CHAPTER 6
Findings and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction.

The study was designed and executed as an evaluative and descriptive study of the functioning of the Kerala University Library. The sources and services of the Kerala University Library were areas under study. The opinion and suggestions of the clientele on the sources, services and personnel are sought and analyzed. The view and suggestions of the staff and their opinion on the management, work environment etc are sought. The study was conducted with a set of hypotheses related to

a) Kerala University Library does not have a strategic plan and policy for giving quality services and for TQM.

b) Absence of a regular and systematic measure for giving user orientation and for assessing user satisfaction.

c) There are inadequate in-service training programmes for the staff to cope up with the advancements in information technology.

Data required for testing the validity of the hypotheses were collected through the following data sources

1) Questionnaires administered to the users of Kerala University Library.

2) Questionnaires administered to the staffs of the Kerala University Library.

3) Interview with the Deputy Librarian-in-charge.

4) Relevant records, registers and files available in the Kerala University Library.

5) Personnel observation of organizational practices, functioning, resources and facilities of the library.

This was supplemented by discussions with the section heads or person in charge of various sections of the Kerala University Library.
The study was conducted with the following objectives.

1. To explore the wide range of resources and services available in the Kerala University Library;
2. To conduct an information audit (i.e. the requirements and level of satisfaction of the users);
3. To see whether there is a systematic methodology for measuring customer satisfaction and the level of acceptance of the elements like commitment, teamwork etc;
4. To evaluate the service quality of the Kerala University Library from a user survey;
5. To evaluate the library quality from the staffs' point of view;
6. To see the management practices prevailed in the library;
7. To see whether there is awareness of TQM or other quality efforts within the library;
8. To explore the barriers within the library to a quality initiative and
9. To suggest measures for implementing effective services in the library and improving existing services.

The findings of the study are presented below.

6.2 Findings.

All the objectives are fully substantiated and major findings based on the analysis is presented in this chapter.

6.2.1 Preferences of information sources.

Most of the users' prefer current periodicals followed by publications of Institutions/Agencies and conference and seminar papers. Secondly users prefer Index/Abstract/Reviews next to periodicals. Majority of the users third preference is Conference/Seminar papers. Status-wise analysis also revealed that majority of the users prefer periodicals. This shows the users' interest in primary information sources.
6.2.2 Adequacy of sources.

Periodicals, textbooks and reference sources are only partially adequate to meet the academic needs of the users; Index/Abstract, Dissertation/Thesis and Online Sources are adequate. Majority of users are unaware of Patents/Standards/Report and Non book materials collection of the library. Status-wise analysis also reveals that the Post Graduates, M.Phil students, Research scholars and Teachers are of the opinion that the periodicals, textbooks and reference sources collection are not up to date.

6.2.3 Frequency of use of information sources.

The sources which are used frequently are textbooks followed by journals. Reference sources and online sources are also frequently used by the users in their information search. Dissertation/Thesis, Conference papers and Catalogue are used only occasionally. Patents/Standards/Reports are used rarely. Number of scientific journals required by the majority of the users is three but the journal collection is very poor.

6.2.4 Routes for seeking information.

Majority of the users are using the contents page of books and journals for locating the required information. Subject index, Author index and Key word index are utilized in the case of reference sources and abstracts. Choosing the right route may enable the user to retrieve right information without loss of time.

6.2.5 User training/orientation.

The provision of user training is very much helpful to the users in finding out and uses various information sources. But the users of the Kerala University Library are not getting sufficient user training. It should be taken into account that all new members should be given orientation and the current users should be trained while introducing a new service.
6.2.6 Request and receipt of resources from outside the library.

33.1% of the users responded that they have requested resources from outside the library and out of that only 4.7% have received the resources. Majority of the users who have requested materials which are not present in the KUL has not received the resource. This shows that the provision of inter library loan is not effectively practiced in the library.

6.2.7 Familiarity with the sources and the usage.

Familiarity and usage of information sources like E-journal consortium, abstracting indexing journals, subject periodicals, online sources etc was examined. Majority of the users are not familiar with the E-journals consortium and a small number with other sources. Since the users are unaware of the service and the information they could retrieve out of it, the usage is also very low. This indicates the lack of proper training/orientation to users.

6.2.8 Awareness of services.

The effectiveness of the university library is very much dependent to the awareness of the services to the users. The analysis shows that the users are neither aware nor use majority of services and sources offered by the library. All the new members are given guidebook, at the time of enrollment, having instructions and information regarding the rules and regulations, services layout etc. Not all services are listed in the guidebook. Users who don't know what the service is cannot benefit from the guidebook or the board in front of the library. It is evident from the questionnaire that majority of users are unaware of the Inter library loan service, CD ROM search service and Indexing and Abstracting service. Unawareness of the users about the services offered indicates that they don't use those services. Unexploitation of the services and resources may lead to the failure of the library in achieving the goal of cost effective production of service.
6.2.9 Level of satisfaction of the services.

Just like user orientation there is no proper system to study the user needs. Also there is no regular mechanism to get the customer feedback and customer perceptions about the services and staff, which is evident from the interview and discussions with the librarians. Majority of the users specifically Teachers, Post graduate students and Research scholars are only moderately satisfied which is an unknown fact to the library staff as there is no proper user study. There should be user studies conducted periodically and the plans, procedures, services etc to be centered on the customer satisfaction.

6.2.10 Use of online services.

Majority of the users utilized Internet for E-mail services followed by online database. Only 25.5% are using the E-journal consortium. From the responses it is evident that 47.5% of the users are unaware of the E-journal consortium and from among those who are using the consortium only 31% are satisfied. Staff should bear in mind that unawareness of the users regarding the services indicates the failure of the library staff in rendering proper guidance.

6.2.11 User behaviour and use pattern.

Frequency of visit of the users depends largely on the attitude of the staff towards users, the sources and services offered by the library, the working hours etc. Majority of users who are not frequent users opted the reason as shortage of time and unavailability of resources out of which the second reason can be minimized by procuring up to date resources. Most of the users acquired knowledge of using online sources either from their colleagues or by themselves, which shows the lack of help the users are receiving from the staff.

85.3% users utilized the library for 1-5 hours per week during the UG program and 61.8% used it for 5-10 hours per week for the PG program. 45% of the respondents used it for more than 10 hours per week for the Research purpose. The less percentage of use of library shows the inadequacy of sources, services and facilities.
Out of the 381 respondents 76.6% know how to use the Electronic/Online sources and most of them acquired the knowledge from their colleagues. The rest majority learned it by themselves or by previous experience. Nobody commended that the library staff trained them for using Electronic/Online sources.

6.2.12 Working hours of the library.

Majority of the users (95%) are satisfied with the working hours of the week days. But the satisfaction level of the working hours on Sundays is less and suggested to increase it. Likewise 13.9% suggested reducing the number of holidays. Reducing the number of holidays may facilitate larger use of the library by the general category of the users.

6.2.13 Library collection.

The analysis of the level of satisfaction on library collection gives a variant picture. Majority are satisfied with the collection of Newspapers and general magazines. But when it come to subject periodicals, general books, textbooks and online sources, the level of satisfaction is much less. Regarding newspaper clippings, microfilm, maps, charts diagrams, CD ROM databases etc majority are not in a position to say whether they are not satisfied or not as they are unaware of the services. The users need indexing/abstracting journals, catalogues, bibliographies, newspapers and conference proceedings via computer access.

6.2.14 Physical facilities.

Most of the users are not satisfied with the cleanliness of the library. Around 60% are not satisfied with the lighting and ventilations, reprography, seating arrangements, arrangement of books and refreshments. Some of them even opined that the atmosphere inside stack is suffocating. The racks and books are dusty and congested. Improving the physical facilities may facilitate greater utilization of the library.
6.2.15 Library staff.

More than 50% of the users need the help of staff in their information search. Out of that 82.9% sought assistance in the book search, 56.2% in the periodical search, 73.8% in the catalogue search and 53.5% to understand various reference tools. This shows that the users are in need of aid from the library staff in their search for information.

Only 32% of the respondents opined that the library staff is always ready to help. 41.2% are of the opinion that library staff is helpful but not very often and 16% responded that the staffs are too busy to help. This shows that the attitude of the staff towards users is not very helpful. Also most of the users are of the opinion that the staffs are not approachable. This indicates that the attitudes of the staff need to be changed.

6.2.16 Reliability.

Reliability measures the ability to perform promised services dependably and accurately. Users opined that the library posses reliability only to a little extent which clearly indicates the dissatisfaction of the users in the performance of the library. The statistical analysis also reveals that the users expect good quality services from the library.

6.2.17 Assurance.

Opinion on the assurance determinants varies from ‘to a little extent’ to ‘to great extent’. Responses reveal that there is no prompt action on users complaints and it is not at all easy to make a complaint or suggestion about the library services. Users are of the opinion that there should be a Suggestion/complaint box in the library.

6.2.18 Tangibles.

Most of the users are satisfied to a great extent in the working condition, the equipments provided but not satisfied with the library web page. The interior of
the library is attractive only to some extent. Lighting and ventilation in the building is not adequate. There is no adequate number of computers for online search. The physical facilities and equipments are the areas which need improvement as far as the users’ responses regarding this is concerned.

6.2.19 Empathy.

Responses reveal that library staffs are courteous and polite to some extent and are not willing to leave the chair all the time. Demonstrations on the use of catalogue and reference sources are done only to some extent. Teaching programmes which enable the users to make effective use of library materials is not conducted. No individual attention is given to the users by the staff. Responses shows that the users are not at all satisfied with the caring and help given by the staff.

6.2.20 Responsiveness.

Responsiveness refers to readiness to provide services. Responses reveal that queries on the availability of a source requested are not answered accurately. Users have to wait for assistance at the reference enquiry desk and to use electronic resources which are against 4th law of library science. Majority of the users responded that the staffs are not showing readiness to provide services to them, but always pretending to be busy.

6.2.21 Mission, goals and objectives

It is a great importance in the management of an institution that the staff got a clear idea about its mission, goals and objectives. It is learned that the Kerala University Library doesn’t have a proper mission statement which can be and should be a motivator to the staff. Staffs are having a general awareness and are of the opinion that the library should be fully automated to achieve the mission. But this is not sufficient to generate dedication and commitment to the ultimate goal of the library. A clear cut mission, goal and objective statement should be developed and make it aware to all staff members.
6.2.22 Support of top management.

84.9% of the staffs opined that they are receiving immense support from the top management and 15.1% responded that they are not supported. This shows that the support of top management, pre-requisite for quality services, is not rendered to all these staffs.

6.2.23 Staff-users relationship.

Staffs are of the opinion that the library is user friendly. Knowing the information needs of the users is very important as it indicates the interest in the clientele and the readiness of the staff to serve them. Responses shows that though the staff is aware of the needs of the users, the quality delivery of services doesn’t happen.

6.2.24 Competency in technological advancements.

Analysis gives a clear picture that the library needs to improve a lot in the area of adopting new technologies. Around 50% of the staffs are of the opinion that they are not competent enough to handle new technologies and needs training.

6.2.25 Assignment of the staff in the library.

84.9% of the staffs are happy with their assignments. 15.1% are not satisfied or given assignments in the area in which they are not proficient enough. Placing the staff in the areas where they are skilled, experienced and interested is an important aspect of quality management. Care should be taken to appoint staff in different sections where they are skilled.

6.2.26 In service training and need for improvement.

92.5% of the staff responded that they have not yet received any sort of training for updating their knowledge and skills. Providing sufficient in service training to the staff members enhances the quality in information delivery. Majority of the staff require training in computer, IT related services, library software etc.
6.2.27 Agreement to team values.

Teamwork exist in the library only to some extent and needs to be improved for the total improvement in quality of the library. Other values – trust, commitment, shared vision, openness and non-judgmental participation also needs to be nurtured and built up more actively.

6.2.28 Staff empowerment.

Responses depicts clearly the fact that majority of the staff had no chance for attending any training programmes or workshops. Authorities should make it a point that all the professionals get a chance to attend training and workshops in the field.

6.2.29 Quality Philosophy.

Responses show that 56% of the staff are aware of the developmental plans of the library. The satisfaction level is less regarding the recruitment policy. Opinion on the result of the work and its contribution to library's success earned only 43.2% satisfaction to great extent and 30.2% staff are fully satisfied.

6.2.30 Faith in management.

45.3% of the staff have faith in the managements competency only to some extent which reveals that they are not satisfied with the management. 43.4% are of the opinion that they are considered an asset to be developed and the remaining are not having the feeling that they are considered an asset rather than a commodity. Majority of the staffs are of opinion that all staffs are not treated equally.

6.2.31 Leadership.

Majority of the staffs are not fully satisfied with the leadership style. Areas like problems, needs and suggestions from the staffs are always welcome by the
authorities, maintenance of cordial relations in the library etc are only satisfied to some extent. The needs and grievances of the staff should be heard and answered by the authorities for the effective management of the library.

6.2.32 Customer focus.

Staffs are of the opinion that the users are satisfied with the services to a little extent only. Even though staffs opined that the services, processes and practices are planned keeping in mind the users’ needs and expectations, this is not a sincere response as they themselves know that the clientele are not satisfied with the services. Staffs are not of the opinion that the users’ who complaint are wrong. But the users are not getting remedy for the complaints on time. Also there is lack of promptness in answering the customers' enquiries.

6.2.33 Staff management.

Responses reveals that major decisions are not taken jointly in the library, which reveals that participatory management is not practiced in the library. Library staff is one of the most important components of the library service. To tap the potentiality and capability of the personnel, the management needs to possess the art of human resources management. The university library has got a good number of professionally qualified manpower. But what is lacking is satisfaction and contentment which may lead to lack of cooperation, dedication etc. There are many reasons and the most important reason is the prevailing disparity due to the UGC and Non-UGC salary scale which brings unhappiness and chaos among the staff. Two professionals doing the very same job and having same responsibilities and having two scales of salary structure because of the presence or absence of NET qualification. One thing that can happen is that it will be the person drawing state scale salary possesses more expertise and tacit knowledge in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities. But because of the less monetary benefits and recognition he/she will be unwilling to utilize the expertise to its maximum.
6.2.34 Job challenge.

Staffs agree that the reshelving of books is not done regularly. But they are not taking more time in the technical processing of new books. Staff members are personally loyal and they agree to the fact that they get pleasure in meeting customer needs.

6.2.35 Continuous improvement.

Talks on current topics and problems related to information services are not at all done in the library. Also the staffs are not in complete agreement to the statements on development of work process and delegation of authority and power to capable employees etc.

6.2.36 Process improvement.

Only 50% staffs are satisfied with the empowerment of the frontline staff. Staff orientation is not practiced in the library. There should be proper orientation/training to the staff, teamwork and empowerment political sufficiently in the library.

6.2.37 Mutual trust and confidence.

More than 50% of the staff agreed that there is no feeling of mutual trust and confidence in the library. Festivals are celebrated jointly in the library. Also interdepartmental cooperation and communication are not satisfactory.

6.2.38 Commitment.

41.5% staffs are of the opinion that they are committed to service to a great extent. Library being a service organization must be fully committed to serve the clientele. Speedy service delivery, accessory in answering questions, willingness to accept assignments and extra work also need to be improved.
6.2.39 Job distribution/rotation.

Job distribution/rotation is not effectively practiced in the library. Also the assignment of jobs and duties are not done to the full extent keeping in mind the suitability of the person.

6.2.40 Reward and recognition.

50% of the staffs are of the opinion that the target for individual performance is high and there is feeling of pressure to continuously improve personnel or group performance. Most of the staff disagreed that rewards are given in proportion to the excellence of job performed. Also they are not satisfied with the performance evaluation. The promotion criteria of seniority rather than merit and efficiency also needs to be considered.

6.2.41 Adequacy of resources

Management should provide sufficient and up to date equipment for the processing/maintenance of documents. Management should also give enough encouragement to professional development. The equipments provided should satisfy the needs of the staff and the communication facility within the library should be improved.

6.2.42 Utilization of resources.

Staffs should use the computers and other equipments provided effectively. The competency of the staff in handling problems related to information tracking is not satisfactory. Staff members are not making effective use of the resources in the library for their professional development. The user education programme rendered by the library is not sufficient.

6.2.43 Innovation of new techniques.

Library website should be well managed and informative. Introduce new techniques in information services so that the users will be served better. OPAC is
not updated on a regular basis. Also the electronic resources provided by the library are not up to user expectations.

6.3 Quality awareness and Quality Initiatives in the Library.

Quality is determined by the user satisfaction and the extend of the usage of the various sources and services by the users. Though University Library is there to give quality services to its varied category of users, we cannot find any willful effort to give quality services to the users. Total Quality Management pre supposes the total involvement and cooperation of all the staff i.e. top to bottom. From the assessment through questionnaire it is understood that:

• There isn't any total quality policy.
• It is not defined the total quality values of the library.
• No step is taken to communicate the total quality values to the staff.
• There is no written plan and procedures to implement total quality in the overall services.
• The library has no strategic plan for TQM.
• There is no proper assessment of the quality of the service with the value incurred to provide the particular service.

6.4 Suggestions.

Based on the above findings after analyzing the responses of the users and staffs the following conclusions are arrived at:

1. Absence of a leading personality adversely affects quality in the overall management of the library. Appointing a University Librarian may enhance effectiveness in the management of the library.
2. Adequate resources need to be procured to satisfy users' information needs.
3. Open access in the reference section will be appreciated by the users and will result in more effective use of documents.
4. Stack room has to be renewed by weeding out unused items and rectifying the stock at least twice a week.
5. Cabins/study carols and group study rooms are to be provided to researchers and post graduates.

6. Prepare mission, goal and objective statements and distribute the same to the library staff.

7. Include the library under the list of university authorities and make the librarian as an ex officio member of any one of the authoritative committees, preferably syndicate.

8. Two scale salary systems under one roof is to get abolished. According to the status of the university, the post of Deputy Librarian, Assistant Librarian Grade I and Assistant Librarian Grade II are to be filled up by promotion according to the seniority and merit. Automatically, persons who have seniority get promoted without looking into NET qualification, but they are not given UGC scale where as their counterparts with NET qualification gets it. It is better to decide not to promote non qualified persons to this post and if no qualified person is there to promote to these posts better to go for direct appointment.

9. As far as library budget is concerned it is nowhere near the recommendations given by various committees and commissions. It needs a serious consideration and more money need to be allotted to the library for its developmental work which aims at quality services.

10. The funds allocated to the library by the various agencies should be utilized properly.

11. Books selection policy should be revised periodically.

12. It is heartening to understand that the library adopted a proper collection development policy. It is a need to build a healthy and effective collection.

13. Change the attitude of the staff towards the users; render enough support to the clientele.

14. Empower the staff and make them competent enough in the effective information delivery innovating new techniques.

15. Render personalized attention to the clientele.

16. Computerize all the sections of the library. Computerization help to avoid redundant manual work and it help to generate reports and statistics easily.
and more accurately. It is this report and statistics that direct the library to the future plan.

17. Improve the physical facilities provided to the users in a library.

18. Train the library staff to equip themselves with modern technologies and make them competent in their respective field to deliver quality services. Make it a point that every staff will be equipped with modern IT technologies which are found necessary for the delivery of library services in the age of digital libraries and virtual libraries.

19. Arrangements should be made for the effective orientation of the users.

20. A proper and regular feedback mechanism has to be chalked out and implemented. It will be good to put complaint boxes in various sections and some person of high authority other than librarian should be given the charge of going through the grievances and bring to the notice of the librarian if necessary or conduct regular user surveys.

21. Increase the working hours of the library on Sundays from 8.0 am to 8.0 pm.

22. Provision of in service training should be made effectively by the management.

23. Conduct staff meetings (can be section wise) regularly, discuss the recent advancements in information service and suggest solutions for the problems faced by the staff in information delivery.

24. Job rotation should be practiced effectively.

25. Excellence should be rewarded on the basis of performance and not on other grounds.

26. Provision for professional development should be provided by the management.

6.5 **Tenability of Hypotheses.**

The above findings of the study substantiated the objective formulated in the study. The study also tested fruitfully the validity of the hypotheses formulated in the beginning of the study.
6.6 Areas of Further Research

The study tried to assess the quality of services and resources of the Kerala University Library from the users' and staffs' point of view. Only the central library is taken as the case under study. Quality assessment studies can be made in other University libraries in Kerala and also the Kerala University Library system as a whole.

Specific areas of further study can be
- Assessment of quality of sources and services in the University libraries in Kerala.
- Job satisfaction of the staff of the Kerala University library system.
- Attitude survey of the staff towards online and IT enabled services.
- Development plan to the University libraries in Kerala based on TQM.
- Study on the process improvement in Kerala University library system.
- Development of a strategic plan for the quality improvement in Kerala University library.
- Detailed study on the allocation and use of budget.
- Study on the usefulness of performance evaluation.
- Study on integrating quality in personnel management in Kerala University library.

6.7 Conclusion.

In this era of Information Communication Technology research and development depend upon the quality of information provided and communicated by the Library and Information Centres. Present day libraries are more aware about the fact that their existence depends upon the satisfaction of the users and so aims to achieve hundred percent customer satisfactions. There may be some discrepancy between what libraries provided and what their customers actually need. This results in the failure of the library to meet customer needs. It is necessary to have a system through which the customer needs are heard and these must be used to improve the quality of service.
The university libraries are indebted to provide quality information to the clientele. As the customers of the library are educated community, the information required by them will be specific and nascent. The resources and services provided by the library should be planned in such a way to satisfy the information needs of the clientele.

Total Quality Management serves as an effective tool to achieve quality in services of a University library. TQM in the context of libraries is to provide the right information to the right user at the right place and time and also at the right cost. TQM offers a suitable framework within which libraries can re-think their service, objectives, delivery mechanisms and internal systems in order to meet user requirements and deliver quality services.

The quality and usefulness of services can be improved by conducting user surveys and analyzing the customer views and opinions. There are several methods or tools to measure, control and improve quality of a library. Techniques like SERVQUAL, LibQUAL+ are very suitable for assessing quality of libraries. The quality can be perceived from the organizational level or user level or both. The library staff has a vital role in the satisfaction of customers. Provision of efficient and courteous service together with a willingness to help ensures a satisfied customer. On the other hand bad customer-staff contact will result in a low satisfaction to the users of the library. User satisfaction surveys will facilitate the assessment of their satisfaction with the products and services offered.

The quality management provides a powerful framework for effective services in the library. It is not a one-time approach but a continuous process. By implementing quality management, the University library may achieve its objective in a more effective way and make the library more visible within the university by getting recognition for the unique and vital role it plays in providing quality service in the university set-up.