CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS

The analysis presented in the previous chapter hints at the requirements of the user community comprising of teachers and researchers in agricultural sciences on one side, and their perception of the stock, services and the staff of the TNAU library on the other. Sandwiched between the two, was the actual profile of TNAU Library, which is both sample and a case for this study. The analysis has scattered many related facts. All such ideas are synthesized and presented as the results or the findings of the studies.

This study, like most studies, has some findings which have directly stemmed out of the objectives and others which accidently emerged. Such objective related and collateral findings are combined and presented hereunder in a logical and cohesive order.

1. Profile of the Users

Listed below are the characteristics of the user community, employed at the TNAU, Coimbatore.
a. All the users had studied M.Sc. and 43.72% had even done a Ph.D.

b. Among these, 18.59% were Professors, 34.17% were Associate Professors (Readers) and 47.24% were Assistant Professors (Lecturers).

c. A strong association was observed between the qualifications and the designation suggesting that there is encouragement or rewards for research. Promotion must have been a good motivator for the respondents to do Ph.D. and to undertake the other types of research.

d. Majority, i.e. 52.26% of the users were between 30-45 years of age followed by those above 45 years (35.18%) and below 25 years (12.56%).

e. Majority of the users (52.26%) had put in more than 15 years service. Also, there were 34.17% of the users with experience ranging from 5 to 15 years followed by 13.57% with less than five years standing.

f. Age of users and experience go almost hand-in-hand. This suggests that the users grow within the organisation. In other words, generally outsiders are not recruited for higher posts. Therefore, it appears that there is no stiff competition from outside.
g. Since experience and designation are also correlated, one can conclude that as one gains experience, he/she gets promotion.

h. It follows from (c), (f) and (g) above, that if one does his Ph.D. indulges in research and gains experience by way of the passing years, he/she generally gets promotion. Therefore, one can conclude that there is enough direct motivation for research.

i. Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering, Horticulture, Basic Sciences, Forestry, Home Science and Veterinary and Animal Sciences, in that order, are the preferred subjects of the users.

2. Preferred Resource Centre

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's Library was the first preferred resource centre for the majority of the users. This suggests that the users are fairly satisfied with its resources, staff and services.

3. Type of Documents

Books and journals continue to be the most preferred documents. This suggests that the tried, tested and confirmed information is preferred more than the nascent information
available in the documents such as technical reports. The other documents are used depending on their purpose.

4. Purpose of Reference and Reading

The first five major purposes in the order of their importance to the users for which the agricultural scientists refer books/periodicals were:

1. To identify a specific problem.
2. To design research project.
3. To avoid duplication in research.
4. To support theoretical background.
5. To frame hypotheses.

Identifying a specific problem would mean, locating a research problem within a broad subject area. It is at this stage that a researcher goes through several works of other authors to know what work has been done and to frame his area of specialisation. In other words, literature survey is the main purpose for referring books and journals.

The above referred five reasons, particularly the order among them, as identified by this study, tells that consulting books and journals or visiting library provides the basic foundation for research i.e. the precise objectives, the blueprint in the form of research design and building blocks like hypotheses.
This directly points at the significance of the libraries in research. This systematic method of doing research, not only reflect in the quality of research, but also in guiding the fresh students for Ph.D. or any other in-depth study. Therefore, libraries have equally significant role in teaching.

5. Aspects of the Users' Information Need

The focus here is to know what type of information is being sought by the farm scientists. The following are some of the findings indicating the factors that count in the type of information sought.

a. Language: Next to English, the languages in which information is considered valuable and sought are, German, Japanese, Russian, French, Chinese and Dutch, in that order.

b. Origin: While 19.6% of the respondents felt the literature originated from India is entirely useful, 6.03% felt that it is of no use. However, 74.37% indicated that information originating from India is partially useful. In otherwords, the majority did not attach much importance to the origin of the information.
What matters is, its relevance and utility for the purpose of research.

c. Climate: Agriculture is a subject closely dependent on the climate of a particular place. It was established in this study that the preferred information pertains to the agriculture of the following types of climates, in that order.

- Tropical
- Sub-tropical
- Semi-arid
- Arid
- Temperate

India being a tropical country, it is natural that information about tropical agriculture is preferred. Even sub-tropical and Semi-arid are preferred for the similar reasons. (It is not out of place to state that International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is functioning at Hyderabad).

Synthesising the findings (b) and (c), it can be concluded that information about agriculture related to tropical, subtropical and semi-arid
c. Recency: While 79.4% say that they prefer recent information, what they meant by that was unbelievable. Just 2.01% of them actually require really nascent information. 84.93% preferred to have information even upto 10 years old.

e. Urgency: How soon one requires the information is an important aspect of information need. It was noticed that the majority expect the information to be given within a week, followed by a fortnight. Only a few expect it on the same day. This shows that the farm scientists are not in a great hurry to find their information. Perhaps, they are well organised to foresee their requirements in advance.

f. Method: Librarians are trained to search information in a systematic manner. They have knowledge of secondary sources, they have access to the other sources of informations. On the other
hand, the users either develop their own crude methods of searching or they may approach the library staff for their information need.

It was noticed that the following is the order of preference among several methods of searching information as indicated by the respondents.

1. Directly referring the periodicals.
2. Searching through abstracts.
3. Referring the subject bibliographies.
5. Through printed indexes.
7. Library's information file.

Directly referring the periodicals is a good indication, if keeping oneself up-to-date is the purpose of reference. And, for retrospective searches, abstracts are the ideal starting points. A point to be noticed is that consulting the library staff has taken the sixth place.
g. **Facilities** : The following are the preferred order among the facilities which the users expect.

1. Provision of primary documents.
2. Access to international databases.
3. Availability of secondary documents.
4. Publicity about the publications.

6. **Users' Perception of the Library**

   The following are the perceptions of the users about the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's Library.

   a. 63.82% of the respondents feel that the book collection was not adequate.

   b. 81.91% of them indicated that the periodical collection is inadequate.

   c. Even when the particulars like the author and title are known 65.83% of the users do not approach the book through the catalogue. They directly go to the shelf which is likely to have it. The rest, either consult the library staff or approach the catalogue.

   d. If the required book is not readily available, the majority try for it in their next visit, some take alternate titles
and only 5.03% approach librarian for help. Lack of reservation facility is a serious lacunae.

e. Only 27.64% of the users seek librarian's help for procuring documents from outside source and 41.21% try on their personal level. It appears that inter-library loan is not a formally accepted process.

f. Majority (i.e. 81.91%) had suggested the library to purchase or subscribe for a book or a periodical respectively, at some time or the other. Many of those whose recommendations were rejected did not even known the reasons. Many didn't even know that it is their right to recommend titles and it only helps the library to grow. In short, users participation in the collection building is not a formally accepted practice.

g. Majority of users do not seek the help of library staff because they either think that the library staff are too busy to be approached or they are not aware that librarians have special skills in searching information.

7. Strengths and Weaknesses

All these findings viewed in the light of the profile of the library given in the previous chapter (Section 6.4) indicates strengths and weaknesses of the TNAU library.
Strengths

a. Majority of its users heavily depend on TNAU Library.

b. Users are highly qualified and experienced. They are well motivated to persuade research and teaching. Therefore they are all well aware of the library's role in their work.

c. The purposes for which the users approach the library amply demonstrate that library is almost indispensible in their work.

d. The subject areas of users interest are well defined.

e. The description of the information sought can be clearly stated in terms of climatic conditions, origin of the information, language of exposition, how recent is the recent information sought etc.

f. Users give enough time to the library staff to search information. In otherwords, library staff do not work under great hurry or pressure or tension as it happens in the cases of newspaper libraries, hospital libraries and contact libraries.
Weaknesses

a. The library is grossly understaffed by any standard. As a result users always find the library staff too busy to be approached for any help. This defeats the role and purpose of library.

b. Collection, particularly leaves much to be desired. Both books and periodical collection is inadequate.

c. Knowledge about secondary journals and the right method of searching information is lacking among the users.

d. There is no practice of reserving a book when it is on loan.

e. Inter-Library loan service is yet to be operated in a formal manner.

f. Users participation in collection building is neglected.

g. There appears no confidence about the capabilities or skills of the library staff in the minds of users.

h. The library building is not functional and hence causes inconvenience to the staff and users.

All these strengths and weaknesses can be summed up to say that the farm scientists do not use library to its full capacity because they do not know its full potential. This, in fact was
the research hypothesis, and thus it is proved. Based on these strengths and weaknesses, the study goes on to make some suggestions which incidentally form the eighth objective of the study. These suggestions are presented in the next chapter.