Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Social sciences play a vital and significant role in improving the quality of life because more than any branch of study, they are about every day life of people. They bring together those who wish to know more about people and the social forces which shape and determine their lives. Social sciences open up a whole host of alternative perspectives about society in social arrangements that exist today and have done so in the past. There can surely be no great or more worthwhile endeavour for human beings than to understand their fellow beings better.

Social science information is a vital national resource which is essential to a nation’s well being socio-economic development and security as any other natural resource. It provides an important basis for international relations, peace, prosperity and overall global development. A substantial part of human culture has been handed down to generations in the form of recorded knowledge. This resource consists of documents such as clay tablets, books, journals, other categories of text, audio-visual material and other units of information or data.

The phenomenal growth in the literature and data of social sciences created problems which cannot be controlled by the individual research workers searching for relevant references. This is so because the greater the number of documents and the variety of data and the more differentiated will be the requirements of research workers which make the problem of adequate retrieval system an urgent task to be attended to. The efficiency with which relevant bibliographical references could be brought to the notice
of the users is an important job requiring immediate attention. This makes
the task of bibliographical control of the literature and the data a very
essential step. Without its fulfillment not only the training and research work
would be hampered but the national research potential which is quite scarce
will also be wasted in searching the relevant references again and again. The
situation could be controlled by developing adequate bibliographical and
documentation tools both at national and international levels. This objective
can be achieved only if the researcher is not bothered, but is rather helped by
a new team of workers in finding out the desired relevant references to the
topic or area of investigation on which he is engaged. Few decades earlier
the researcher did not appreciate in general this division of labour for the
efficient conduct of research. However, now due to the ever increasing
number of documents – published and unpublished; the variety of statistical
data almost in each discipline of social sciences and the intellectual labour
involved in keeping abreast with this flood of publications information has
convinced the research workers about the need for adequate bibliographical
and documentation services as an essential stage in their research work.

As far as social sciences are concerned a very interesting and useful
area of knowledge covers the organised human behavior. The creation of
social institutions – political, economic, legal, administrative and
educational – and the relationship of these bodies to individuals is a major
field of study. The activities of all these institutions influence human
behaviour. Since social sciences are very comprehensive there exist a very
large number of books, including several of the valuable classical titles
which are in use even today. Many new books are emerging in this field,
which are very valuable to people especially to students and researchers.
This is more so in the case of books in a regional language, especially
Malayalam.
The people of Kerala are well known for their quest for knowledge. It is a State with cent percent literacy and the educational scenario is far better compared to many other Indian states. Kerala also can boast of about 6000 libraries at the village level with an average of 6 libraries at every Panchayat. Their eagerness for building up of a knowledge society is evident from the programs meant for taking Information Technology down to the masses.

The 21st century remains in a crucial period for change and development and it is primarily known as information age where education and educational institutions would play a novel and crucial role in this sensitive period of development. Definitely this century will need a different type of education – education for masses and the poor, ultimately for national growth and development. But there are five critical areas requiring immediate attention, if this knowledge leveraged growth is to be achieved – education, research, communication, intellectual property rights, and human resource management. At the top of the priority is education and training. A strong educational infrastructure is highly necessary for knowledge-leveraged growth. We must fundamentally reform our educational sector to address many of the problems facing the country, ranging from population control to social development. This clearly indicates that there is a great need to restructure the educational institutions in general and institutions of social sciences in particular because social sciences have a profound concern for human beings and deal with human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects in all respects.
1.1 Relevance of the study

Books are the end products of the intellectual process of disciplined minds. Book is a repository of information, knowledge and media of communication from mind to mind. Without books the growth of knowledge and its extension would have been far behind or even stagnant. It is by reading books that a fertile mind is stimulated and becomes more fruitful. All educational activities whether in formal or informal education have to depend on the printed books. Right from the primary level to the higher education, both students and teachers choose and read the books. Even research work cannot completely be independent of books.

Gupta suggests two approaches that have normally been considered in understanding knowledge growth: i) quantitative and ii) qualitative. Qualitative approach suggests structural or descriptive models of knowledge growth, while descriptive models use social phenomenon to explain diffusion and creation of knowledge. Quantitative approach is relied on summarization statistics to describe observed behavior while others apply growth and technology diffusion models and bibliometric/scientometric techniques. Many studies have been made on the growth of literature in the field of science and technology. But few studies have been conducted in the growth of social science literature.

Even though there are a lot of books in the English language their number is comparatively low in Malayalam. This is mainly because of the wide spread use of English as the medium for study and teaching, especially at the higher levels of education. But today the shift in emphasis to Malayalam could be evinced. The government’s initiative to switch over to Malayalam as the official language gave a fillip to the production of more
books in the language. Therefore, it is worthwhile to study the rate of production of social science books and other related aspects of book production in Malayalam.

For the effective communication, the language of communication should be in the language most familiar to the users. In spite of the importance attached to books in social sciences, very few studies are available about their production and growth. This is more so in the case of Malayalam. The scarcity of previous studies regarding Malayalam books in social sciences and the personal interest of the investigator in the literature of social sciences prompted the present study.

1.2 Title of the Study

The title of the study is Social Science books in Malayalam: A survey and bibliometric study.

1.3 Definition of key terms

Social Sciences: Professor Seligman defines social science as “those mental and cultural sciences which deal with the activities of the individuals as a member of a group”. D.J. Foskett is of opinion that the social sciences comprise the study of the human individuals in relationship with other individuals and in particular the study of the various groupings in which individuals link together for the purpose of advancing the progress of humanity in general.

While examining the clusters of definitions, it was found that there is no unanimity of opinion regarding the subjects to be incorporated into the
social sciences. So the subjects commonly appeared in all these definitions, which are suitable for the study have been chosen. They are Education, Geography, History, Political Science, Economics, Sociology and Law.

Books: For the purpose of the study, following the UNESCO definition “non – periodical publications not less than 49 pages, exclusive of covers” is adopted. Only those books which come within the purview of social sciences and published in Malayalam Language are considered.

Malayalam: Malayalam stands for the Malayalam language spoken by more than 31.8 million people and is considered as one of the four prominent Dravidian Languages of South India. It occupies 10th position in terms of the number of speakers in India.

Survey: The Oxford English Dictionary defines survey as “The act of examining or inspecting in detail especially for some specific purpose”. In the study, it is the survey of social science books published in Malayalam.

Bibliometric Study: Alan Pritchard defines ‘Bibliometrics’ as that branch of information theory that attempts to analyse quantitatively the properties and behavior of recorded knowledge. It is the application of mathematical and statistical techniques to books and other records of communication. Bibliometric study means a study made by applying the principles of Bibliometrics. Here, it is the quantitative analysis of social science books in Malayalam.
1.4 Scope and Coverage

The social science have a very wide connotation and the demarcation between different disciplines is not clear cut as in science. For the purpose of the study, the definitions of notable social scientists like Jean Piaget, Thomas M.Little, Maurice B.Line, Professor Seligman and D.J.Foskett have been examined to identify the subjects to be incorporated into the social sciences. The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), the principal objective of which is to promote social science research in India, identifies certain disciplines to be incorporated into the social sciences. Thus it was observed that Anthropology, Commerce, Demography, Economics, Education, Geography, History, Law, Linguistics, Management, Psychology, Public Administration and Sociology could be incorporated. The Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG), the freely available web portal launched in 1994 incorporates some more disciplines like ‘Hospitality and catering,’ ‘Human Geography’, ‘Sports and Leisure Practice’ besides the traditional social science disciplines, within the fold of social sciences. The treatment of social sciences in various classification schemes like Dewey Decimal Classification (DC) Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), Library of Congress Classification (LC) and Colon Classification (CC) was also examined. Since the study was about books in a regional language where considerable number of books are not available in all the peripheral areas of social sciences, it was considered better to adopt the pattern followed by Ranganathan in Colon Classification (6th Ed) since it covers all the disciplines mentioned above within seven disciplines in a logical sequence. Under $\sum$ - Social Sciences the following disciplines are listed thus: T - education, U - Geography, V - History, W - Political Science, X - Economics, Y - Sociology and Z - Law.
The present study is confined to a period of 166 years i.e. from 1835-2000. The study started from the year 1835 because it was found that the first social science book in Malayalam was published in 1835 and hence the study started from that year.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are

1. To assess the share of Malayalam books in each social science discipline;
2. To assess the share of each type of books like biographies, children’s literature, ready reference books, text books and mult-ivolumed books in individual disciplines.;
3. To assess the growth rate of social science books over decades;
4. To identify the authorship pattern in each discipline;
5. To identify the major publishers of social science books in Malayalam;
6. To assess the translations and the source language from which they are translated;
7. To estimate the price per page of social science books and to find out the price- page correlation and
8. To find out the determinants of publication output of Malayalam books in social sciences.
1.6 Hypotheses

(i) Though there is a rich collection of social science books in Malayalam, there is an imbalance in the growth of books in different subjects with the result that while some are well developed, others are lagging behind.

(ii) The government is not keen on providing translation services in the field of social sciences so that many good works on various social science disciplines available in other Indian languages are not translated into Malayalam

(iii) There are certain socio-economic factors which determine the growth of publication in any subject or language like population, total literacy, female literacy, Real State Domestic Product and Real Per Capita Income and this is true of social science books in Malayalam.

1.7 Methodology

Methodology applied in the present study involves the following

i Literature survey

ii Bibliometric analysis

1.7.1 Literature survey

An extensive survey of literature on social sciences including books and primary periodicals was done. In addition, the CD – ROM databases, LISA plus, ERIC and other electronic databases were also searched for relevant studies. But a bibliometric study as envisaged here could not be
located. However, the literature search provided a lot of background information.

For the collection of data, various sources have been consulted. The most important among them was the ‘Malayala Granthasoochi’ published by the Kerala Sahitya Academy, Trissur. It is an important bibliography which provides a comprehensive account of books in Malayalam in seven volumes. The compilation of bibliography was started under the editorialship of K.M Govi. and AK Panikkar. The first volume came out in 1973, the second volume in 1974. The 7th volume was published in 1997. A notable feature of the Granthasoochi is that the first volume is exclusively devoted for literary works and the second volume for non-literary works. The other five volumes contain both literary and non-literary works. Entries are arranged alphabetically in the name of the author under each subject. The Granthasoochi also provides indexes of author, title and subject. The CD-ROM version of the Malayala Granthasoochi came out in 2006. It includes books published in Malayalam up to 2000.

Another source used was the Malayalam edition of the Indian National Bibliography. It started publication in 1958 and was published by the Central Reference Library, Kolkata. As per the Delivery of Books Act of 1954 a copy of each book published in India would be deposited in the National Library, Kolkata. Based on these books they prepare the bibliography of Malayalam books in all subjects and publish it in every 10 years. It is classified according to the Dewey Decimal Classification and is provided with an index consisting of authors, translators, publishers, titles and subjects.
‘The catalogue of Malayalam Books in the British Museum’ edited by Albertine Gaur, catalogues of major publishers in Malayalam and catalogues of the Kerala University Library; State Central Library, Thiruvananthapuram; the Legislative Library, Thiruvananthapuram; the Kerala Sahitya Academy Library, Trissur were some other sources consulted.

In addition, the entire Malayalam books in the social science subjects available in the Kerala University Library and Departmental Libraries, the State Central Library, Thiruvananthapuram and the Sahitya Academy Library, Trissur were examined to identify gaps and for missing information in the data bases of social science books.

1.7.2 Bibliometric analysis

In order to carry out the bibliometric analysis the details of 5920 books were recorded in the computer. They were recorded on the basis of individual subjects in social sciences. Using the SPSS program various analyses were made.

1.8 Limitations of the study

Since the study covers 166 years from 1835-2000, right from the appearance of social science books in Malayalam, physical verification of all the books is impossible. Therefore, to be comprehensive, published bibliographies were also depended upon to a certain extant. Though every effort has been made to compile a comprehensive database of Malayalam books in social sciences, still there may be omissions in the list due to the
rarity of books and the inadequacy of bibliographic control measures especially in the earlier stages.

1.9 Organization of the thesis

The study is organised under five chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

This preliminary chapter presents the relevance of the study, definition of key terms, scope, objectives, hypotheses, methodology and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Review of the related literature gives an overview of major studies conducted in this field. They are grouped under the heading ‘Structure and characteristics of social science information’, ‘Sources of information in social sciences’, ‘Documentation and bibliographic control of social science literature’ and Bibliometric studies in social sciences’

Chapter 3: Social Science Information

This chapter focuses on the different types of information sources in social sciences used by social scientists, pattern of information use, characteristics of social science literature, various social science organizations and institutions at the global, national and state level, importance of social science books, social science book production in India and social science book production in Malayalam.
Chapter 4: Social Science Books in Malayalam: Bibliometric analysis

A detailed bibliometric analysis of social science books published in Malayalam is attempted in this chapter. The major analyses are the subject-wise distribution, types of books, decade-wise production, authorship pattern, countries covered, major publishers, various editions, translations, estimation of price per page, price and page correlation and determinants of publication output of Malayalam books in social sciences.

Chapter 5: Findings and Conclusion

It is the concluding chapter which gives the summary of the findings. It offers suggestions to improve the production of social science books in Malayalam as well as their bibliographic control. The hypotheses are tested and proved and point out the areas suitable for further studies.
REFERENCES


