CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

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7.0. Introduction

The present study has attempted a comparative evaluation of behaviour and attitudes of different category of users in seven university libraries in Karnataka State. It gives a broad over-view of the status and working of the libraries in general, their collection and services in particular. The evaluation parameters examined in this study are both subjective and objective and they offer suggestions for further development of library and information services to meet the ever-changing demands of users. The study also helps the librarians to understand the users’ opinion towards adequacies and performance of the library resources and services. In addition they also present to them the better side of the library. In this research study the researcher has considered all the relevant and appropriate parameters for evaluation and has examined them at length. The inferences drawn from the analysis of the data the following findings have been evolved.

7.1. Findings from the Analysis – I : Librarians’ Views

7.11. Status of Universities

1. The universities in Karnataka have varying number of courses of study, and related facilities for conducting research activities. It is found that the University of Mysore has 63 departments of studies in different faculties which is the highest among all universities whereas Kuvempu University has 20 departments which is numerically the least among the others. This is due to the fact that the University of Mysore is the oldest among the universities in Karnataka.

7.12. Post of University Librarians

2. It is found that out of the 7 sanctioned posts of university librarians only 3 have full time librarians. In some cases the post of a university librarian has been vacant for a considerable length of time. This has affected the overall
management and administration of the library, and libraries have an uneven developmental scale.

7.13. Depleted Library Staff Strength

3. The existing staff strength, both professional and others is highly inadequate compared to the magnitude of the work. The staff strength has depleted drastically as the vacancies fallen due to retirement of staff in particular have not been filled. For example the overall professionally qualified staff in all university libraries ranges from 2 to 10 professionals with an average of 7 per library. This has come down to 2-3 and there are non-professional staffs to head some of the essential services like reference service or looking after user services and so on.

The findings 2 and 3 mentioned above have considerably affected the overall functions and services of the university libraries in Karnataka in particular. This situation is also seen in the entire country and thus serious lacunae has been found in all university libraries in the country as a whole. Contextually this has concurrently affected all the services offered to the readers in universities and thereby the library use habits in general.

7.14. Library Operations and Functions

4. Further it is also seen that the annual acquisitions of books has also come down due to the lack of funds whereas the demands of users are becoming diverse due to inter-disciplinary nature of emerging research potential subjects. The number of books added to the libraries and the number of periodicals being subscribed to the changing subject contexts have also shown a decreasing trend over the last few years. Often the university management looks towards the implied technological developments in library and information field. In this pretext the budgets are cut and the subscriptions to primary periodicals are drastically slashed.

5. It is observed that the number of reading materials consulted within the premises is more than those borrowed. Loose issues of periodicals are issued only to the faculty members.
7.15. Library Finance

6. As far as library finance is concerned, each library has a separate budget provision for books, journals etc. Indian Institute of Science has adequate funds proportionate to its size and it head on account of the money spent for books and journals in the last three years. The library budgets of the university are not only uniform but they are also consistent and libraries have to plan their purchases depending upon the funds whenever and whatever way they are made available and allotted to the libraries.

7.16. Library and Information Services

7. It is observed that all the seven universities in Karnataka are providing the traditional library services like, lending, reading and reference, acquisition of primary periodicals, procurement of books on inter-library loan as and when requested by the readers and so on. The microform collection once used as an alternative to print media is now gradually being replaced with electronic forms of documents. Hence the demand for the former media has almost been non-existent whereas the demand for the latter is gradually increasing. The translation service was once in great demand and it is now seldom or never sought. The other services are made available only on demand. However, internet based services like e-mail, accessing other library networks, downloading articles, academic and course related software are being sought by a large number of users of the libraries. Several other network based services are also being made available or being provided by only in one or two universities libraries.

8. It is observed that all the libraries have reference sources essential for answering reference queries. It is also observed that the staff attends to queries over telephone also. However, personal visits to all the libraries by the researcher have revealed that except at the Indian Institute of Science library, in other libraries the existence of a meaningful reference section was not seen.

9. All the university libraries meet the needs of users by borrowing books on Inter-Library Loan(ILL) and it is working satisfactorily. However, some
difficulties were found in providing this service due to some reasons like missing of documents in transit, delayed returns from borrowers, and restrictions on types of documents that can be borrowed under ILL from the lending library. These are some of the issues which need to be resolved for the smooth functioning of ILL service.

10. It is found that 4(57.14%) of the 7 Libraries provide bibliographical services on demand. A notable feature of this service is that, except Kuvempu University all other uses their library's computerized databases for preparing the bibliographies for this service.

7.17. Information Technology(IT) based Services

11. The analysis of data on the availability of IT facilities in all university libraries reveals that most of the libraries have extensively computerized their operations and this has been developed progressively during the last five years. From the point of the rating of these facilities it is found that 71.42% have answered them as good. The infrastructure includes an adequate number of computers with facilities for, CD-ROMs, printers, scanner and other peripheral devices.

12. It is found that all the university libraries, except Kuvempu University, are participating in one or the other network system, either at local, or at national level for the purpose of resource sharing. They have contextually established their individual library LANs(Local Area Networks) and this facilitates a faster and an efficient resource sharing activities.

13. The analysis of the data on the use of IT by libraries reveals that an evaluation of IT applications in libraries is possible. It is found that 52% of the statements asked about the use of IT in library are strongly agreeable, 40% of the statements are agreeable with the good use of the IT facilities in the library. Further only 8% of the statements are of uncertain nature. This finding implies that IT has essentially played its role in providing quality library and information services and products are concerned.
7.18. User Education Programme

14. Aptly all university libraries are conducting user education programme at different intervals. They are using combination of different methods for conducting the programme. The programme duration and time are found to be convenient and adequate.

In the opinion of the professionals working in these libraries, the user education programme has increased the use of library facilities and services. This implies that the quality of user education being provided is good, effective and result oriented.

7.19. Physical Facilities

15. It is revealed that both traditional and modern infrastructure is available at all university libraries to a large extent. Basic facilities, IT facilities and networking facilities are moderately made available.

16. The number of seats to be provided for in-house reading and reference had been standardized years ago. According to these standards it is found that the seating capacity in many university libraries has been adequate. However, where there were lacunas in this context that is found in three libraries, regarding inadequacy of seats, the libraries now have taken steps to improve the situation. As a matter of fact some of them have a proposal on the anvil for the construction of additional reading halls.

7.2. Findings from the Analysis – II : Users’ Views

7.21. Users’ General Responses

1. Among the user responses received from university libraries, the Kuvempu (91.5%) and Bangalore (91.4%) Universities rank 1st and 2nd respectively while the least responses have come from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (68.00%).

2. The response from the different categories is found in the order that, Science and Technology being the highest and Commerce and Management being the least. The reasons for these variations are self-evident.
3. Of the total respondents 416(50.00%) are PG students, 216(27.83%), Research Scholars and 198(23.16%) are Faculty Members.

7.22. Library Use

4. It is found that the majority of the users depend on university library(97.71%) for their study, research and teaching needs. In other cases the departmental libraries(30.72%) and public libraries(18.92%) are also used to a certain extent. Only 4.34% of respondents use all types of libraries.

5. The analysis of the data on the frequency of visits to the library by users, shows that 43.25% of the respondents visit the library every day. 39.04% of users visit library several times a week, and the rest once in a week. This indicates that libraries have made a good impact on the users.

6. All the users visit a library to study for the course they are studying/teaching. Some of them are visiting library to ask the staff for information which indicates the library use pattern.

6.23. Use of Reading Materials and Other Facilities

7. From the analysis of reading materials it is found that the print materials are largely used and among the types of documents the users are consult books, journals, theses and dissertations.

8. It is found that one fourth of library users have indicated that the book collection is adequate for their course. It is also observed that almost all PG students and research scholars have indicated that the recommendations given by them are not considered for the procurement of books. However, a majority of the faculty members have indicted that their recommendations are considered in procuring books to the library.

9. It is observed that most of the PG students use reading materials/documents for their course study and for general awareness. The use of library for the purpose of research is on the lower web. Half of the research scholars use
reading materials for their research work and about 28% use for obtaining current information or for browsing through. One third of faculty members use reading materials for research work and two thirds of them use it for teaching work. The findings reveal that the purpose of use of reading materials is directly related to the purpose with which the users are more concerned.

10. The findings reveal that more than half of the users have found the books and reference sources are very useful. In case of journals, more than one-third users say that they are very useful and an equal number of them say that they are useful. One third of users say Indexing/Abstracting journals, theses and dissertations are very useful. This gives a clear picture of need based use pattern of library resources. Resources exclusively meant for the research students and the faculty, are rarely used by PG students whose requirement is only course work and not research.

7.24. Awareness of Library and Information Services

11. Users have indicated that they are clearly aware of library services. Almost all users are aware of the basic services like circulation, lending, reference, and inter-library loan etc.

12. It is found that users are very familiar with the bibliographical, CAS and OPAC services. The users are not so familiar with services like SDI, indexing, abstracting and translation.

13. In the case of Network-based library and information services, it is found that the users are knowledgeable to a limited extent about the use of E-mail and Internet services. Awareness about Web-OPAC and bulletin board, e-journals, document delivery service and the use of library network is less.

7.25. Use of Library and Information Services

14. It is noticed that most of the users are satisfied with the existing circulation service in all the seven university libraries. However, one fifth of the PG
students and one fourth of the research scholars and faculty members are not happy with circulation service.

15. It is observed that two third of the PG students and research scholars and half of the faculty members are satisfied with reading hall facilities in their respective university libraries. However, it is also observed that one fourth of PG students, one third of research scholars and faculty members are not satisfied with the reading hall facilities.

16. More than half of the PG students, research scholars and faculty members are satisfied with the overall services in the journal section. However, it is also noted that nearly one third of PG students, research scholars and faculty members are not satisfied with the service of periodical section.

17. It is observed that more than half of the library users are not satisfied with the quality of Current Awareness Service (CAS) being provided in their university libraries. Nearly one fifth of PG students, one tenth of faculty members and a few research scholars are uncertain about the quality of current awareness service.

18. It is observed that, the majority of users are not satisfied with the quality of Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) service being provided. Almost two third of users have said that they are uncertain with SDI service. Only one tenth of users have indicated that they are satisfied with SDI service.

19. The study found that the equipments like photocopying/xerox, computers and Internet facilities are always in good working condition. However, most of the time the AV aids, microfilm readers, scanners are found to be not in good working condition. There is a mixed reaction about the working conditions of printers in university libraries.

20. It is found that more than half of users are not satisfied with the ILL service being provided in the university libraries.
21. It is found that two third of PG students, research scholars and more than half of faculty members are satisfied with the photocopying service. However, it is also noted that one fourth of the users are not satisfied with it.

22. The analysis of data clearly indicates that the audio-visual service in all the university libraries is very poor. More than one third of users have indicated that they are not satisfied with this service, and the equal number of users is uncertain about the quality of this service. A negligible percentage of users are satisfied but none of them are extremely satisfied.

23. It is observed that in the majority of university libraries directional signs/guides are clear and helpful, library resources are easily located and also properly shelved. However, it is observed that library resources are not properly re-shelved in the majority of the university libraries.

7.26. Information Technology(IT) Based Services

24. A majority of users except from Mangalore University, are not satisfied with the overall IT based information services. Only one third of research scholars, one fourth of faculty members and about 12% of PG students are satisfied with IT based services. It is to be noted that no user has indicated that he/she is extremely satisfied. A considerable number of users (about 14%) have indicated that, they are not at all satisfied with the overall IT based services.

25. It is found that more than half of users are satisfied with the overall features of OPAC. Only a negligible percentage of users are uncertain about the quality of OPAC and about one fifth of users have indicated that they are not satisfied with it.

26. Users are keen to visit the library mainly to use computers and Internet. Half of the users visit library to use computers. The remaining half of the users visit library for using OPAC. One third of users go there to use CD-ROMs, E-mail and Internet.
7.27. User Education

27. Half of the users are not satisfied with the overall quality of user education programme being provided at different university libraries. However, one fourth of users have felt that they are satisfied with the quality of user education programme. Approximately an equal number of users have indicated that they are not at all happy with the quality of user education programme.

7.28. Library Staff

28. Three fourth of users feel that the library staff is quite approachable. Half of them feel that they are courteous. Two fifth feel that they are friendly and easy to talk to, and an equal number of users have disagreed to this opinion. On the one hand one fourth of users have stated that the library staff is available whenever they needed and on the other hand one third of users have stated that the library staff are reluctant to leave the chair and help them. However, half of the users were uncertain about this.

29. The communication ability of the library staff (providing services) is quite tolerable. About the efficiency of library staff in providing relevant materials has received mixed response. It is found that the library staffs do not demonstrate or train the users for using catalogue and reference sources. They also do not provide suitable answers to users' queries.

30. The staff does not demonstrate or trains the users in using OPAC, CD-ROM, e-mail, Internet and help them to have an access to search the online databases. It is also observed that the library users in all universities except those in Mangalore and Gulbarga Universities do not understand search strategy. Same is the case with the users' ability to identify appropriate databases for searching relevant, quantitative, and current information. It is also found that the time taken to provide printouts of bibliography is not satisfactory in the context of IT based services.
7.29. Physical Facilities

31. As far as physical facilities are concerned, furnitures/seating arrangement is satisfactory in all seven-university libraries. Interior decoration and aesthetic look of the library are satisfactory in nearly half of the libraries. Lighting/ventilation is good in all university libraries except in Karnataka University, Dharwad. Group work area or browsing section is not satisfactory in all universities except at the Indian Institute of Science. The users are not satisfied with the research cabins/cubicles provided in all except Mangalore University. Humidity/temperature and safety aspects in university libraries are not satisfactory in all the libraries except Mangalore and Indian Institute of Science. Drinking water and toilet facilities are poor in most of the university libraries.

7.3. Implied Suggestions

The views and comments offered by the users have enabled the investigator to offer some feasible suggestions for achieving optimal utilization of library resources and services. They are given as follows;

7.31. Appointment of Librarians

1. The present study has seriously considered the lack of manpower as the main cause for the decline in the quality of library and information services. Hence, it urges the state government to lift the ban on appointment of the university library staff and the librarian, as a special consideration and as essential service staff.

7.32. Increasing Library Membership Base

2. Authorities think that anybody who is studying for a course will be using the library for his/her academic requirements. However, it is really startling to know that not all the students enroll for the library membership on account of many factors. Either they depend upon some other library for their needs or they are not aware of their library services. If the library fails to attract substantial number of students studying then the money spent on its resources
will not be justified. Hence, it is necessary for each university library to start a membership drive with innovative ideas. Students need to be convinced about the quality and usefulness of its services. This can be achieved by designing awareness programmes like bringing out informative Brochures, Orientation Programmes, and signboards at prominent places.

7.33. Awareness About Library and Information Services

3. The present study explicitly states that university libraries are lacking in the programmes of users awareness and publicity. This is more important than any other in the overall use of library resources and services by users. In order to meet the same, each library has to have compulsory user awareness and publicity programmes like user orientation either through videocassettes or through lecture method from time to time. Similarly a library has to prepare its attractive but informative guide/manual for both students and teachers. The guide should provide a detailed note which should reflect, among other things, the use of abstracting services, bibliographies and other reference sources.

7.34. Quality of Library and Information Services

4. Close scrutiny of the findings reveals that either half of the users or more than that are not satisfied with the quality of services being provided. It includes services like CAS, SDI, ILL, Bibliographical Services, etc. This requires a serious introspection. Even though many of these services are started with much enthusiasm, they have not been continued with the same zeal. These services are not updated, and continue to be provided with the same obsolete method and format. They are out of seen with the present academic environment. This justifies the users dissatisfaction with this. To improve this scenario it is suggested that each service needs to be done keeping in view the users' expectations from it. Methods should be updated on a regular basis and information should be presented in an attractive way. Feedback should be sought from the users and the services be evaluated to decide its utility. The staff involved in developing these services should be encouraged to develop core competences required for this.
7.35. Quality of Reference/Information Desk

5. Libraries must realize the importance of routing all the queries through a single window. Information Desk or Reference Desk is very practical idea which is working efficiently, but only where it has an adequate staff. Personal visits have revealed that most libraries do not have the professionally trained staff to man this desk. Libraries should take this with utmost care and deploy competent staff to address reference queries. The quality of reference desk enhances the library image as a courteous and cooperative support service of the University.

7.36. Computer Based Information Services

6. It is appreciable that most of the libraries have a good infrastructure as far as providing traditional library services like circulation, in-house reading and reference services are concerned. However, the same cannot be said about computer-based services. They are still limited rudimentary services like providing e-mail and Internet services. They must go a step further and provide services like online databases, networked CD-ROM database services, access to e-journals, online indexing/abstracting databases, etc. Libraries should invest in developing library web pages and provide services like Web-OPAC, access to digital resources of library through it. Many of the transactions like renewal, reservation of documents should be carried out from web page. With the ambitious projects like UGC-Infonet, libraries should develop the mindset to upgrade existing computer based services.

7.37. Quality of Professional Staff

7. Analysis points out that overall quality of the staff at all university libraries is satisfactory. However, one should not be content with this finding. An adequate motivation and incentives need to be given to the staff to improve upon their skills in discharging their duties efficiently. Once a satisfactory level of efficiency is achieved then the staff must strive double to keep that level consistent and to improve upon it.
7.37.1. Communication Ability/Skills

8. The staff should be trained in understanding the user needs accurately. Their communicative ability is very crucial. Short-term courses/workshops and Management Development Programmes (MDPs) designed by communication experts be introduced to the staff. They can be encouraged to develop their own methods of interpersonal skills in handling all kinds of user queries.

7.37.2. IT Knowledge

9. The changing information environment demands the library professionals to acquire or update new skills regularly. In-house training programmes are most effective in training the staff about operations of digital resources like databases, e-journals, etc. More and more staff may also be encouraged to participate in seminars/workshops and to engage them in research work.

7.38. Library Facilities

10. Basic library facilities are satisfactory in most of the university libraries. They also have an expansion plan to increase the seating and shelving space. However, efforts must be made to provide an environment with clean and hygiene drinking water, toilets, etc. It is another apathy that even in a university library, users need to be told not to litter and keep the environment clean.

7.39. Routine Work

11. User and use evaluation studies should form a part and parcel of routine work of the library.

7.4. Conclusion

A university library in the academic environment plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of higher education and in taking the degree of teaching and research to its peak. The higher education in India has undergone a radical transformation in the last few decades especially with the development in the IT and
its applications in higher education. The Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have had a profound impact on higher education in India and abroad, and have not only changed the way information generated, organized, stored, and distributed but more importantly they have become indispensable tools for teaching, learning and research activities in the country. The mission of the university library is to provide an effective access for its members and other participating members to its own resources as well as to scholarly and professional information resources. Traditional tools are unable to keep up the time aspect; hence the academic libraries do not have other choice, than to embrace the available technology judiciously to meet the expectations of the user community.

The developments in storage technology, particularly electronic media, CD-ROMs, Internet access has created a wide spectrum bearing on the reading habits and information seeking behaviour of readers. In an era of library and information networks, users are demanding instant solutions to their information needs, which go beyond inner and outside the geographical boundaries of the library. It is a healthy sign that the present day librarian does not wish to remain static. He is trying to possess more technical and professional skills than ever before to meet the needs of the users and is becoming more and more effective. This attitude has caused a sea change in the entire library environment. More librarians are coming forward to conduct the user’s survey to identify and evaluate the services. He is also required to identify and investigate the optimum utilization of library resources and services. But, a majority of the librarians, who are conducting users’ surveys are carrying out the same on an informal basis and at random intervals. This reflects some fear or hesitation hidden in the heart of librarians. By conducting formal users’ surveys at regular intervals one can the advantage to know the customer well. It helps to evaluate the appropriateness
and adaptability of the existing services and provide inputs for designing the user-friendly services.

Libraries should respond to the pulse of the users and for this the periodical evaluation becomes helpful. This appraisal must be impartial, objective, and service-centered. It can be attempted either through personal dialogues with the users or through conducting surveys or through holding a formal seminar by inviting written comments from the users. The current trends in respect of the library services in the Indian University Libraries indicate that their nature is more passive than dynamic. This may perhaps be the result of many environmental factors.

The future of the library services in the Indian university libraries will depend upon two major factors viz., (a) availability of the adequate and dedicated staff in proportion to the growth of the library (b) creating an understanding with university authorities to provide the specialized staff for the specific purpose. What Barry Tottlerdel observed in this context needs to be seriously taken note of in the Indian university libraries. He observed – "Despite the likelihood that shortage of funds is likely immediate improvement to library services that involves little expenditure in financial terms but considerable expenditure in terms of imagination".

The present study makes an all out effort to present the state-of-the-art in the university libraries of Karnataka selected for the study. With specific reference to evaluation and improving the services and infrastructure facilities from time to time, there is no evidence which is very clearly indicating the bright face of the profession. However, it can be accepted that the use of information technology is picking up and there is a sense of competition among the university libraries to add evaluate and measurement of performance as a regular practice.
7.5. Future Areas of Research

The present study is confined to measurement and evaluation of library and information services in university libraries in Karnataka State. Further the detailed measurement and evaluation studies may be focused not only on Indian university libraries but also conducting on public and special libraries. It is observed from the published literature that there is a need for periodical evaluation of the library and information services. This becomes more relevant in the higher level of learning like universities where there will be a regular revamping of curriculum so as to meet the contemporary needs of the society. Therefore the evaluation, measurement, and evolving a viable model for library and information services becomes very essential. So, there is a pressing need for approaching the problems in holistic perspective, and also in specific aspects. Such an exercise will provide a new direction and a new dimension to the efficiency of the library services and in addition build the image of the library as a trustworthy partner in the developmental process.

Increasing studies of the performance appraisal, measurement of effectiveness, evaluation of the services as well as the facilities in all types of libraries is an indication of the importance of the research in this direction.

Western countries have taken noticeable lead in promoting the evidence based library and information services. This idea gives a much-needed insight to the future researchers to conduct further an intensive research in this aspect. With the onslaught of World Wide Web(WWW) sources the evaluation and measurement of use and access to electronic information becomes highly significant. This adds a new dimension to the entire Library and Information Science research.