Chapter-1

Introductory
Background and Framework of the Study
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INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Libraries have existed for more than a thousand years. In ancient period, libraries were maintained privately by people, rulers and scholars. They comprised of personal or semi-personal collections. Many were attached to temples or legal houses. They specialized in religious studies and law respectively but were never referred to as special libraries. The genesis of special library is difficult to trace, however the evidence of the libraries can be seen after the World War I. The later part of the 20th century saw a significant awakening. Since independence in 1947, there has a steady expansion of research activities due to the establishment of scientific institution, laboratories, emergence of academic and learned society etc. Special libraries began to be recognized slowly in the later part of 19th century. Twentieth century has been called as 'an era of special library'. However, the concept of special library, as we know it today started appearing during twentieth century, particularly after World War II. The history of special libraries in India is interrelated with the growth of research
institutions which stimulated the setting up of such libraries in the country.

As business and industries in general began to grow, such organizations increased in number, size and complexity. Later on, the establishment of scientific and research institutions such as Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), R&D laboratories and other such organizations, paved the way for the establishment of special libraries. With the emergence of all such organization, R&D activities were increasing and information demands were becoming highly specialized.

Consistent efforts have been made and enough literature has been produced on special libraries, but no single distinct definition has emerged which can be accepted fully. Rather, it became complicated because of the large number of definitions. However, the definitions of special libraries began to crystallize only after the turn of the twentieth century but the emphasis varies from one definition to other which would be evident from the following definitions.

Johnson\(^1\) considered 'service' as the most important criterion of a special library, and specifically ranked its service as more important than its subject matter. According to Ridley\(^2\) 'subject' is most important
criterion. He said that a special library means, "A collection of information covering a specific field which may be administered by a special staff and for service of a limited clientele". White has emphasized upon 'specialized clientele and materials'. He said that a special library deals with a specialized clientele or specialized materials or with a combination of both. According to Astall "Special libraries serve the specialist clientele, located within a single establishment or a group, and all are engaged in working towards one common purpose." The emphasize here is on 'special clientele' and 'common purpose' of the organization.

The following definitions given by ISO and UNESCO are quite comprehensive.

According to International Organization for Standardization, Special libraries are "those maintained by an association, government, parliament research institution (excluding university), learned society, professional association, museum, business firm, industrial enterprise, chamber of commerce, etc. or specific field or subject, e.g. natural sciences, social sciences, agriculture, chemistry, medicine, economics, engineering law and history". Emphasize here is on 'parent organizations' and 'specific subject'. According to UNESCO "These libraries may be attached to various bodies, such as parliament or a government department, a scientific or other research institution, a
learned society, professional association, museum industrial association, chamber of commerce, etc....Special libraries are primarily designed to serve a limited number of experts, scientists, research workers, etc, and not coming within any of the categories- national libraries, university libraries, school libraries." This definition is more clear and comprehensive, as it includes organizations, serving a limited number of special clientele, and excludes ‘so-called special libraries’, belonging to other types (national, university, school) of libraries. This definition should be more relevant and acceptable to us.

1.2 Significance of the Study:

Libraries have been considered and accepted as heart and soul of the organization. Because of the multidisciplinary nature of research, the role of a library in R & D organization is more important. It is almost impossible to quantify the information output in any field of research and its related areas. Hence the role of the libraries in acquiring, organizing and disseminating the required information to their patrons cannot be overestimated.

The R&D special libraries in the country are better equipped because the investments in these libraries are much larger than other libraries. Most of the libraries are equipped with modern facilities for handling & providing information to the users. Therefore, the growth of the libraries is quite commendable and they have all the characteristics of a
model organization where facilities of all types are present. The present study will help to find out the level of growth and development of these libraries in terms of facilities. In addition to the routine library services, they offer modern IT based services to their users with ever-dwindling financial resources and facilities.

It is also essential to know the utilization level of modern services by the users of these libraries because every year these libraries are spending a huge amount for this purpose. So the investigator decided to conduct the study for measuring the growth, development and use of the libraries.

The literature review illustrates/explains/shows that few studies have been undertaken but not of these libraries. A study of the growth and development of these libraries as a whole has not been conducted so far. The literature review illustrates that how many similar studies have been conducted so far and also shows that the studies should have not been conducted on this topic.

In keeping with these factors, the present study has been aimed to study the growth, development and use of libraries.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study aimed at and tried to achieve the following objectives.

1. To trace the historical development and growth of libraries.
2. To trace the growth and development in terms of collection and budget.

3. To trace the current status of the libraries in terms of resources and services.

4. To identify the weakness of the libraries.

5. To determine the extent of use of library resources and services and ascertain users' priority for change in services.

6. To find out the factors for slow development of libraries.

7. To make suggestions for better growth, development and services of the libraries.

1.4 The scope of the study:

The scope of the study consists of special libraries of various subjects i.e. Medical, Science, and Agriculture. These libraries were selected out of different libraries existing in Delhi on the basis of the criterion that they are basically affiliated to the special subject areas, they are also acting as national libraries in their subject area and are also under Government control. Delhi being a metropolitan city and the capital of the country has libraries of all disciplines which are very rich in terms of their collection and resources, and leaders in terms of IT applications. The study excludes public, private and university libraries in Delhi. The goal of the study is limited with growth,
development and services available in the libraries. That is why three libraries of different subjects have been taken for study. The libraries are:

- National Science Library, New Delhi.
- National Medical Library, New Delhi.
- Indian Agricultural Research Institute Library, New Delhi.

1.5 Hypotheses

Following hypotheses have been formulated and are proposed to be tested.

1. The growth of libraries is a continuous process.

2. Budget is continuously increasing to cope up the demand of the libraries.

3. Developments of the libraries take the form of expansion of physical facilities and services.

4. Libraries are maintaining their traditional services and collections even as they use technology in new ways to deliver services and provide access to information on networks or through document delivery services.
5. The infrastructure facilities and information services available in all the libraries are not sufficient to meet the information needs of the users.

6. Electronic formats and online databases slowly but surely are becoming an important part of collection of special libraries.

1.6 Research Methodology

There are various research methods such as, historical, survey, experimental etc. This study is based upon survey method. Survey method is used to study growth, development and services of three select National Subject Libraries located in Delhi.

1.6.1 Sample and size of the Population:

The population comprises research scholars, faculty members and other students in 3 select libraries namely IARI, NML and NSL located in Delhi. There were total number of 800 users in IARI and 550 users in NML while as NSL has total population of 50 users. The population investigated was 195 which included male as well as female respondents in IARI, NML and NSL.

1.6.2 Data Collection Method:

Large numbers of data collection techniques are available such as questionnaire, schedule, interviews, observations, socio metric, document review, psychological test etc. The questionnaire, interview,
observations and document review techniques has been used to collect the data.

1.6.2.1 Questionnaire:

To collect the necessary data for the present study, two sets of questionnaires were designed. One for each Librarian/Head of the Library and another for users of the library. Major formatting in the construction of the questionnaire was made to obtain information on growth development and use of the National Science Library, National Medical Library, Indian Agricultural Research Institute Library these all are located in New Delhi.

In order to get maximum information on present study each question is formulated on the basis of the literature reviewed. It has been recognized on the most applicable and reliable instrument for measuring the current status of libraries.

1.6.2.2 Interview method:

Interview is an interpersonal face to face conversation in which the interviewer asks questions pertinent to the research, and respondent answers the questions. It is a very effective tool to collect the data from the people because it ensures better responses as compared to other methods of data collection. Interview also enriches the qualitative data from questionnaire. Therefore, both structured and unstructured interviews have been conducted with the various categories of users on
various aspects i.e. document collection, library and staff, services of the library and their suggestions to improve the library services.

The questionnaire method provides a sufficient structure to facilitate comparative analysis providing clear linkage to the quantitative survey, while providing the interviewer with the opportunity to clarify any question of which the respondent is unclear. The interview technique also helped to understand the problems and to find out the possible solutions of the same to achieve the objectives of the study.

1.6.2.3 Observation:

Observation is a well established technique for collection of data. The observation method is normally employed in measuring, testing, characterizing human behavior. In order to fully assess current library practices, the researcher could not rely solely upon interviews or questionnaire or existing data and so a variety of observation and monitoring techniques were employed. On visiting libraries, it was observed that in a few libraries, there is a wide gap of information provided by the librarians in the areas of availability of infrastructure facilities, use of the collection, both printed and electronic, application of IT in library, problems faced etc. This technique helped the researcher to make the study more scientific.

1.6.2.4 Document review:
The investigator also consulted various printed and electronic document such as annual reports, pamphlets, brochures, CD-ROMs, concerned web-sites and other records of the libraries whenever is required.

1.7 Pilot Study:

After designing the questionnaire a pilot study was conducted in order to test the questionnaire to resolve any problem, which might arise concerning the use of these instruments.

The purpose of the pilot study is to test validity of the questionnaire both as a data collection instrument and statistical measurement device. At this stage it was intended to make the questionnaire easily understandable to the people and to eliminate the probability of misunderstanding, confusions and bias. A group of users, and librarians were agreed to fill in the questionnaire and being interviewed for testing purposes.

As a result of the pre test it was decided to utilize more structured responses, and to record some of the questions in order to improve their clarity.

Separate questionnaire was made for librarians and users. The questionnaire designed for librarians consisting of a number of questions in definite order and format, viz. Library collection, printed as well as electronic, budget, personnel, membership, management of
various activities of the library with special reference to application of S & T, information activities available, information about electronic information services and various training programmes and in relation to manpower needs of the libraries etc. The format of the questionnaire has been given in appendix 1.

The questionnaire designed for library users is also based on structured pattern and is in definite format viz. usefulness of the material, usefulness of the services, purpose of visit to the library, Impact of IT on management, printed sources, problem faced while using IT based services. How to improve services? etc. The questionnaire for library users has been appended as appendix II.

1.8.1 Distribution of Questionnaire:

Investigator visited select libraries and approached the librarians/head of the libraries and users for the purpose of collecting the data. Well structured questionnaires were distributed among the librarians/head of the libraries and library users. Duly filled in questionnaires were collected back from the respondents. Several trips were made by the investigator to get more filled questionnaires and to achieve more response rate.

The questionnaires were distributed to each Librarian /Head of libraries of IARI, NML, NSL, New Delhi and duly filled in questionnaire were received.
The following table shows the distribution of questionnaire to the users of the select libraries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Libraries under study</th>
<th>Questionnaire administered</th>
<th>Questionnaire received</th>
<th>Questionnaire selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IARI (800)</td>
<td>120 (15.00)</td>
<td>92 (76.67)</td>
<td>80 (66.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NML (550)</td>
<td>100 (18.18)</td>
<td>84 (84.00)</td>
<td>75 (75.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSL (50)</td>
<td>45 (90.00)</td>
<td>42 (84.00)</td>
<td>40 (80.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Percentage within parentheses)

The questionnaires were also distributed among the users. A total number of 120 questionnaires were distributed in IARI library, 100 questionnaires in NML and 45 questionnaires were administered in NSL. Out of 120 distributed questionnaires, 92 duly filled in questionnaire were received. Out of which 12 incomplete responses were rejected. In the NML 100 questionnaires were administered out of which 84 duly filled in questionnaires were collected back. Out of these 9 responses of questionnaires were unsatisfactory. In NSL a total number of 45 questionnaires were distributed. Out of which 42 questionnaires were received. In these questionnaires only 3 were incomplete.
Therefore, the investigator considered 80 questionnaires from IARI library, 75 questionnaires from NML, and 40 questionnaires from NSL selected for the study.

1.9 Sources of Data

The data for the study collected from primary sources of information such as journals/periodicals, prospectus, brochures, standards, monographs, reports, websites and responses received from the librarians/head of the libraries, staff and users. However, secondary and tertiary sources i.e. Text books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, yearbooks, directories were also consulted as per need of the study.

1.10 Analysis and presentation of data:

The data collected through questionnaire, observation and informal interview are organized and tabulated by using statistical methods, tables and percentage. The table, chart and diagrams were generated by using MS-Excel software versions 2003.

References

1 Johnson, Ethel M (1915), “The special library and its problems”. Special libraries, Vol. 6, p.158


