PREFACE

There has literally been information explosion, as a result there is information need, awareness and an increasing use of information in social sciences. The social sciences act as a source of guidance to administrators, academicians and researchers. The developmental issues can be perceived in a wider perspective and progressive ideas can thus be conceived.

To really understand the process of change in social science research, a balanced and well-developed information system in social science is very essential. The Libraries and Information Centres collect and disseminates relevant material on a given subject are designed to serve a limited clientele. Now information can be acquired, processed, stored, retrieved and disseminated by way of combined use of computing and telecommunication technology. The modern IT based services and facilities to researchers facilitate their academic pursuits.

The study involves the assessment of social science research libraries in India especially the ones funded by Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi. There are total 27 LICs of ICSSR Research Institutes all over the country. These 27 LICs have been taken for the study because there is a lot of variation found in terms of their resource base for researchers though their funding body is the same. They are established at different points of time, i.e. over a period of as much as forty-five years. Yet, sufficient growth has not been witnessed, especially for the old libraries. There is a lot of budget variations found in these LICs, which hinder their growth. A very important aspect is that they together cover almost all the disciplines of social sciences. More emphasis is given here on budget aspects and user satisfaction in terms of IT applications.

In the present study, a comparative study of their resources, facilities, infrastructure, budget, etc. have been done with a view to increasing IT facilities and services so that its status can be established. At the same time, changing information needs, priorities and behaviour in an IT based environment is made. After having gained the overall status of these 27 LICs, a National Information System and Network Model of these LICs is proposed so that they can share their resources in future. This aspect has not been touched and no study has yet been conducted on growth and development of social science research libraries in terms of providing technologically advanced information services to their users especially in view of the changing user needs in view of technological advancements and IT applications.
The following scheme of chapters has been adopted:

The first chapter Introduction includes the development and need of Social Science Research in India along with a general overview of Social Science Research Libraries in India. The social science research viz-a-viz research libraries and their structure are also been highlighted. The growing importance of Information Technology and its products and services has also been emphasized. The aims and objectives, scope and significance and methodology of the study are also detailed.

The second chapter is Review of Literature wherein a number of published and unpublished work, primary and secondary sources have been surveyed on the subject relating to this study which are detailed as well as recapitulated in the chapter.

The third chapter concerns a general overview of the growth and development of social sciences emphasizing on the state of the art of social science research in India. The general trend of social science growth as a discipline is also been discussed. In view of information explosion, the structure of social scientists and in turn the structure of social science research libraries and their resource base is also studied. The overall growth and importance of social science research has been emphasized.

The fourth chapter relates to the general overview of ICSSR libraries in terms of their resources, facilities and services. Emphasis has been laid on the qualitative aspects, i.e. how extensive is the library network in terms of books, services, facilities, etc. Within the intensive study, emphasis has been laid on the quality collection in terms of the user needs. The technical status, i.e. the overall library infrastructure and services has been taken care of. Within the administrative and other management aspects of the library, the financial issues and staff patterns have been discussed. The budgetary aspect of the library has been touched upon in detail analysing it by getting out the percentage of the Institute budget. The various statistical techniques like taking out coefficient variation, coefficient correlation, standard deviation and mean has been taken out. Thereby ranking has been done for each LIC for various years covered for the study would be adopted to analyze the budget. This approach would help us to compare the existing resources of these LICs to assess their overall growth and development.

The chapter fifth relates to the Status of IT Applications in the ICSSR LICs viz-a-viz User Satisfaction: An Overview. A comparison of the resources and services of these libraries is also done. At the same time, assessment of the IT products popularly in use by these LICs is also done. Accordingly, the LICs using the IT products and services to a greater extent for users have also been identified.
The user satisfaction for IT products and services has been assessed by way of sampling their responses and doing their paired ranking.

The sixth chapter encompasses a proposal for National Information System with a Network Model of ICSSR LICs. According to the identified core LICs using IT products and services, phase-wise distribution of these LICs would be done so that they may be incorporated in the Network Model of NIS. A plan for the new proposed site detailing the required network devices and financial aspects is also mentioned.

In the concluding chapter, the state of the art is assessed. This has been done keeping in view the overall information base, services and IT resources available in these LICs. The changing user needs, usage and preferences for IT products has been done as part of the outcome of user survey. The constraints faced by these LICs have also been highlighted. The importance of this study lies in establishing that once these LICs are automated are self-sufficient in their resource base and providing sufficient IT based services to their users, a National Information System Network of ICSSR LICs be planned so that these valuable information resources may be shared. Thereby, recommendations and suggestions are provided.

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January 5th, 2005.