ABSTRACT

In the 21st century librarianship, value added services and satisfaction of the library users are key words for any library. As such, it is necessary to assess library services from users’ perspective. The basic purpose of assessing services of the library is to improve services and satisfy library users. Libraries are the service providing institutions. Therefore the quality of service delivery is the most important factor among all library operations. The foremost belief of the quality management is that the customer decides the quality of product or service. Therefore it is necessary to understand the expectations of library users. For the librarians the expectations of the users serves as a guideline for the integrated library development, planning of library services, and enriching of existing collection. As such, knowledge about the expectations of the library users has become significant for library. The expectations of the users depend on the type of the library, nature of the work of users, purpose and the objectives of the institution.

ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING INSTITUTE (ATI) LIBRARIES

Training is an important activity in every field. The corporate world, public sector units and the government organizations have recognized importance of training for enhanced performance and efficiency. These organizations have set up training units or institutions as essential part of their strategic planning of Human Resources Development.

After independence, all state governments have set up administrative training institutions to augment the knowledge, skill and attitude of the employees to perform their assigned job more competently and effectively. State governments have invested huge amounts by providing infrastructure facilities like well equipped classrooms, hostel, boarding, furniture, electronic equipment, libraries and recreational facilities etc. to these training institutes. Among these facilities the library facility is the most important facility as it creates the academic environment essential for the institute.
The purpose of library in the training institutes is unique. Libraries of the training institutes serve the trainee participants and the trainers with essential academic inputs. Trainers and trainee participants have unique informational, recreational needs. As such, the nature of services, the collection and the usage pattern differs from that of other public, research, academic or special libraries. Here the faculty members, the trainers and the trainee participants are the users of ATI libraries.

During the training programme the faculty members are expected to provide latest and updated information, best practices and innovative ideas in administration as training input. The faculty members look forward to ATI libraries as reliable source for such information and document. To meet such demands of the faculty members’ the librarian need to know the expectations of the faculty members from the ATI library.

**NEED OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The new generation of officers in the government sector are highly qualified and techno friendly. The job profile of such officers also demand updated knowledge, data sources and references for keeping them abreast of new developments in the field of their interest. Therefore, they not only expect value added library services and comprehensive collection but also knowledgeable and helpful library staff in the ATI libraries. In the networked environment, it is also expected that librarians must also be an information navigator and guide the user to the proper resources for the effective library use. To cope up with the expectations of the users, the librarians have to change their traditional role, modified suitably according to the expectations of the users. To understand such expectations, which are not explicitly told, but reflected, in the behaviour of the library users, an urgent need was felt to undertake study of user expectations.

Users of all libraries expect some minimum service level from the libraries. What are these minimum service level standards? Do the services and facilities provided by the library meet the expectations of the users? Are the services and the facilities in the library
fulfilling the need of the users? Why library services not utilized optimally? Is there a gap between the actual service provided by the library and the library users’ expectation? The researcher found need to ask such questions very relevant for the proper use of the library. The researcher attempted to search the answers for these questions and to know the expectations of the library users of the ATI libraries through the present research.

The information needs of the ATI faculty members depend on the theme and contents of the training. Similarly, the trainer is expected to consult various information sources and references to develop the training modules and the reading materials for training programmes. During the training programmes the faculty members may need some library help, which is not expressed through regular communication channels. Therefore, it was felt necessary to establish a formal channel to record the unexpressed expectations of the library users through the present study.

The libraries of ATIs are at different stages of development. The purpose of this study was to study the expectations of the faculty members of ATIs from the libraries. Based on such expectations, it will be possible to develop a model for development of ATI libraries. To fulfill the above, therefore, the study of library users’ expectations was undertaken.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To study the libraries of the Administrative Training Institutes in India with reference to infrastructure, human resources, financial resources, IT facilities and services
- To understand the development of service quality concept in LIS sector
- To develop criteria for assessing service quality of ATI libraries
- To rank the attributes of service quality according to the ATI library users
- To develop a service quality audit scale for assessing service quality of ATI libraries
To frame a model for development of ATI libraries on the basis of the users’ expectations

**Research Methodology**

The study was focused on ATI libraries and its users. The 29 state ATI libraries located in every state were selected for the study. The researcher aimed at understanding the facilities, services, collection, resources, management of libraries, computerization and the types of users of the ATI libraries. In order to collect information, a questionnaire was distributed to the librarians of ATI libraries and information was collected.

To know the user expectations from the concerned ATI library a questionnaire was designed and distributed to a total 307 faculty members of all various ATIs. The attributes for the service quality were identified and questions / statements were made (on the basis of Hernon and Altman Model) to elicit the responses of faculty members. The attributes of library service quality were categorized into five groups which contain statements – Resources, Staff, Services, Guidance and Environment (as shown in Table 1 below). The researcher has attempted to find out the library service quality expectations of the faculty members based on these five attributes.

The response to the questionnaire from the faculty members was received i.e. 68.4% (210 faculty members).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Service Quality Attribute</th>
<th>No of statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scope of the Study**
The scope of this study is limited to the libraries of the Administrative Training Institutes in India. The researcher has sought the expectations about the service quality of the libraries from the faculty members engaged in training activities as library users of all 29 state ATIs. The state ATIs covered in the study are:

Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarath, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamilnadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal.

LIMITATIONS
The present study is limited to the survey of libraries and library service quality expectations of faculty members attached to all State Administrative Training Institutes in India. The regional training centers and the small libraries attached to it are not covered in this study as these centers are very small and do not provide much library services. The study does not cover the libraries of other training institutes located in various states belonging to various government departments like Agriculture, Revenue, Cooperation, Income Tax, etc. Similarly, the national training institute, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie is not covered in this study.

For the response on expectations about library service quality the population was the faculty members from all state ATIs. Other library users like course participants, students, staff and administrative officers were not selected for the response on questionnaire.

FINDINGS
It is observed that the majority 75% (157) of the ATI faculty members give first priority to the physical ‘Environment’ aspect of the library service quality. The ‘environment’ includes tangible elements of service quality like availability of computers, OPAC terminals, cleanliness, adequate light, proper ventilation, functional furniture, suitable library hours, library software and place for reading. The importance given by the faculty members indicate that the physical environment where the service is delivered in the library is very important and plays a vital role in the entire ATI. The faculty members
expect that the library should give priority to improving infrastructure, cleanliness, and comforts in the library. The library of ATI is necessarily a place where senior officers and trainee officers would like to sit, read study and get the feel of an academic environment. The purpose of training is to refresh mind of the trainee. Keeping this purpose of library in ATI, the environment of the library is expected to be elegant and welcoming. In short, its ambiance is very important.

The second in priority given by 59.5% (125) faculty members of ATIs is to the ‘Services’. The document lending, reference service, referral service, current awareness service, newspaper clippings are some of the important services. The users also expect that the record of holdings of any member should be accurate. The catalogue should be up-to-date. It should be a reliable source of holdings of the library. The services should be consistent and as per the requirement of the users. Proper and timely shelving of documents is the most important for open access libraries because users expect to find documents in proper place when they search for it. The responses given by the staff should be accurate and in time.

The third in the rank is the ‘Resources’ dimension of the service quality. The resources in the library are a comprehensive collection of documents. In-depth collection in any particular subject, un-interpreted series of journals, range of collection of CDs, newspapers of local, national and international coverage, and variety of latest journals are expected in the comprehensive collection. There is a need to update the collection regularly. Some budgetary issues are also important. The tight budget position reflects on the purchase of documents in any library. Therefore judicious selection of documents is necessary.

The library service quality dimension, ‘Staff’, is ranked fourth by the faculty members of ATIs. The employees are the most important factor affecting on the service quality. The attitude, behavior, etiquettes, decorum and dress code of the staff is also important. The faculty members of ATIs gave fourth importance to the staff. As the staff are known to the faculty members for considerable period of time.
‘Guidance’ is the fifth service quality dimension. It includes proper signage, help, display of rules, location map, help menu for OPAC, user orientation programmes, information literacy are main apprehension covered under guidance. Since most of the faculty members are well acquainted with the ATI library workings, collection and services, guidance for the library operations is ranked fifth in the order.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the observations following are few recommendations made by the researcher:

**Repository of Government Publications**
Officers from various government departments visit ATI for different type of training programmes. The libraries of ATIs are expected to support the training programmes by facilitating various statistical information sources, committee reports, annual reports, performance evaluation reports, etc, as inputs for training programmes conducted in the Institute. Therefore it should be made mandatory for all the government departments to send all their publications to the concerned State ATI library for preservation and dissemination. Since the ATIs are located in important cities of the states, public access to these documents are easily be possible. The access to all government publications would also be relevant important from the point of view of ‘Right to Information Act 2005’ also.

**National Training Resources Database (NTRD)**
The core activity of ATIs is to impart training. Various faculty members from different ATIs are engaged in developing training modules, documenting best practices in administration, case studies, action research projects, etc. As a result, lot of documents are generated that may be useful to many. Similarly, libraries of ATIs possess documents on various aspects of training and other related subjects. In the present age of globalization and economic crunch, ATI libraries should share their resources for better information access, should avoid duplication and should provide various services to the faculty members. The union catalogue of training modules, reading materials, best practices in administration could be very useful. The websites of the ATIs could be used more dynamically for this purpose. ATI libraries would therefore function as NTRDs.
Association of ATI Librarians

Association is a ‘group of persons who have joined a formal organization devoted to pursuing a common interest or purpose.’ All professionals working in similar fields form their association to discuss and solve problems common to all. The ATI librarians also serve specific user community, handle specific collections and offer special services. Therefore, it is recommended that all library professionals working in ATIs should come together and form associations of ATI librarians.

Model for ATI Libraries Development

The present study revealed that libraries of ATIs are at various stages of development. They need a strategic planning for overall development of infrastructure, human resources, collection, services, computer hardware and software etc. It is accepted that the developing the ATI library is entirely the responsibility of ATI management. The development of library has many facets like policy formulation, staff training, resources mobilization and augmentation of infrastructure. Taking these interdependent and crucial factors a comprehensive development model for ATI library is strongly recommended.

Service Quality Audit Scale for ATI Libraries

It is said that ‘what is measured can only be improved’. Therefore, to measure the service quality of ATI libraries, a scale has been developed and recommended for use. The ATI libraries can assess the service quality of their library with the help of the scale and accordingly decide the strategy for further development.

CONCLUSION

Today, service quality is one of the most important factors in any business as well as in all service sectors. Quality is measured from customers’ point of view because customers are the ‘greatest asset’ for any organization. To assess quality of the present services vis-à-vis service quality expectations of users, it is very important to prepare the overall library development plan.

According to the majority of the ATI faculty members the ‘Environment’ is the most important service quality dimension. This implies that the librarians and institutions have to concentrate on the improvement of the infrastructure and physical facilities in the
library on top priority. Environment issues like purchase of suitable software, proper use and maintenance of IT gadgets, proper ventilation, cleanliness, require special attention from library managers.

In the study, it has been observed that first basic concern for the environment has to be fulfilled. Next is the ‘Services’ provided by the library, the third is the ‘Resources’ followed by ‘Staff’ and the last is the ‘Guidance’. The hierarchy of the service quality dimensions that emerge from the study indicates that the sequence of service quality dimension goes from concrete things to the abstract. State specific preferences are different as local priorities are also different.

The library development plan prepared for the ATI libraries has taken user expectations as the base. It ensures the optimum use of the library resources and user based services. For ATIs, which are still developing their services and infrastructure, the model would serve as a guideline for further development. The preparation and implementation of service quality development plan by each ATI library would be important as a step further towards quality of library services. Similarly, Service Quality Audit Scale would help the librarians, as a self assessment tool and the librarians of ATIs would be able to judge their libraries on this scale.

Finally, it is not sufficient merely to know the expectations of library users. Thus knowledge must be translated into service quality delivery plan and implementation so as to satisfy library users.