agricultural Universities are giving significance to the provision of library services. Correspondingly, there seems to be an increasing trend in the use of information services by; its clientele. It is the user behavior or information use pattern that shapes the nature and mode of services being provided. A change in the information gathering habits of users will certainly bring a corresponding change in the related nature of services to be provided.
In the present study information needs or information use pattern or information gathering habits are grouped either under institution wise or discipline wise. The study proposed in this dissertation reflects the first mentioned category. It is further emphasized that an attempt has been made to study the information needs of undergraduates of the Agricultural Colleges in Andhra Pradesh as seen in the review of literature. Therefore it was thought appropriate to venture this topic.

Information is the vital resource for the success of any profession, trade or industry. Recent past has witnessed the proliferation of information in almost all disciplines of the universe of knowledge and the situation continues to exist even today. Access to information is necessary for identifying problems as well as for solving problems. Along with the tremendous production of data, multiplicity of information sources flooding the market created a situation where in the professionals and subject specialists were not able to cope with the increase of information. This information explosion has prompted the information managers to find ways and means of storing, retrieving and disseminating information in specialized subject fields. This has resulted in the developments in information technologies like — computer technology, mass storage, data communications etc, which had world wide impact on the communication of information. Michael Gordon (1979) enunciated the definition of information technology as adopted by UNESCO which deserves special mention in this context.
"The scientific, technological and engineering disciplines and the management techniques used in information handling and processing, their application, computers and their interaction with men and machines and associated social, economic and cultural matters".

As a result of rapid developments in information technology the libraries moved from their traditional concept of “storehouses of knowledge” to adopt the new technologies as a means of capturing, storing and retrieving information.

Libraries having started to use computers for printing and generating cataloguer cards, as early as 1960s, succeeded in automating almost all library operations like acquisitions, circulations, reference and on-line retrieval of information in the last two decades. The libraries in advanced countries now began to use the new information delivery systems like teletex, videotext, telefascimile, storage technologies like CD-ROM, networking systems and the exports systems. Several information databases are now available online. It is estimated that currently more than 3,000 databases are available for on-line searching. The several search systems provide on-line access to several international databases like MEDLARS, AGRIS, INSPEC, BIOSIS etc.

The planning and implementation of information systems not only need sound knowledge of latest technologies, but also must be oriented to the people who are going to be ultimate beneficiaries.
Many user surveys appeared in the field of science and technology as well as in social science disciplines. But the literature reported very few studies on the information needs of the technical profession. The present study therefore is an effort in this direction.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the types of information needs and to find out the information needs of the Agricultural College Students.

2. To survey the existing information sources available in the Agricultural College Students.

3. To examine the awareness of e-Resources and Online Services of Agricultural Students.

4. To find out the extent of the services rendered by the Agricultural College Libraries.

5. To identify the information requirements of the Agricultural College Students.

1.4. FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are formulated.

1. The existing information sources in various agricultural college libraries in Andhra Pradesh are not adequate to meet the requirements of the users.

2. The services rendered by agricultural college libraries in Andhra Pradesh are satisfactory.

3. Users are aware of the various services rendered by agricultural college libraries in Andhra Pradesh.

4. The information resources and online services available at agricultural college libraries are satisfactory.
1.5. LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to six agricultural college libraries of Andhra Pradesh. The present study is intended to study the agricultural resources and services of Agricultural College Libraries of Andhra Pradesh by collecting the opinions of the users. The users of the library consist of B.Sc. (Ag.), M.Sc. (Ag.), Ph.D. students, Teaching staff and Non-Teaching staff. The present study is limited to make the survey of the Undergraduate students of Agriculture only. This is due to the constraints of time and cost involved. Hence in this study the term “Users” denotes Undergraduate students of Agriculture of Andhra Pradesh.

1.6. METHODOLOGY

1.6.1. Sampling Technique

The study needs data collection from two groups of population. The first group is the LIS professional librarians of agricultural libraries in Andhra Pradesh and the second group consists of agricultural college students of Andhra Pradesh. First group consists of 6 libraries attached to agricultural colleges. The factual data required for the study was collected through questionnaire from 6 college libraries. Thus the study on the libraries has become a complete enumeration (Census method).
The primary data was collected from the sample users of the library through questionnaires. The investigator distributed 850 questionnaires to the population of the agricultural colleges in Andhra Pradesh. It is roughly about 40% of the population surveyed. 660 (76.65%) of the population in this study responded to our questionnaire, which is sufficiently fair percentage to deduce the inference for this study.

The secondary data was collected from various books, periodicals, hand books and records available in the Agricultural Colleges and ANGRAU College Libraries.

1.6.2. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to streamline the questionnaire. For this limited sample of population was given questionnaire. The collected questionnaires were analyzed. The defects such as terminology and subject etc., were rectified and finally questionnaire free from ambiguity was prepared for distribution.

1.7. DATA ANALYSIS

The primary data collected through structured questionnaire was analyzed by using suitable statistical techniques like Chi-Square test, ANOVA, dendograms, and other techniques. Apart from these bar diagrams, pie charts and other graphical representations were also employed for easy understanding and self explanation.
Table 1.1
COLLEGEWISE DISTRIBUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the College (Abbreviations)</th>
<th>Total No. of UG students</th>
<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>Total No. of UG students</th>
<th>Distributed</th>
<th>Received</th>
<th>Percentage of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Agricultural College, Hyderabad (AGCH)</td>
<td>475</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>71.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>S.V. Agricultural College, Tirupati (AGCT)</td>
<td>227</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>155</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>67.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Agricultural College, Bapatla (AGCB)</td>
<td>475</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>76.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Agricultural College, Naira (AGCN)</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>80.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Agricultural College, Aswaraopet (AGCA)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>89.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Agricultural College, Mahanandi (AGCM)</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>85.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>850</strong></td>
<td><strong>660</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>77.65</strong></td>
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Data was collected from 660 students from the above colleges.

1.8. CONSPECTUS

Keeping the objectives in view, the entire work is divided into the six chapters.

The first chapter deals with the introduction, objectives of the study, need for the study, methodology, limitations, formation of hypotheses and concepts.

The second chapter is devoted for review of literature. It includes review of the past studies conducted by various persons.

The third chapter presents an overview of agricultural education and research in India.
The fourth chapter sketches a brief account of the agricultural libraries in India in general and Agricultural College Libraries in Andhra Pradesh in particular and the analysis of the data obtained through questionnaires regarding sources, services and facilities available in Agricultural College Libraries in Andhra Pradesh.

The fifth chapter is data analysis, the data collected through questionnaire from various colleges. More critical account is given to information needs of agricultural students and the awareness of the agricultural information sources and services.

The findings and suggestions have been presented in the last and final chapter, followed by selected bibliography and appendices.

REFERENCES


