METHODOLOGY

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CHAPTER IV

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4.0 Introduction

The present study has been undertaken to assess human relations among library staff and the perceptions of library users in the major University libraries of Kerala State namely Calicut University Library, Cochin University of Science And Technology Library, Kerala University Library and Mahatma Gandhi University Library. This chapter presents the variables of the study, sample used for the study, sources of data, tools used for the study, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques.

4.1 Variables of the study

The present study takes two types of variables into consideration: study variables and classificatory variables. The study variables have been chalked out after making extensive literature review and consultation with experts in the fields of Psychology, Management, Human Resource Management and Library & Information Science.

The study variables used in the study to assess the human relations existing among the library staff are: working conditions, work groups, rewards, management policies and administration, satisfaction with the nature of work, leadership, communication and supervision. The classificatory variables used are university, designation, experience of service and gender. The classificatory variable ‘designation’ is divided into two: superior and subordinate for the purpose of analysis in which subordinate staff includes staff members below the rank of Assistant Librarian.

In order to assess the perception of the users with regard to the functioning of university libraries, the study variables used are library collection, arrangement of collection, library physical facilities, library services, user-staff interaction and satisfaction. The following are the
classification variables used to ascertain the user perception: university, status, experience as library user and gender

4.2 Sample used for the study

As the present study is intended to analyse the human relations among the library staff, and perception of the users with regard to functioning of university libraries, the staff and users of the major university libraries have been taken as units of study. The major university libraries taken up for the study are Calicut University Library, Cochin University of Science And Technology Library, Kerala University Library and Mahatma Gandhi University Library. All along the report the university libraries are referred to as part of their parent organisation, that is, the university. Even though the Calicut University Library was renamed as C H Mohammed Koya Library, the present study uses the names of the universities to which they are attached for want of uniformity. It is practically infeasible to do a complete enumeration of the population. The process of sampling helps to make generalisations on the basis of application of variables on a representative sample of the population. The library staff who work in the central library of the universities have been taken as the sample. The staff in the department libraries and study centres of the University has been excluded owing to the fact that their superior will not be a library professional. Moreover the department libraries mostly have only a single professional whereby communication and other aspects between the professional and others cannot be assessed. The sample of library staff consisted of 120 staff members. Questionnaires to the library staff were personally handed over to them. The following are the details of questionnaires distributed and returned: In Calicut University Library, out of the 26 questionnaires which were distributed, 24 of them were received back. One questionnaire was incomplete and hence the number of questionnaires complete in all respects were 23. In Cochin
University of Science And Technology Library, out of the 22 professionals, questionnaires received back are 20. In Kerala University Library, within the 49 professionals, 33 questionnaires were returned and in Mahatma Gandhi University Library, 15 out of the 23 questionnaires were returned. Repeated efforts were taken to get the filled questionnaires back from the respondents. A total of 91 questionnaires were received from the sample of library staff.

The perception of the library users with regard to the functioning of university libraries was assessed from the population of library users of the four major university libraries in Kerala State. They are the target group about which inferences have to be made. It is physically impossible to completely enumerate the users of the university library. As the population consists of different types of users with different characteristics, a representative part of the population has been selected for the study. A pilot study was conducted and based on the nature of the responses the irrelevant statements were avoided and the size of the sample was fixed to be 100 library users each from the four major University Libraries. Questionnaires to the library users were personally handed over to them. More than 100 questionnaires each were distributed to the users of Calicut University Library, Cochin University of Science And Technology Library, Kerala University Library and Mahatma Gandhi University Libraries and 100, 82, 93, 94 questionnaires respectively were received back. The sample consisted of 400 library users. Sampling was carried out on the basis of simple random sampling wherein students, teachers, research scholars and non-teaching staff members of University have been taken into consideration as users. Data were collected from these user groups as they form the core group among the users in a university library. The final sample of library users consisted of 369 users.
The sample of University Librarians consisted of the university librarians of the four major University libraries selected for the study.

4.3 Sources of Data

The data necessary for carrying out the present study were collected from primary sources and secondary sources. Primary data are first-hand information collected by the researcher from their original sources. It is collected through various methods such as observation, interviewing and mailing. Primary data was collected from the staff members and users of University libraries by making use of two separate questionnaires. Data was collected from the University Librarians with the help of a structured interview schedule.

Secondary data are data which are readily available in some form. The secondary sources consist of readily available compendia and already compiled statistical statements and reports whose data may be used by researchers for their studies. Secondary data was collected from the Annual reports, Census reports, articles published in periodicals and official websites.

4.4 Tools used for the study

Methods of data gathering involves the use of appropriate recording forms. They are called tools or instruments of data collection. The present study used questionnaires and interview schedule for collecting the data. The tools were prepared after extensive literature survey and consultation with experts. A five-point Likert scale each was prepared for collecting data from the university library staff on human relations, and university library users on their perception of the functioning of university libraries. Measure of organizational climate prepared by Costley and others (1994) is taken as the base for the preparation of the questionnaire for university library staff. The questionnaire for university library users was prepared in such a way that if
users entered a library, their perception regarding the attributes which constituted the proper functioning of university libraries were taken into account. Data was collected from the university librarians of the four major university libraries with the help of a structured interview schedule. Two questionnaires were prepared for the collection of data for the present study: 1. Questionnaire for library staff and 2. Questionnaire for library users.

4.4.1 Questionnaire for library staff

The questionnaire is divided into two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A requires the respondents to fill in their personal details like institution, designation, age, gender, number of years of service, educational qualification comprising academic qualification and professional qualification and computer literacy. Part B consists of statements, which describe the concepts, or ideas, which come under study variables taken up for the study. The following are the eight study variables which are used to measure human relations of library staff in University libraries: Working conditions, Work groups, Rewards, Management policies and administration, Satisfaction with the nature of work, Leadership, Communication and Supervision.

4.4.1.1 Working conditions

The environment in which the library staff works is termed as working conditions. This aspect has considerable influence on the personnel. The level of orientation he receives from the institution paves the way for his future work. The library staff were asked to record their responses towards the concepts, which came under the variable working conditions. A total of 9 statements pertaining to physical conditions and orientation were presented. Out of the 9 statements, 6 of them are positive statements and 3 of them are negative statements.
4.4.1.2 Work groups

The concept work groups consists of cooperation and job performance. The employee achieves job objectives through the performance of the job. The performance of the employee largely depends upon the cooperation received from colleagues and superiors. The study variable work groups was presented before the respondents in the form of 4 statements which pertains to areas like cooperation and job performance. Out of the 4 statements, two each are positive and negative statements.

4.4.1.3 Rewards

As far as employees are concerned, rewards are motivational factors. People work more productively in an independent manner than working interdependently to receive rewards, which promote highly individualistic motivation. Statements which best described the concepts under the variable rewards numbered 8. The aspects related with benefits were used for preparing the statements. Out of the statements 5 of them are positive and 3 of them are negative.

4.4.1.4 Management policies and administration

The attitude of the management influences the behaviour of the employee. Its policies and administration depends a lot on the pattern in which they establish policies. The administration should be such that the employees should not feel it but it should be there for the development of the staff. The respondents were made to record their responses to the aspects like communication of information, fairness of policies and administration, advancements and promotion which came under the variable management policies and administration in the form of 8 statements of which 4 statements each are positive and negative.
4.4.1.5 Satisfaction with the nature of work

The employees need to have satisfaction with the nature of work. This aspect could be found in various forms. The employees should have the freedom to take decisions when it is required and future ratification of the same need to be there. Ample opportunities have to be there for personal and professional growth and the staff members should be responsible for the work done by them. Interest should be inculcated with regard to the work carried out by the staff. There are 13 statements, which described the different aspects like freedom, growth, responsibility, achievement, influence and interest, which came under the concept satisfaction with the nature of work. The statements required responses to 9 positive statements and 4 negative statements.

4.4.1.6 Leadership

Leadership is the attitude towards the development of the institution. It consists of conceiving a vision for the organization. The important part of this aspect is to energise the staff members to offer maximum productivity to achieve the goals of the institution. Leadership is vital as it has such a powerful influence on the individual and group behaviour. It required the respondents to assess the concept leadership and delegation of power in the form of 15 statements of which 12 are positive and 3 are negative.

4.4.1.7 Communication

Communication is a demanding skill of understanding and being understood in ways that improve, rather than inhibit, interaction between people. An understanding of some of the basic processes, difficulties, and techniques of communication is a necessary ingredient for successful organizational life. Effective managers recognize that the way they communicate is a key to the performance of their employees. The concept of
communication and the aspect of interpersonal communication were presented in 8 statements of which 5 are positive and 3 are negative. The respondents had to indicate their assessment regarding the same.

4.4.1.8 Supervision

The supervisory function is more than a stepping stone upward—it has a key role in human relations. The supervisors are the mirrors of the management in which employee-relations will have its image. The concept of supervision has 15 statements consisting of the aspects communication, trust, job competence, consideration and recognition of which 10 statements are positive and 5 are negative.

4.4.2 Questionnaire for library users

The questionnaire is divided into two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A requires the respondents to fill in their personal details like institution, age, gender, status, qualification, faculty, experience as a library user, frequency of visit to the library, hours spent in the library in a week, purpose of visit, use of library and use of other library. Part B consists of statements that describe the concepts or ideas, which come under study variables taken up for the study. The following are the six study variables, which are used to assess the perception of the library users regarding the functioning of University libraries: Library collection, Arrangement of collection, Library Physical Facilities, Library Services, User-staff interaction and Satisfaction.

4.4.2.1 Library collection

Library collection refers to the types of materials which are part of the stock. This variable includes the different routine works which are carried out while procuring materials to a library. There are six statements which consist of various aspects related to library collection like adequacy,
procurement, quality and different types of information sources of which 2 statements are negative and the remaining 4 are positive.

4.4.2.2 Arrangement of collection

The arrangement of collection in a library comprises concepts like classification scheme, helpfulness of card catalogue and computerized catalogues, display of new books, arrangement of different types of books, indexing of periodicals, location of books and shelf arrangement. These aspects are presented in the form of 11 statements of which 6 of them are positive and 5 of them are negative.

4.4.2.3 Library physical facilities

The library users had to respond to the aspects related to library physical facilities like convenience of location, convenience of working hours, physical maintenance of reading materials, adequacy of seating arrangement, lighting and ventilation arrangement, provision of drinking water and toilet facilities, atmosphere for serious reading and need for cabins for serious reading. The above aspects are presented in 10 statements in which 5 statements each are negative and positive.

4.4.2.4 Library services

Library services reflect the image of the library before the public. There are different types of services, which are provided by the libraries to their users on demand and in anticipation. Statements pertaining to library services numbered 5. The adequacy of loan period, collection of fine, number of borrower’s tickets, reservation and renewal facilities were to be assessed by the users. Among the 5 statements, 2 statements are negative and the remaining 3 are positive. Apart from these the library facilities/services numbering 16 are presented to the library users. They were asked to distribute
100 points to the library services offered by University libraries according to their relative importance.

4.4.2.5 User-staff interaction

The interaction of library users and staff will have to be cordial. The interaction will result in the satisfaction of the information need of the library user. In the mean time the passive users could be turned into active users. There are 14 statements which described the different aspects like cordial nature, co-operation, helpfulness, nature of interaction, provision of service, essential aspect found in staff, factors affecting library use, skills of staff which came under the concept user-staff interaction. The statements required responses to 10 positive statements and 4 negative statements

4.4.2.6 Satisfaction

The satisfaction of the users is of paramount importance as they are the mainstay of a library. The concept of satisfaction had 9 statements consisting of the aspects general environment of the library, working of circulation section, periodical section, maintenance section, reference section, documentation section, internet section, overall facilities and status of the library. The users are asked to record their responses towards the aspect in question.

4.4.3 Interview Schedule for University Librarians

The interview schedule for University Librarians consisted of questions related to the management of university library.

4.4.4 Mode of answering

The two questionnaires are prepared in such a way that the respondents had to indicate their responses to each of the statements by putting a tick mark to Strongly Agree(SA), Agree(A), Neither Agree nor Agree(N), Disagree(D)
and Strongly Disagree (SD). Copies each of the questionnaire and interview schedule is provided in the appendices.

4.5 Scoring pattern

The questionnaires contain positive as well as negative statements. The scoring is done by giving weights to the responses given by the respondents. Five alternatives are given to the respondents for indicating their perception regarding the aspect in question in both the questionnaires. They are Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither Agree nor Disagree (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The scores allotted to the responses for positive statements are 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Negative statements are allotted 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

4.6 Data collection procedure

The investigator personally visited the four university libraries taken up for the study and distributed the questionnaires among the library staff and library users after seeking prior permission from the concerned librarian. Data was collected from the university librarians by making the use of a structured interview schedule.

4.7 Data analysis techniques

The data collected by means of questionnaire was tabulated in sheets. The data was statistically analyzed by means of software packages. Arithmetic mean, Standard deviation, Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Factor analysis have been carried out to analyse the collected data. In order to address the varied and complex needs of the user community and to satisfy the library staff, libraries have to gear themselves to face the challenges. It is in this context that application of inferential statistics in a library becomes relevant through studies among the library staff and library users.
Arithmetic mean helps to represent all the measurement made on a group. It gives a concise description of the whole by indicating the central value of a distribution. In order to describe the distribution, a measure of the spread of the actual score is required. The extent of the spread may vary from distribution to distribution. The extent of variability could be assessed by Standard Deviation. The present study has used Analysis of Variance as it is used for comparison and regression in the study of relationships, prediction and model building. ANOVA is best suited for studying user behaviour as different variables can affect user behaviour and changes in the variables could lead to changes in the behaviour of the users\(^2\) (Amba 125). Arithmetic mean, Standard Deviation and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were carried out by making use of the software package ‘Statistical Package for Social Sciences’ (SPSS).

The level of staff perception regarding human relations and the perception of the library users regarding the functioning of libraries has been rated by making use of a grading table wherein perception upto 1/3 of the aggregate mean score has been rated as poor, 1/3-2/3 as average and above 2/3 as good. The significance of variation in perception of the staff based on the classificatory variables is tested by using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The F-Ratio indicates the significance of the difference.

Factor analysis is an extremely powerful and useful analytic approach to psychological, behavioural, financial and other types of data. It is a statistical technique, which is used to determine the underlying factors or forces among a large number of interdependent variables or measures. Factor analysis was carried out with the help of the software package ‘Statistica’.
References


