CHAPTER: VII

CONCLUSION: FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Libraries provide a support service to the institutions they serve. It is important to understand the goals of the institutions served to enable librarians to come up with a mission statement that should reflect the library's commitment in helping the institutions to achieve its goals. Thorough planning is needed to ensure that all activities carried out towards meeting the institutional goals. Commitment to educate users should be reflected in the mission statement of the library.

User education in academic libraries has become an important area of library activities where better understanding and exploitation of the academic environment should be the ultimate goal of the academic librarians. It plays a vital role in the process of information dissemination and utilization of resources in academic libraries.

Through the orientation to the students at the beginning of the session a proper understanding of the library operation can be given to the user. It also provided the faculty of refining and developing the library services in the educational system of a country.

G Kumar and K Kumar (1983) in their book “Philosophy of user education” said that the necessary infrastructure and the innovation of suitable library instruction methods to suit Indian conditions have not been developed so far. But from last 15 years the environment has
been changed. Not only academic libraries but also other types of libraries have felt the need of user education programme.

Unconsciously, formal or informal whatever it may be the user education programme is provided in almost all the libraries. Use of guides, pamphlets descriptions in reader's tickets, personal instructions, which are the important tools of the user educations are the evidence of already practicing user education in libraries. But excluding a few libraries, all these are not in a systematic way and can't be called as proper user education programme. Therefore the existing libraries have not been fully utilized. Somehow there is a wide gap between the kind of required information and the kind of information made available. Proper user education programme can make a bridge between the gaps.

7.1 Findings

Since library and information centres are service oriented and non-profit organizations so fund is obviously limited. So the authority should take some strategies so that fund can be mobilized. Unfortunately, no such type of strategies has been found. At the same time, fund allotments in each and every activity of the libraries are very much essential for quality and longevity of the services. But from the study, it is seen that except books & journals and reprography services, the budget allotment for other services are almost nil.

From the study, it is seen that library collection including journals and reading materials in digital forms in university level are quite satisfactory. Again quite a good number of services are offered in academic libraries of Assam. But important question is that
whether these existing reading materials and services can meet the needs of the users or not. An evaluation process for collections and services offered by the library is essential to know the aforesaid matter. Unfortunately, not a single academic library of Assam has the provision of taking feed back from users or any evaluation process to know the relevancy of their services and collections.

On the basis of information supplied by users, it is clear that academic libraries are not able to attract them to its fold. While the students are studying in the undergraduate and post graduate classes, their library use and of information seeking behaviour are mostly regulated by their past experience and by the suggestions received from their senior students or teachers. From the analysis it is observed that the frequencies of library visit by students are very low in comparison to teachers and research scholars. The fact is that students have less idea about the library than teachers and R/Scholars. Similarly, it is found that students mostly use the library to read textbooks and newspapers. Of course, teachers and research scholars use it for other purposes also, namely, to consult reference books, subject journals, internet searching, etc. The majority of the college students don’t know the facilities of their libraries and the importance of subject journals, reference books, etc. in their academic life. Therefore, the frequency of the library visit and use of reference books, subject journals, etc among college students are very low.

A huge number of students they don’t know how books are arranged in the stack room of their library. Of course, most of the teachers and research scholars are aware of the classification system of their library. But regarding consultation of library catalogue, it is found that not only the students but also teachers and research scholars are not using the
catalogue card for searching their required information. Therefore, most of the students need the help of the staff for searching their information regularly. Even teachers and research scholars also need the help of the staff for a simple searching. That means a few teachers and R/Scholars are yet to be a self-dependent reader. Regarding awareness of library facilities it is found that the percentages of awareness of library facilities among students are less than teachers and R/Scholars because teachers and R/Scholars are experienced in using libraries in their academic life. To make the students aware about the library facilities, a training programme is very much essential.

Again from the study, it is clear that in comparison to the teachers and R/Scholars, student’s needs regular help from the library personnel due to lack of training for utilization of library materials.

Most of the users don’t know about the user education programme, even though they need some awareness programme to know about their library. Of course, a few number of users are not required such types of programme. It is due to the lack of idea about the latest concept of the library. They do not know how libraries are developed and how much a library can help them in their academic career. Teachers and research scholars are very much interested regarding this type of awareness programme. It is clear from analysis that teachers and research scholars are not satisfied with the existing awareness programme and therefore they are in the support of introducing these types of awareness programme. Though the percentage (31%) is low, even students are also not satisfied with the existing awareness programme.
It is seen that out of 131 libraries only a few 50 (38%) libraries are providing formal user education. Library orientation and lecture method are the most popular component and method of instructions respectively. Others 81 (62%) libraries having informal user education programme, they use various tools like pamphlets, guides, reader's tickets, etc. to make aware their users.

After analyzing the causes of non adopting formal user education programme, it is observed that most of the libraries are agreed with the opinion that lack of interest of the authority and lack of competent staff are some of major reasons for not having user education.

From the study it is found that 74% libraries having informal user education programme are interested to introduce formal user education programme in their libraries. Most probably they are getting problem in proper management of libraries with untrained users.

If we compare the mutilation of reading materials between both types of libraries, it is found that 90% libraries having formal user education programme agreed with the opinion whereas only 22% libraries having informal user education programme are agreed with this opinion. It is clear from this analysis that libraries where formal user education is available there the mutilation is less. Similarly in case of decrease of late fine with existing user education programme, it is found that 84% libraries having formal user education programme are agreed with this opinion while only 15% libraries having informal user education are
agreed with this opinion. Thus it may be presumed that libraries having informal user education programme are still not in a position to see the difference of the aforesaid matter.

It is found that existing user education programme is not sufficient for making the users aware of the library resources for their proper utilization.

From data and analysis, it is observed that the frequency of formal users in reference and textbook section are more or less same in the libraries where user education programme is available, while in libraries where user education programme is not available, there the percentage of frequency of textbook section is too high then the reference section. Thus, it may be presumed that due to lack of awareness, important reference books that reflect the standard of a library are lying unutilized in the libraries of Assam. Not only the textbook section but also the others like reference sections, periodicals, newspaper section, etc. should be utilized properly and then only a library can achieve its goals.

7.2 Suggestions

Though the study is excluding the school libraries still from our personal experience it is observed that in Assam, there are no properly organized school libraries except a few English medium schools. In childhood, child learns good habits very easily. Hence systematic training in efficient use of the library should in fact be imparted at the school level. During the school time students should know about the library or the role of library in their academic life. Students coming from these schools are having no interest to go to the college libraries, because, they get their required information from a few text books which
they can afford and during their school time, they did not get the opportunity to avail the facilities of the school libraries. They did not cultivate their reading habit in school time. There should be a programme of cultivation of reading habit in school libraries. In schools there should be a library hour and this can be utilized for the purpose of library orientation. During the orientation to students, following items should be explained- 

i) Importance of library, library functions, services and facilities.

ii) Library ethics including library rules and as well as how to take care of books.

iii) Parts of a book.

iv) How to read a book.


The orientation should be done in such a way that the children are able to follow it and benefit to maximum. The teacher of the school can also play an important role. They should bring the students to the library and assist the librarian in making the orientation programme a success. The concerned authority should also come up with suitable plan like-

a) Establishment of well equipped school libraries.

b) Free flow of fund to develop school libraries.
c) Appointment of full time teacher cum librarian.

d) A compulsory library oriented subject should be introduced in every class.

Besides the above, various library organizations also can organize book week, book festival, book fair, library-oriented competitions in schools to motivate students. In schools, user education can be a regular and continuous programme supplementing the regular courses.

On the basis of the above discussion, the following humble suggestions have been made for proper utilization of the library reading materials.

1) The concerned authority should include the use of the library in the school curriculum, which is a very vital to the academic development of the students. It will enable them to acquire the skill for information searching. The concepts and techniques of user education are formally incorporated in the college and university curricula.

2) Since libraries are not profit making organizations and budget is limited, so profit making services such as reprography, Internet cafe, refreshing counter, translation and documentation service on payment, etc. may be planned.

3) Concerned authority should provide free flow of fund so that some infrastructural changes can be made immediately for providing formal user education using various methods.
4) The process of understanding needs of the user's of the library should be adopted at any cost. It is very much essential in collection development process of the library. As already mentioned, budget is limited so during purchasing of library reading materials we should very careful in selection of material so that unnecessary items may not occupy the space.

5) Resource sharing among colleges or universities may be planned and implemented with adequate user initiation. Through this we may serve our customers even within a limited budget.

6) The feedback or evaluation process for both resources and services should be taken so that revision and correction of resources and services can be made and then only the quality of the library can be maintained.

7) Academic libraries of Assam should also provide the other services such as reference, OPAC, bibliographic services, CAS/SDI, etc along with the circulation services and then the standard of the library will be maintained.

8) The college and university authority should provide facilities for user education programme like space for lecture method, audio visual materials, training to the library staff, etc. to conduct user education programme.
9) Though a few university libraries are conducting library orientation as a part of user education, but this should not be limited to library orientation only. Only orientation can’t meet the requirement of the users.

10) The UGC along with concerned university should come forward to organize certain courses for college librarians and library staff on regular basis to educate them how to conduct user education.

11) College librarians in both district and state levels should organize seminars/ workshop in order to discuss their common problems that face in conducting user education programme in their colleges.

12) In Assam, all university libraries are having separate library buildings but there is not a single suitable conference hall/ seminar hall is found to hold user education programme. So authority should look after the matter and provide the facilities. Due to non-availability of suitable conference hall in library, the formal user education programme wherever available, had to be conducted in general reading room at the cost of readers’ services.

13) User Education Programme should be carefully planned and implemented as an important aspect of documentation activities in university libraries. The university libraries which are providing user education programmes should try to make such programmes more systematic and productive. This would help university libraries to play a more useful and effective role in the educational programme and also in research work. Planning of course content of the user education programme is necessary. Users are varying from libraries to
libraries. During preparation of course content we should keep in mind the needs of users. The programme should cover all the aspects of user needs. An ideal syllabus of user education programme used in Jaysagar College has been given in Annexure-I.

14) A library bulletin, which includes the latest arrivals of documents, announcements, etc., may be brought out to create awareness among users.

15) At least one-week regular library orientation classes should be undertaken as against one-day orientation available in colleges and universities.

16) The user education programme should not cover only the information about the library; otherwise the students start losing interest. In college level, students should be taught about career counseling, information about various competitive examinations and scope of the subjects they are studying, etc. Now-a-days, IT and audio visual aids has been developed. The latest techniques and tools should adopt for attracting students community.

17) User education will be more useful, if all the libraries are to use to introduce open access system.

18) The success of user education programme depends upon the capacity of motivation. Therefore, the main responsibility of user education programme should be in hand of right persons.
19) The user education is not a one man programme. It is teamwork. So, all library personnel and faculty members should act together for the success of the programme.

20) In case of college, the authority should try to include the user education programme in class routine and then only the students' will be bound to attend this programme.

A college librarian has to operate in an environment where educational administration, faculty and students so often fail to recognize the role of the library in relation to the educational objectives of the parent institutions, viz, college and university. The process of collection development calls for greatest attention because the usefulness of a library depends on the quality of its stock. Many readers are reluctant to approach staff members with their problems. There is no use to blame users that they did not ask for references or did not approach a right person because in many cases there is no system through which users are told about the libraries. Hence, there should be a formal training in use of libraries which will encourage them to approach the staff and at the same time make them more independent as they will be able to solve many of their library problems for themselves. It also inspires the students for self-education, which is a life long process.

Students are not in same quality. Most of them are like to be idle and do not want to study if they can avoid it. They prefer mugging up lecture notes to reading books. According to Unomah (1986), 'Sometimes the major responsibility for students use or lack of use of the library lay with the faculty. The implication of this is that a lecture that has no library training is not likely to encourage or motivate his students in the use of the library. (Salaam: 2003:33)
Teachers have great role in utilization of library by students. They should cooperate with the library staff in imparting user education programme. They should encourage students to consult more reference books and should motivate students to consult library materials. They should take keen interest in sending their students to the user education programme invariably. Sometimes lectures provide notes and handouts to students. In this case, they should give some references to the students and they can go through that reference book for further study. Less emphasis should be placed on lecture’s note and handouts. Emphasis should be more on the class discussions; seminars and home assignment which would make the students to do research on the topic assigned to them. As already mentioned the frequency of users in reference and textbook section are more or less same in the libraries where user education programme is available but still the percentage of utilization is very low. No doubt, it is comparatively higher than the libraries where formal user education programme is informal. Though some librarians demand that they are providing user education programme in some libraries, still it is not in a proper way.

Libraries now-a-days gradually cope up with the latest information and new techniques; resources are available including journals. Even though, the picture of the library use is not so clean. Libraries are not in a position to attract to its fold. It is only due to the lack of awareness among the library users.

After conducting the study followed by extensive survey and analysis of the data it is found that though libraries of Assam are rich in terms of information and resources still the percentage of utilization is very low. So it may be concluded that both of the hypotheses have been proved.
It is the time to evaluate the earlier methods and systems and application of new techniques and technologies so that users are attracted towards the library. At the same time, all libraries to make the users aware about the utilization of the resources should adopt the user education programme formally. It is the need of hour to plan new strategies and irrespective of the division the entire citizen related with higher education along with the library professionals adopt the project of awareness programme among users and let it to spread to the society.