Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The grey literature has a great significance in supporting on going initiatives aimed at improving standards in developing nations. It provides citizens with the information they require to make decisions about their lives and the societies they live in. It covers nearly every aspect of science and technology and provides readers with research summaries, facts, statistics and the information contained in it is usually valuable and unique. The greatest challenge involved with these items is the process of identification. Since there is limited indexing and acquisition, availability is usually marred with uncertainty. Absence of editorial control, raising questions about authenticity and reliability are the other constraints. Despite these considerations, grey literature is continually referenced in scholarly articles and therefore remains an issue that librarians must contend with. There is a need for specialized bibliographic instruments to facilitate the identification and retrieval of grey literature. Grey literature is being produced at an exponential rate; its rate of growth is therefore, more than that of conventional white literature.

The importance of grey literature is becoming increasingly recognized in many organizations. It encapsulates the knowledge and know-how and thus is a vital business asset. It has similar importance in quality of life aspects – like healthcare, environment and culture. Grey literature in any academic environment represents the cutting edge of knowledge and so its management is of utmost importance. Grey literature is an important source of information; it is produced by researchers and practitioners in the field. It can often be produced more quickly, have greater flexibility and be more detailed than other types of literature. Grey literature serves scholars and lay readers alike with facts, statistics and other data that offer more comprehensive view of the topic of interest in the future. Gray literature will be even more important in a world in
which free trade and instantaneous communication have been eliminated by many of the barriers to information flow.

1.2 Grey Literature: Concepts and Definitions

Grey literature means, that which is not usually available through normal book selling channels and therefore, difficult to identify and obtain. Examples of grey literature include reports, theses, dissertations, technical notes, specifications, conference proceedings, patents, trade literature, and supplementary publications and so on. The term “Grey” in the professional environment is “unconventional” “informal” “informally published” “fugitive” and even “invisible”. There are number of well-known definitions of grey literature. Auger (1998, p.3) includes in the purview reports, technical notes and specifications, theses and dissertations, trade literature, preprints etc. In his definition all of which are characterized by:

- Poor bibliographic control and information
- Low print runs and a non-professional layout and format
- They are difficult to obtain, as they are not available through normal book selling channels.

Another popular definition is known as “Luxembourg Convention of Grey Literature”, named after the location of the 3rd International Conference on Grey Literature. It states that Grey Literature is produced at all levels of government, academia, business and industry, in print and electronic formats and is not controlled by commercial publishers. (Grey Net, 1999).

The Most elaborate definition is from the Inter-Agency Grey Literature Working Group (IGLWG 1995). According to this definition, Grey literature is foreign or domestic open source material that is usually available through specialized channels and may not enter normal publishing channels or systems of publication, distribution, bibliographic control or acquisition by book sellers or subscription agents (IGLWG-1995, cited by Sonle and Ryan, 1995).
Thus, the term Grey Literature includes government publications, theses and dissertations, proceedings of conferences, seminars, workshops, trade literature and such other industry publications prepared for in-house use by various corporations, laboratories, schools and institutions.

The present study is intended to cover the organization of grey literature and its use pattern in the recognized research centres of VTU. Further, study focuses on the six categories of grey literature: theses, dissertations, institutional publications, trade literature, technical reports and proceedings of conferences, seminars and workshops. They are explained in brief here below.

**Theses**

Researchers and scholars in the academic institutions and universities take up research programmes and finally come out with the research reports/theses for the award of doctoral degrees. These reports constitute unpublished sources of primary information and become property of the universities. Theses are considered to be vital as they carry in-depth studies indicating objectives, methodology, hypotheses, and findings of research encompassing up-to-date statistical data, citations and information pertaining to the narrow field of study. Theses are valuable because they are original and subject to strict review.

**Dissertations**

By and large, master’s degree students take-up minor research projects as part fulfillment of their degree programmes and submit to the academic institutions, the dissertations. Studies in dissertations cover small area, involving limited population samples, and the research work gets completed within the stipulated semester period. Dissertations cover all issues such as methodology, scope and findings of research, including up-to-date reading list, usually useful in case of similar project works.
Institution Publications

Every institution, whether academic or research brings out number of in-house publications for internal circulation and reference. Annual reports, budget reports, academic progress reports, quality assessment reports, audit reports, reports covering academic and research programmes, including extension programmes and publications covering infrastructure development, human resource development, and training facility fall into this category. The institution publications form vital source of information giving details on the background/historical development of the institution. Usually, scholars working in the same institution access them for facts and figures.

Trade literature

Manufacturing and service sectors bring-out regularly the publications in the form of book-lets, catalogues, brochures and guides. They cover various products and services of industries, laboratories and manufacturers giving specific details pertaining to models, components, prices, warranty, mode of delivery and so forth. Users refer to these literature to know the latest products, prices, models and composition.

Technical Reports

Industrial and research institutions regularly bring-out report literature which carry experimental procedure, production data, operating plans, flow-charts, drawings, mainly dealing with technological specifications useful for engineers and technologists. By and large, research organizations prepare technical reports as their outcome of research activities, addressing a particular problem. Technical reports are usually very rich in experimental detail according to the MAGiC Project (Needham, 2002, p.20). Sometimes, institutions apply colour coding for easy identification and circulation and immediate reference. Technical reports are the most valuable source of grey literature useful for research and development in any given field.
Proceedings of Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

Academicians and scientists belonging to a particular discipline come together on a common platform to discuss and deliberate on a particular subject and come-out with recommendations. Before/after the conferences or seminars usually the professional bodies/societies/associations bring out the proceedings. The proceedings carry research articles covering up-to-date data and information, contributed by many scholars and hence, form very useful tool to know the current trends and developments (Ramadevi, 2006, pp.53-54).

However, the proceedings of the workshops project practical details and step-by-step guidelines usually circulated among the participants before the conduct of practical orientation or training sessions, emphasizing mainly on hands-on experience.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The research problem is conceived under the title “ORGANISATION AND USE PATTERNS OF GREY LITERATURE BY FACULTY AND RESEARCHERS IN RESEARCH CENTRES AFFILIATED TO VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY : A STUDY”

1.4. Need for the Study

There are 159 engineering colleges in Karnataka state imparting technical education at graduate and postgraduate levels. There are 69 engineering colleges / institutes providing facilities for research work leading to the award of Doctoral Degrees in engineering sciences and technology.

As it is seen from the definitions, most of the grey Literature is not available through normal publishing channels. Institutions that produce grey literature do not maintain bibliographical control at the institutional level. There are some agencies making efforts to obtain details of these publications trying to bring out bibliographic control tools. As such we find poor
bibliographical control of grey materials. Afore said engineering college libraries possess research reports, project reports, Ph.D theses, dissertations of PG students etc. They also acquire other types of grey materials such as proceedings, reports etc. Some of these libraries also acquire trade literature too. The literature study reveals that till now no study has been done on grey literature available in engineering colleges. The way they are organized to facilitate easy access, and to what extent users are using these resources though significant, are yet to be understood. Therefore, there the need to study the organizational methods of grey literature in engineering colleges and the use pattern of these materials by the users of college libraries is felt. The study is considered to be important since it unfolds the existing gaps in organization of grey literature and their usage pattern which will help to find new approaches for facilitating better access to these materials.

1.5 Objectives

Following are the objectives of the study:

• To know the availability of grey literature in the engineering institutions.
• To understand the extent of organisation and the methods adopted by the libraries to organise the grey literature.
• To assess the use pattern of grey literature by the faculty supervisors and research scholars in the recognised research centres.
• To suggest proper methods of organization of grey literature for their easy access by the user community.
• To comprehend the training requirements of the librarians and users for better access and use of grey literature.

1.6 Hypotheses

• The Grey literature in the engineering colleges is under-utilized. The under-utilization of gray literature is directly related to their improper organization and lack of easy accessibility.
• The Grey literature in many engineering college libraries under study is not regularly procured and up-dated.
• Working librarians of engineering colleges need orientation / training to procure, organize and facilitate access under resource sharing programme.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

The study is intended to cover the organization of Grey Literature and its use pattern in the recognized research centres of VTU. The University has recognized 69 engineering institutions that facilitate research leading to the award of doctoral degrees. Further, study focuses on the 6 categories of Grey Literature: theses, dissertations, institutional publications, trade literature, technical reports and the proceedings of conferences, seminars and workshops.

The users covered in this study include faculty guides and research scholars of all research disciplines, both full time and part time. The scope of the study is limited to conventional sources excluding electronic forms of grey literature.

1.8 Methodology

The study began with a detailed and extensive literature search. The literature relating to grey literature was collected from various sources. Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), Open SIGLE Repository, Grey Net International Database and Internet served as sources of information. Having collected the said information, the researcher studied the developments and grouped those under 9 sub-headings.

The researcher in the beginning collected information about engineering colleges that are recognized for research by the VTU. As of April 2009, there were 69 engineering colleges recognized by the VTU as research centers. The details of these centers are provided in the Chapter III of the thesis.
Considering the availability of the infrastructure facility and the qualified faculty, the VTU has identified some of the departments in the 69 engineering colleges in Karnataka for taking up the research programmes. These 69 colleges are called the Recognised Research Centres of VTU. In these Research Centres, the VTU has further recognized the faculty members for the purpose of supervising the doctoral research. There are also research scholars in these departments who have registered with VTU for research leading to the award of doctoral degrees. The present study is intended to cover the VTU recognized faculty supervisors, as well as, the research scholars as the users of Grey Literature.

The primary data relating to the availability and organization of grey literature in the libraries of the Recognised Research Centres have been collected through questionnaire from the librarians. The researcher also visited all these centres and observed the grey collection and its organisation. After having received the filled in questionnaires, the data was tabulated and analysed. The second questionnaire was designed and administered to all the users, the faculty members who are engaged in supervising the doctoral programmes and the research scholars who have registered for Ph.D programme. The data thus obtained through the questionnaires have been analysed in the light of the objectives. The entire population covered in the study is 930 research scholars and 340 faculty guides. The percentage of total users covered in the study is 84.6. The report containing analysed data has been presented with tables, graphs and charts for clarity.

1.9 Conspectus
The final research report consists of 8 chapters.

Chapter 1 being an introductory, introduces the topic of the research, explains the need for present research, objectives of the study and hypotheses. It describes the methodology adopted for data collection and analysis. It also
gives scope and limitations of the study. Further, it provides summary of the remaining chapters.

**Chapter 2** explains the concepts and definitions of grey literature, including the importance and various forms of grey literature. The chapter also furnishes the detailed survey of the literature.

**Chapter 3** provides a profile of VTU and its recognized research centres, including the details of research disciplines identified by the University.

**Chapter 4** presents the analysis and interpretation of primary data obtained from the libraries as well as, the responses of the librarians on the organisational and use patterns of grey literature.

**Chapter 5** presents the analysis and interpretation of responses of the faculty guides and research scholars on the organisational and use patterns of grey literature.

**Chapter 6** is the summary of findings and recommendations based on the study. The chapter also projects the conclusions, covering the culmination of research.

**Bibliography** of various sources cited/consulted during the course of research is rendered.

**Annexure** comprises Questionnaires and the details of the working librarians of the Recognised Research Centres