CHAPTER 8

SUGGESTIONS

All the strengths point at the presence of matured and motivated users and weaknesses indicate the shortcomings owing to improper communication between users and the library staff. In other words, there is a major role for the library in Agricultural Education and Research but it is being played half-heartedly by the TNAU Library. Therefore, the following suggestions stem from the study and they are grouped in a useful manner. These form the opportunities and threats of the SWOT analysis referred on p. 57.

1. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Library should involve the users more actively in its collection development. It should be made clear to the users, that it is their library, and they can decide what it should have. This not only brings better documents to the library, but also makes the users understand how librarians struggle to live within budget lines.

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2. Surveys of use of periodical literature should be conducted from time-to-time to know if every journal is being used or not. Special efforts must be made to promote the use of less used journals.

3. Proper efforts must be made to identify lacunae in the collection such as incomplete multivolume works, missing titles and titles cited in standard bibliographies which are not available in the library etc. Even an eye on the inter-library loans help in identifying good titles for addition. Users help may be sought in this activity.

4. Since books are still the main sources of information (p. 77) and the users require information up to nearly previous ten years (p. 83), a portion of the budget should be earmarked for procuring standard works, not available in the library. The balance amount should be spent on new books.

5. Co-ordinated effort will see that the departmental libraries don't duplicate the collection. Thus, money is made available for other worthy titles.

6. Since climate is a main aspect of agricultural information, classification or cross referencing through catalogue cards
and providing keywords while computerising in the future, this aspect should be reflected.

7. An early computerisation solves many problems of searching catalogue cards and avoids duplication of documents which takes away valuable space and money.

8. Computerisation should be planned conforming to the standards recommended by INFLIBNET, a library network proposed for the university libraries and other research organisations (See also 12th item of this section).

9. A service facilitating reservation of books that are on loan should be started with immediate effect. It is least expensive but most useful service. It shows the user community that the library cares for them.

10. A conventional reference desk should be established on all the floors. It is not merely having a desk that matters, but it should always be manned. Further, staff at this desk shouldn't unnecessarily display that he/she is busy. No work from the other departments should be brought to the reference desk. The staff should be always ready and willing to help.

11. The library should have some current awareness services to take care of individual requirements of the researchers.
12. A word of caution regarding computerisation. One need not venture to abstract and index all the journal articles. If AGRIS is available on CD-ROM, it is better one subscribes to it and buy a CD-ROM drive. This is particularly recommended for two reasons. First, a team of experts prepare, edit and bring out AGRIS. They also have access to a number of journals, in different languages. They use standard subject headings with thesaurus, which ensures consistency. Subscribing to such a document the library gets access to the citations and abstracts of such a vast output of literature. Second, the library does not have staff and expertise to do this mammoth work in-house.

13. The library is understaffed. There should be a carefully planned recruitment drive to support all services.

14. User education should be given priority. Besides giving lectures and guided tour, the library should have a 45 minutes programme about its services on video. This is recommended particularly because users who are not attentive at the time of lecture may see the video tapes at their convenience without being shy of asking librarians to repeat what was told. The library can be proud of such a video cassette. Even this video cassette has to be revised at least once in two or three years.
15. Facilities like inter-com telephone on all the service points and work tables, micro-film and fiche reader installed in a prominent place, safety measures like fire extinguishers, service contracts with pest control etc. are to be strengthened.

16. Work allocation to the staff should take care that no individual is burdened. There should be enough variety to provide job satisfaction. Professionally satisfied staff can provide better service.

17. Enough publicity should be given about the presence and utility of audio-visual and the other special collection.

18. The building should be renovated to see that it is made more functional. One of the staircase is redundant. Catalogue cabinet should be placed on the ground floor. The authorities should consult some experienced librarians in this matter.

All these suggestions, being product of this study, are not merely recommendations. These should actually be reviewed as tips towards marketing of library and information services to agricultural scientists. These reflect the strengths, weakness opportunities, and threats of TNAU Library. What is told about
TNAU Library is equally valid for any agricultural university library; it may differ in degree. This study drives home the importance or role of library in teaching and research of agricultural sciences. It is not merely being proud of a key role that matters, but it is important to play it well. It is hoped that the suggestions of this study will be useful for any Indian Agricultural University Library to play its role to its full potential.