CHAPTER – 6

MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

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6.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter the data collected by survey methodology using a questionnaire method is presented and analyzed. In this chapter, major findings of the study are presented based on the analysis of the data. The findings are grouped and presented under significant headings.

6.1 Major Findings of the Study

I. Findings of traditional library environment

a) General findings about the colleges:

Under this heading, the type of college management, courses offered and the status of the accreditation.

1. Among the colleges under study majority of colleges numbering 225 (66.2%) belongs to the private (grant-in-aid) management. The remaining 115 (33.8%) colleges are the government colleges.

2. On the courses of study in undergraduate category, from among the 340 colleges taken for study, 230 (67.6%) colleges offer B.A. degree courses, followed by 85 (25.00%) colleges offer B.Com. degrees and a small number of colleges i.e. 15 (7.4%) offer B.Sc. courses.
3. The study of postgraduate courses show of the eight P-G courses offered the M.A. degree is offered by 24 (7.1%) colleges which is the highest among them. The next is the PGDCA with 23 (6.8%) number of colleges.

4. The study finds that among the 340 colleges, 285 (83.82%) colleges have completed the accreditation process instituted by NAAC and for the remaining colleges the accreditation process is underway.

5. Of the 285 which have been accredited, the highest number of colleges to the extent of 194 (68.07%) colleges got the “B” grade and interestingly 55 (19.30%) colleges have got “A” more than the B+ grade with only 8.42% of colleges.

b) Findings about the College Libraries

Under this heading the situation of college libraries with reference to collection, finance, allocation of budget, services, library staff and physical facilities like buildings etc., are given here.

6. The libraries under study possess a large collection of print materials like books and periodicals with a mean value of 32834 and 57 respectively. The collection of audio-visuals, compact-discs and electronic sources is very meager with mean values 47.64, 112.94 and only 1.15 respectively.

7. The study findings reveal that of the entire 340 colleges offer lending and reference services to their users. This is followed by 295 (86.8%) user
education programmes, and the next comes the current awareness service with 280 (82.4%) and photocopy by 254 (74.7%) colleges.

8. The college library users constitute students, teachers and administrative staff. Among them the student users are the major category with a mean value of nearly 1000 per college. In case of teachers it is only 39 per college.

9. The sources of finance for most colleges are UGC and the library fees collected from students with 302 (88.8%) and 313 (92.1%) colleges respectively. Other sources are the government and the donations.

10. The budget allocation for the last three years shows that it is on the decline year after year especially from UGC. Only a small amount is allocated for the purchase of non-print media like, audio-visuals, CDs and others.

11. Among the professional staff heading the college libraries, 334 colleges with 98.2% are having the professional librarian. For remaining colleges details were not available.

12. The common ratio of library staff consists of one professional, one semi-professional and one non-professional which is found to be in most colleges with 278 (81.8%), 162 (47.6%) and 132 (38.8) figures respectively. Surprisingly some colleges have large number of semi and non-professional staff in the absence of a professional.

13. The professional staff in majority possesses the basic minimum qualification of Masters Degree in Library and Information Science. The number is 264 with 77.6% of libraries. The other higher qualified staffs are with Ph.D. 7
(2.1%) and M.Phil. 31 (9.1%). It is rather surprising that there are 38 (11.2%) only with B.L.I.Sc. qualification.

14. Among physical infrastructure the library building is one of the major facility. It found that 208 (61.2%) colleges have an independent library building and for the remaining colleges 132 (38.8%) the library building is a part of main or other buildings.

c) Electronic Environment in the Libraries

Under this part the electronic environment assessed is electronic information resources held by the college libraries and the budget allocation made there to. Other then this the ICT infrastructures like, library automation, software used, internet and web facility are available, the funding for IT infrastructure, the networking environment for participating in library networks and the opinion of library staff on library automation and networking are sought. In addition, any supporting facilities available are also reckoned.

i) Library Automation and Related Issues:

15. The automation is one of the fundamental requirements for going electronic by the libraries. It is found that 241 (70.9%) college libraries have partially automated their library house keeping activities only and in 99 (29.1%) college libraries the automation is under progress.
16. Out of 241 colleges which have partially automated, 238 (98.70%) college libraries have automated only the cataloguing system only and 231 (95.8%) college libraries the acquisition of books and periodical systems. In 98 (40.6%) libraries the circulation system is coupled with barcode system and 117 (48.5%) libraries are without the barcode system in the circulation system. Since the barcode is insisted this indicates an important finding. It is found that libraries have OPAC facility.

17. It is indicated from the study finding that 296 (87.1%) college library staff is of the opinion that the library automation has more benefits than the manual system.

18. It was a very interesting finding that a large majority of libraries with a strength of 320 (94.1%) have opined that it is because of the initiation taken by the librarian the automation was introduced. In contrast 300 (88.2%) libraries agree that it is because of the availability of grants from the management.

19. There are very interesting findings related to library automation such as its benefits, benchmarking manuals for library automation and influencing factors for library automation. The data and findings are given under tables – 27, 28 and 29 vide sections 5.27, 5.28 and 5.29 respectively.

20. The opinion on the need for automation finds that 296 (87.1%) libraries have agreed that automation is essential for getting better library services in the present scenario.
ii) Use of Software Packages

21. Among 340 libraries, 148 (43.5%) libraries use e-lib automation library software package which is followed by 63 (18.5%) libraries use the NewGenLib open source software. Next in the preference is LibSoft with 46(13.5%) and 11(3.2%) libraries use the locally developed automation software.

22. The use of operating systems is another important finding in the study. The study indicates that 172 (50.6%) libraries have been using Windows-98 operating system, followed by Window 2000/XP in 168 (49.4%) libraries. It is interesting to note that 8(2.4%) libraries use LINUX operating system.

23. On the use of other software utilities, 280 (82.4%) libraries use MS-Word, and in the 188 (55.3%) libraries and 147 (43.2%) libraries the MS-Power Point and MS-Access are used respectively. It is also found that in 141 (41.5%) libraries the DTP is used and in a very small number of libraries 30 (8.8%) and 48 (14.1%) the spread sheet and DBMS utilities are found in use which are more utilitarian for library management.

iii) IT Infrastructure Support

24. In the context of some stand-by utility like UPS and Inverter, it is found from the study that 222 (65.3%) libraries possess UPS/Stabilizer. It is interesting to
note that 128 (37.6%) of them have generators. Even it is a central facility for college, but the library gets this facility.

25. Among other accessories relating to IT infrastructure, libraries possess display and presentation facilities, television and DVD/CD players. The libraries have OHP and LCD projectors and the tape recorders including public address systems. The details are presented under table – 21 vide section 5.21.

26. The study findings show that the college libraries receive funding for IT infrastructure from different sources. The INFLIBNET, college management and the UGC are the sources from where 329 (96.8%), 258 (75.9%) and 215 (63.2%) libraries have received funding for IT infrastructure respectively.

iv). Internet, Web and Networking Aspects

27. The study findings show that 280 (82.4%) colleges have provided INTERNET facilities in their libraries.

28. In the context of the web/network based services 186 (54.7%) and 169 (49.7%) libraries provide facilities for browsing and e-mail services.

29. It is highly discouraging to find that among 340 libraries only 13 (3.8%) libraries are having a membership to any library network and remaining 327 (96.2) libraries do not carry any membership facility in this regard. On the other hand, in contrast the data on opinions on having willingness to
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participate and draw benefits from networks reveals positive attitude of the libraries.

30. The findings on the facilities of library networks reveal that, 329 (96.8%) libraries have opined that it helps to access to world wide web and this is followed by 316 (92.9%) libraries stating that networking helps in document delivery services.

31. It is quite encouraging to find that the willingness to participate in library networks has a good response. Out of 340 libraries, 273 (80.3%) of them have shown willingness to participate in regional networks. Other factors on the benefits of participating the library networks are revealed under table-30 vide section 5.30.

32. The study finds that 207 (60.9%) library staff strongly agrees that there is a need for networking college libraries. Those who are willing to participate in the networking opine that they need proper training in handling information technology gadgets in the libraries.

33. The opinions on importance of networking of libraries was sought with five point rating scales, Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. About 17 important factors were used for enquiry and the findings of the responses are tabulated under table – 37 and vide section 5.36.

34. The best practices in libraries are the guidelines for quality services. The findings on the best practices in libraries reveal that 302(88.8%) library staff says that conduct user education programmes frequently, 249 (73.2%)
libraries acquire reading materials in different formats followed by 184 (54.1%) libraries stating that the library automation activity is to be carried out with standard digital software.

35. The best practices are ranked from their opinions expressed by the respondents. As many as 18 instances of best practices are enlisted and opinions are sought. The findings are quite interesting in the sense that the first two rankings are quite conversant with common library practices like collection building and user education programmes. Some of them are quite diverse. The data is revealing and findings are curious. See table – 39 vide section 5.37.

The findings of the research study primarily show the resultant factors of electronic environment in college libraries and their implications in the maintenance of quality and the development of skills for handling the changing college library situations.

6.2 Conclusion

Information and communication technologies have descended on academic libraries towards a total transformation and the related technological advances are focusing on a number of issues and challenges with electronic environment in respect of resource collection, organization and services. The immediate challenge to academic libraries is to bring in a change in the working conditions and build
relevant competencies and skills among the library users and staff. This will be achieved through the development of strategies to build and manage the transition from the print version to the electronic version. In this era of dynamic changes in the ICT, library professional will recognize the importance of obtaining the necessary skills to become competitive and function in the information age of the twenty first century, and it would be a life-long learning process. In Karnataka, the Department of Collegiate Education has made efforts to update the skills of college librarian. The degree of knowledge and skill level required for librarians will be dictated by the needs of information sources made available to support the curriculum for the research. The academic librarians must often be familiar with both print and electronic versions to help serve the information needs of several levels of library patrons.

The electronic resources have actually created better facilities for the users of the libraries as well as for library profession. The libraries are building hybrid collection and making due environment to strike a balance between collection and providing access to print and electronic resources. In addition, librarians must keep in mind the needs of patrons as the resource of the library, as they build collections and prepare access. The academic libraries must keep pace with developments and with the emerging technologies will be able to serve the basic information needs of the library users. The libraries are required to assist and train library users with online public catalogue, e-journals, and other electronic resources as the college libraries are
tending to become more and more electronic in their collection environment. They also include commercial online database, stand alone and networked CD-ROM databases. Added to these, there are varieties of information resources available on the internet with overwhelming number of information possibilities and delivery mechanisms. In this context, the academic libraries' growth is lamented by the choice of collection between electronic and print media and the library users and the library staffs are required to update skills and knowledge in order to provide quality services. The conclusions drawn on this topic “Growth and Development of College Libraries in the Electronic Environment: A Study of Impact of Quality Awareness and Competence Building Measures” deal with the issues and objectives set before this research study.

A. General

1. The college libraries under study come under the different management and governance and there is an even growth of them, under Government and private (grant-in-aid) management categories.

2. The courses offered by the colleges are primarily undergraduate and the science courses are on the decline may be concluded as due to the growth of professional education in the state.

3. The post-graduate courses are very few and yet there is some hope for professionally oriented courses like PGDCA and MBA.
4. This change and impact of courses offered has some influence on the academic libraries and their users.

5. Several education commissions by the Government of India and the University Grants Commission were constituted to improve the lot of academic libraries and there are some marginal improvements found in this regard. The Ranganathan and the Radhakrishanan Commissions have really highlighted the importance of libraries in the academic institutions.

6. The UGC has created the National Assessment and Accreditation Council which has been responsible for the positive approach towards the improvement of academic libraries and in this regard it has issued guidelines and norms towards the quality standards of Constituent, Affiliated and Autonomous Colleges.

B. Developments

7. The growth of college libraries is also associated with the influence of information communication technologies in the last two decades which has necessitated the libraries to go electronic and the staff needs to upgrade their skills and knowledge to handle the changing environment.

8. It is commendable to note that the Department of Collegiate Education in Karnataka has created a mechanism to train the college librarians towards
quality management and to build competencies with modern technological facilities.

9. The establishment of INFLIBNET by the UGC has influenced the college libraries to look forward to the advantages of ICT applications in their work.

10. The above fact has initiated widespread programmes of automating library operations in many college libraries. This has enabled them to participate in the library networks to share the resources and also augment better collection profile for their users.

11. In the light of the above the college libraries are building adequate IT infrastructure and the adequate funds are made available to them in this regard.

12. The UGC-INFONET consortia have made a tremendous impact on college libraries to enter into the world of electronic environment and the faculty and students are benefited by this project.

13. The UGC – INFONET consortia here to before have focused on the university faculty has now extended to the services of the college libraries under the jurisdiction of each university.

14. The proposed UNILINK programme of linking university libraries in the state would create a needed impetus to share the electronic resources not only among the universities but also among the colleges.
C. Electronic Environment

15. The onset of electronic environment of academic libraries which was a slow
gradual process in the early 1990s became accelerated with several changes
not only technology but by the initiatives taken by Government and the UGC
such as INFLIBNET project and UGC-INFONET consortia.

16. Though the onset of electronic resources has been more than one and a half
decade now, especially in academic environment, the electronic resources
possessed by the college libraries is not quite adequate.

17. In this context, it is strongly felt that the college libraries should formulate
policy to acquire electronic resources and also observe the policies, standards
and guidelines issued by the suitable authorities like NAAC and others.

18. It is observed that the academic libraries have to build adequate strength of
electronic resources and may have to allocate considerable amount towards
subscriptions to e-journals and other e-publications.

19. The college libraries are keen and eager to participate in library networks at all
levels and are even to ready to subscribe to these networks if they are
fee-based.

20. The developments at the national level like the INFLIBNET, UGC-INFONET
consortia and other digital library projects are going to create a healthy and
conceivable electronic environment in the college libraries and the college

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libraries should also look forward to build their own electronic resources through archival digitization and creating institutional repositories.

6.3 Suggestions and points for further study

1. The process of accreditation has been responsible for the transformation in the outlook of college libraries especially in the adopt of modern technological developments in the academic environment, for teaching, research and pedagogy. It is suggested that more and more colleges should seek accreditation and derive benefits for the assessment process which is a positive move.

2. In the knowledge era of today, library without adequate collection of knowledge resources is like a body without soul. It is observed from the study that only a few colleges are subscribing electronic journals and acquiring different formats, especially the multimedia products so essential in teaching.

3. In this era of electronic information revolution, the users’ demands are more towards sources of easy access and appealing. Hence there is need for augmenting the libraries with sources which supplement learning more effectively like the multimedia resources especially reference works. It is found that many college libraries have not concentrated on them and it is strongly suggested that the libraries would make efforts to stock sufficient number of these resources.

4. The library staff especially the professional staff should make it a point to update their knowledge as frequently as possible and there are ample opportunities
available outside the formal learning environment. Hence the staff should acquire new knowledge voluntarily and utilize the same in improving their libraries. It is suggested that minimum qualifications for college libraries should not at any time be less than masters degree in Library and Information Science, with a desirable qualification in IT oriented subjects like, digital libraries, library automation and networking and knowledge management and so on.

5. The age of electronic and digital libraries has arrived and has become stable organizational change. The primary need of the hour is to help the users to use the services at optimum level and for which need education and training. Hence, the academic libraries should design a scheme of imparting information literacy to all of its users more intensively and it should become part of the academic assignment in the curriculum.

6.4 Further Areas of Research

1. The study has covered colleges under only two types of management. It should include now the purely private colleges and attempt a comparison of situation in the Government, Private Aided and Purely Private Colleges.

2. A research on the use of electronic resources in college libraries and their adequate provision with sufficient funding could be another research area which would generate issues for funding the college libraries to build digital collection in tune with the developments.
3. The study of ICT infrastructure and their utilization and benefits to the users of libraries can be another useful research area and that would bring some benchmarks for the ICT facilities in the college libraries.

4. The IT is generating new technologies for application in libraries like RFID technology. The research in cost effective use of new technologies in academic libraries would make a good research proposal.