Chapter – 7

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study made by the researcher and presented in the earlier chapters of this thesis has tried to reveal the state of polytechnic libraries and their librarians in Punjab State and has pinpointed the problems and difficulties faced by them and by their users.

Summary

A summary of the findings regarding the physical infrastructure and working conditions of the polytechnic libraries, their resources and services and their adequacy regarding collection and the main problems generally faced by the libraries etc. are presented below, based on the information gathered from the librarians.

Facilities of the libraries

Majority of the libraries (i.e. 80%) are located as a part of the main building of the institution. A few libraries (i.e. 20%) are located in a separate building.

Most of the libraries (i.e. 60%) do not have adequate space, good and comfortable furniture and necessary equipment.

However, the librarians seemed satisfied with the lighting, ventilation and cleanliness conditions, though all of them have proposals and they viewed that there is scope for improvement and provision for better facilities. Some stated that the library is used for admission work of the institution in the beginning of the session.

Availability of Computers

All the librarians are interested to make use of the computers to automate library operations and services and they feel that computers would have many advantages. A small number of librarians (i.e. 10%) have computers in their libraries.
They make catalogue entries on computers.
Library Staff

50% libraries do not have any additional staff except the chief librarian. Majority of the present librarians have the requisite qualification and have long experience. The librarians expressed the need for additional manpower through recruitment of at least two (2) assistant librarians and also two (2) library attendants. The present attendants belong only to the administrative office of the institution. In the absence of librarian, they are not ready to supervise the library properly.

Professional development

Librarians also felt that membership of professional associations is the indicator of zeal for the library profession. It is necessary for the librarians to involve in different activities of professional development by participating in conferences, seminars, workshops, refresher courses and contributing to professional knowledge in the form of books and articles to raise their status and their profession.

Majority of the librarians deprived of these activities showed their grievances/grudge against the authority. They feel that they should be sponsored to attend seminars and conferences to keep themselves abreast and aware of recent developments in the library field.

Library budget

Most of the libraries have been allotted a very few percentage of the total budget except in a few libraries. All the librarians expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the allotment of the respective library budget. In fact, the library budget is only about 3.5% of the total budget of institution.

Document collection

The total document collection in the forty polytechnic libraries is 6,81,424 with the lowest number of books 3673 at Sri Sai Polytechnic College, Manawala, Amritsar, and the highest number 45000 at Government Polytechnic Guru Teg Bahadurgarh, Moga.
The overall annual average rate of growth of the libraries in terms of books added is very low. The periodical collection at most of the libraries is very inadequate and static. Most of the libraries have not adequate collection of reference books and special material.

**Book bank collection**

Out of the eleven (11) government polytechnics, only three(3) have book bank collection i.e. above nine thousand (i.e. 9172) to eighteen thousand (i.e 18367) and remaining eight (8) polytechnics have book bank collection from merely above three hundred (i.e. 345) to five thousand only (i.e. 5500). This facility is provided to the financial weak students of the institution.

**Newspapers**

All the polytechnic libraries acquire newspapers of English, Punjabi and Hindi. Newspaper’s availability vary in number i.e. minimum one (1) to maximum four (4).

**Organization of resources**

All the polytechnic libraries classify their documents by using classification scheme Dewey Decimal Classification edition 18th to 21st. Majority of the libraries (i.e. 40%) use 18th edition followed by 19th (i.e. 28%), 20th (i.e.25%) and 21st (i.e. 7%). All the polytechnic libraries use AACRII for cataloguing their documents.

All polytechnics make author entries. Majority of polytechnics make both author and title entries (i.e. 75%) and the subject entries are made by some (i.e.60 %) by using Sears List of Subject Headings. All libraries have the provision of dictionary catalogue. A few libraries have the provision of both i.e. Dictionary and Classified Catalogue. All use card catalogues.

Majority of the polytechnic libraries (i.e. 53%) arrange books on the racks according to classified order and 47% according to broad subjects.
**Method of recording and maintenance**

Majority of libraries record their document collection on accession register. Method of recording and maintenance of documents to assign the accession numbers in ledgers is used by a few libraries.

To circulate the documents, they use register system and put the name of the library borrower, author and title of the book and get the signature of the borrower.

**Working Hours**

Working hours of the polytechnics vary from each other. These are not convenient to library users as no library opens in the late evening. Majority of the polytechnics open 9 AM to 5 PM during teaching hours.

25% libraries open during examination days and vacations and 10% libraries open as per requirements of the library users.

**Frequency of lending services**

All libraries provide lending services to users on all working days but in the absence of librarian, no one can get the books issued. The main reason for not providing lending service to users is because of insufficient staff or manpower.

**Library Use**

Inadequate and lack of facilities are the reasons not to visit library daily by the library users. Only (12.5%) users use the library daily. The low percentages (i.e. 4.5%) visit the library fortnightly. So, majority of the users (i.e. 23.5%) are not regular users.

**Number of Books Issued**

The number of books issued to teaching staff is 3-8 books at a time. The number of books issued to non-teaching and students is 2-6 books.

The main reason for not issuing more books to students is due to insufficient copies of books. Even then, majority of the users are satisfied with the number of
books issued to them. A few library users exchange books with each other when they need.

**Access to documents**

Both the close access and open access systems are applied in different libraries. Some libraries place the reference collection in close access and other documents in open access.

The main reasons for denying free access to documents are “to check loss of books or theft”.

**Stock Verification**

As per oral discussion, majority of the librarians said that their frequency of stock verification is “once in a year” and a few librarians stated “Once in two years”. It is observed that majority of the librarians do not want to undertake stock verification every year due to shortage of staff and allow the use of library the users even during vacations etc.

Their method of stock verification is by using blank sheets and ticking the accession numbers of the books. The number of books lost or missed per year at the libraries is officially tolerable.

**Preservation of books**

Majority of the libraries apply the sandalwood dust and silica gel as pest control measures and humidity fires in the libraries. Some libraries also apply Dichlorobenzene and Phenyl balls for preservation of library books. A few libraries take no precaution at all. Majority of the polytechnic libraries entrust the book binding work from outside vendors.

**Summary and Findings Based on Survey of the Users**

A summary of the main findings-views etc of library users regarding the physical facilities, information resources, services, information material mostly used, purpose of library use, frequency of visits to the polytechnic libraries, criteria for book selection, etc is presented in the following paragraphs.
**Frequency of Visits to Library**

The majority of the users visit the library when they need the library services and facilities (i.e. 37%).

A very low percentage of users visit the library fortnightly (i.e. 4.5%)

**Time Spent in Library Per Week**

The majority of the users (i.e.18.2%) spend 2 to 3 hours per week in the library. Average users spend 3 to 4 hours per week in the library.

**Purpose of using library**

Majority of users (i.e. 18.5%) use their libraries for reading newspapers and magazines followed by 27% for borrowing and returning of books.

15% users use the library for consulting reference books because the reference books are not issued.

**Physical Facilities**

Physical facilities particularly location of library from the hostels/ main building, lighting, ventilation, water, seating capacity, working hours are good as expressed by the users. Majority of the library users are satisfied with the existing facilities.

The present working hours of the libraries are not convenient to a small number of users (i.e.21%) as they feel and demand that library should be opened in the lunch break because due to their busy schedule of classes at morning time, they find free time only during the lunch break for consulting the library. Users viewed that one hour before the commencement of the classes and one hour after closure of the classes in the evening would be more convenient for optimum usage of the libraries.
**Information Material Mostly Used**

Information material mostly used at polytechnic libraries are reference books (20%) periodical literature (i.e. 17.5%) text books (16.8%) and newspapers (8.5%) while the magazines, electronic resources(Special material) and maps, charts etc. are used by a very low percentage of users (i.e. 7.3% to 6.8%).

**Adequacy of Library Information Material**

Majority of the library were users are satisfied with the availability of textbooks and magazines followed by periodicals and general books. Inadequacy of electronic resources was stated by some users. The number of multiple copies is not enough. There should be more books by Indian authors.

**Methods of Locating the Required Material**

The users of the library were asked to indicate how they find required reading material and books. Majority of the users said it is by browsing through the shelves. Some said they consult the library staff and seek their help in finding books. Some students admitted that they take help from their class fellows. A few users said that they use catalogue to locate books.

This infers that the methods followed by the students to find the required books in the libraries vary. Majority of the students who use the library stated that catalogue is not up-to-date. A high percentage of library users follow the method of browsing and checking the racks and consulting the library staff. Sometimes, they complaint about non cooperation of library staff.

The library staff should assist the readers in getting required material and information. The library users suggested that there should be uniformity in the classification and cataloguing. The catalogue should be checked by the librarian time to time and drawback in it should be corrected.

**Selection of Books**

About 47% of the users answered that the librarians or management ignored their suggestions while selecting and purchasing books for the library. It is drastic
implication that if the genuine needs of the readers are ignored, then expect many visits to the library by the students/users is impossible.

Further, the analysis reveals that to extend the satisfaction among the library users, the staff of the library must concentrate on the improvement of the three factors such as physical facilities like comfortable seating arrangement, proper lighting and ventilation must be taken care of, collection of books or other reading material and library environment.

A serious attention is also required on other two aspects such as shelf arrangement and computer facilities.

Orientation Programs

Majority of the users felt that library orientation programme should be introduced time to time for ensuring optimum and effective use of library resources.

Suggestions Made by the Library Users

Summarised below are the suggestions made by the library users (teachers and students) of the polytechnics under survey to whom questionnaires were distributed:

- Provide a separate building as the users mainly felt the inadequacy of space.
- Acquire comfortable furniture, proper lighting and ventilation facilities.
- Make provision for display of the new arrivals of books/journals.
- Acquire books on general knowledge.
- Acquire books at the diploma level as there is a great number of books of higher standard which are useful only to teachers.
- Acquire more books by Indian authors.
- Need of proper shelving of the books in the shelves.
- Computerise library services like OPAC.
- Library catalogue must be updated regularly.
- Make provision for open access system
- There is a need for a good rapport and guidance from the library staff.
Demand to increase the number of books to be issued to the students.

Extend working hours and there is need for opening the library on Saturdays and during vacations.

Additional manpower for library services in the absence of librarian is required.

Weeding out of obsolete books is essential.

Preservation of books by binding which are in bad condition and some without pages is urgently needed.

There is need to make the library a “Silent Zone”.

**Suggestions Based On The Present Study**

It is not merely enough to stock the library with adequate resources and to man it by competent staff. Polytechnics must find means to derive the greatest benefit from the library. Arising out of the study, the followings are the main suggestions and recommendations which are based on experience and observation during the survey and interviews of the librarians and the library users. These recommendations and suggestions are made for enhancing the effectiveness of library utilization.

- Polytechnic libraries which are inside the institution need to be given separate buildings with proper facilities, equipment and comfortable furniture, etc. The rhythm of the library function should not be disturbed by conducting other activities such as admission and examinations in the library.

- Non-book material such as audiocassettes, videocassettes, compact discs, multimedia discs and photo copier should be procured by the libraries and used to satisfy information needs of the faculty and the users.

- The Directorate of Technical Education should train and permit the librarians to make use of the available computers of the institution to automate the library services. There should be a network of government polytechnic libraries.
A library committee should be constituted at once in all polytechnics to give them proper direction and enhance their work and functioning.

The need for adequate staff for the polytechnic libraries requires no discussion. The need is for implementing the norms laid by the All India Council for Technical Education in respect of the staff position for every polytechnic library. Steps therefore need to be taken on priority basis to fill vacant library posts.

However, till such time that positions are filled up, it is suggested that the polytechnic libraries may requisite the services of apprentice trainees on an annual basis. These trainees should possess a degree in library and information science. As per the Apprenticeship Act, the Board of Apprenticeship and the Institution share the stipend of the trainees. Hence, there will be no financial commitment to the institution towards the remuneration of these trainees. These trainees may be provided intensive training immediately after selection in area such as circulation, classification, cataloging and shelving the documents, so that they can be effectively made use of in this area of service.

The concerned authorities should ensure that the cadre or status and pay scale of the polytechnic librarians are fixed at par with that of the teaching staff based on the recommendations of the Damodaran Committee Report 1970-71.

The closed access system which is currently followed in the polytechnic libraries appears to be detrimental for optimal utilization of the library. It is necessary for all polytechnic libraries to switch over to the open access system at the earliest. It is desirable for the AICTE and State Director of Technical Education to make the open book access system mandatory for all polytechnics. It is disheartening to find that a few libraries do not allow the library users to select the books at the racks and borrow them at their will.

A part from the lending reference services, the polytechnic libraries should also introduce Current Awareness Service (CAS). Under CAS, the resources are to be displayed prominently so that the faculty members and students get to know and become aware of the new resources. The resources that will be displayed are newly acquired books and periodicals procured through the library budget. In addition, the new clippings related to technology taken out of the subscribed newspapers are to be put up in the notice board.
The total conditions of the libraries are very poor due to insufficient grants on the one hand and failure to utilize these grants in time on the other. The present budgets of the libraries need to be doubled to enable the librarians to procure at least the minimum of suitable books, periodicals, reference and special material.

Lack of suitable and consistent policy in book selection creates many problems and the administration should adopt or allocating grant to different subject branches, based on the needs of that particular area and the subject requirement.

The principal of the institutions should adopt suitable criteria for the teachers and students to participate in the selection of library books. The role of the cooperative stores in procuring only those books immediately available should be discouraged.

It is disheartening to note that half of the library books which are useful and suitable to the students are usually in the hands of the teachers. Also a majority of the library books are either obsolete or of higher standards than the level of the diploma students. Hence, the librarians should ensure that suitable books are kept under Text Book Section only for reference to enable both the students and the teachers to use them.

It is necessary to see that an adequate number of text books, reference book and periodicals should be procured as per the needs of the students and the teachers.

Libraries must be kept open for at least 4 or 5 hours longer that the normal teaching hours of the polytechnic. It must remain open on Saturdays and during the vacations.

The librarian has a key role in the promotion of library use. She/he have an insight into the academic attitudes and methods of study and a desire to serve the readers. They should also be familiar with the proper (organization of recourses classification and cataloguing) for this purpose, he/she should undergo proper orientation training in the organization and management of technical library.

It is incumbent on the part of the librarian to familiarize the potential users with the available recourses through user education.
For the first year students, intensive guidance and orientation are necessary to familiarize the students with the library set up and the use of library. Those teachers who are really interested in library work and well-acquainted with the students needs and intellectual level may also be involved in this orientation work. The orientation programmes should be offered at the first or second week following the admission, students may be grouped branch wise. For each group, a half day lecture on the whole aspects regarding library followed by conducted tour of the library be arranged.

In some cases, personal attention and guidance may be necessary. The subject teacher and the librarian may help the individual students in solving their problems. They can help the students in search for information.

The teacher should set the term papers individual or group projects in such a way as to make it necessary for students to have recourse to library resources. The teacher may organize seminars and quiz on specific topics which would require extensive references to be done by the students in the library.

The teacher may also encourage review of books to be done by the students. The students may be asked to review and collect specifications on products described or advertised in the periodicals. More and more textbooks should be written by the teachers in the polytechnics themselves.

To sum up, in the teaching learning process, the teacher should make their since efforts to integrate the use of library.

In general, the conclusion draws regarding the state of the polytechnic libraries surveyed is that they are far from adequate in terms of facilities, resources, manpower and standards. Most of the document collection at these libraries are either obsolete or unsuitable and do not serve the needs of the students. Neither the clientele of the libraries (due to lack of services and adequate document collection) not the librarians (dissatisfaction with the services conditions and status non-recognition on par with the teaching staff) is satisfied. With the libraries perhaps, the main lacuna in the process of library development is the non-implementation of the recommendations of the various Committees and Commissions appointed by the Government, which showed interest only in the constitution, but not in putting their recommendations into practice.

Information is an essential commodity in nation building and development, as essential and important as energy or material. If we are to infuse our young learners
with the strength and skills required to help a nation grow and attain its objectives, the ‘information highway’ is the route we should follow.

The study presented in the preceding chapters has attempted to provide a picture of the polytechnic libraries in the State of Punjab and Chandigarh and to bring out the various problems and difficulties faced by them. The State Government must look at and assess these problems and give priority in finding solutions to them. Fiscal resources must be enhanced considerably to enable the libraries to build up substantial collections needed for their users. Suitable accommodation and equipment should be provided with competent staff to render at least basic support services and help the students in their learning process. Access to information must be made more easy, and an environment conducive to learning and assimilating information be developed. Book selection policies and administrative policies relating to the libraries in the polytechnic institutions must be changed. The importance and relevance of the library as the centre of knowledge and resources required for development of skills and competence and understanding must be recognized and accepted fully if the role of the library is to be realized.