Chapter 1
Introduction

Libraries are facing serious competition from commercial information services providers which essentially use the resources available from libraries and analyze and repackage the same for customized use by the clients and online resources are emerging in a big way that will question the role and form of libraries in future. In the competitive information environment, information is being recognized as a critical resource for socio-economic development. Scientific and technical information growth is exponential and the users are confused with the right information at the right time. Thus libraries have been putting considerable efforts in the design of information products and services in distributing the same effectively and efficiently. In view of the social, economic and technological changes, library and information centers have begun to realize that marketing of information products and services is an integral part of administration. On account of information explosion, the technological revolution and escalating library costs are responsible for encouraging the library profession to develop a professional marketing approach in its operations and services.

1.1 Marketing

The literature on marketing does not provide a single definition of the concept due to the difference in background and perspectives of the authors, ranging from business to information. The word “marketing” in the Oxford English Dictionary reveals that usage of the term can be traced back to 1561 when it meant simply “to buy or sell”. As early as 1884, the meaning began to change to “‘bringing or sending (a commodity) to market,’” which encompasses not just the selling of a product, but the “‘systematic study of all the factors involved in marketing a product’”. The meaning of the word “marketing” is the action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising.
The American Marketing Association (AMA) defined marketing as the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services to the customer. Kotler, the marketing guru, calls marketing a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others.” He further adds “marketing is the analysis, planning and controlling of the firm’s customer imagining, resources, policies and activities with a view to satisfying the need and want of chosen customer groups at a profit.” He summarized the marketing concept holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists in determining the need and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors. The four key elements of marketing concept are target market, satisfying needs and wants, coordinate marketing, and organizational goals.

Marketing is the process by which products are made available to the ultimate customers from their point of origin. It consists of all those activities which are meant to ensure the flow of goods and services from the producer to the customer. The modern concept of marketing is a social approach which is customer oriented. It makes customer the focus of all business activities. It laid emphasis of the customer satisfaction. The modern concept of marketing is one which starts with an interpretation of consumer’s needs and desires.

Marketing is no longer viewed as merely the selling of a product, but more “an approach to product design that reflects the identified needs of the target populations”. Marketing involves the process of creating products that consumers want. In terms of libraries, marketing can be defined as the process of planning, promoting, and advertising library services and resources created and packaged according to users’ needs and expectations. In essence, marketing gives libraries the tools to determine what services users want, and then to develop, package, and promote those services and resources in a way that will entice users to use the library effectively.
1.1.1 Marketing of information changes and challenges

The history of marketing library services began long before the concept was born. Samuel Swett Green in his often quoted speech at the ALA Conference in 1876 advocated "improved personal relations between librarians and readers." It could be said that today's marketing of library services has its roots in parts of the USA and Northern Europe, in countries with few illiterates and more money, libraries, and library schools than the rest of the world. This certainly does not mean that the idea of libraries reaching out to "the common man" has not occupied librarians in other parts of the world. For instance, there is the example of the "library movement" in India at the beginning of the 20th century.7

Marketing of information is one of the stages of information management. It involves promoting the information products and services by adopting marketing strategies effectively. The most important objective of marketing information is to attract more number of users and to encourage them to utilize the resources of the library to the maximum extent.

Many of business sector organizations have achieved success through a better management of the market. There are four essential factors identified in a successful marketing oriented organization.

1. Focus on customers
2. Long-run perspective
3. Full use of all the resources available
4. Tendency to innovations

In terms of libraries, marketing means a sufficient change in the traditional attitude of librarians towards acquisition, organization, processing and retrieving information. The basis of library service should be to help its users to solve their information gathering and processing needs. The libraries can do this only if it relies on systematic information collection, procedures and policies and adjusts its products, services and organizational policies and procedures to the demands of
the users. Also the modern concept of library, is user oriented which makes user the focus of all activities

At the pragmatic level, there are two types of barrier which might hinder the recognition that libraries need to adopt the marketing concept.  

- In general libraries offer a service and not a good. Services marketing have been recognized as a separate field which has developed more recently that product marketing. A service is an intangible product involving a deed, a performance, or an effort that cannot be physically processed. Focus on the quality of the service experience and the relationship with the customer in developing a service marketing strategy.

- Many libraries are established by parent organizations, such as academic institutions or local authorities to offer a service. It encourages a more traditional perspective on marketing characterized by an approach based on deciding the services that can be offered and then seeking to persuade the customer that they wish to buy.

The winds of globalization, marketization, and privatization have been sweeping away the long-held political and economic beliefs. Governments and social sponsors have been propagating that social institutions like hospitals, schools, colleges, and libraries become self sufficient if they are to purposefully work and demonstrate their relevance and competence to their clients. As a result, librarians and information managers are facing a four pronged challenge.

- Increase in clientele, their variety, demands, and their expectations.
- Increase in the initial or capital cost of information and Information Technology, and the need to leverage the technology and find new levels of economies of scale to serve the increasing potential clientele.
- Drying up of the public sponsorship and subsidy and the need to find alternative sources of revenue.
- Complexity in ways of identifying clients and their requirements and serving them.
Librarians and information managers are, therefore, called upon to show their initiative and entrepreneurship. The concept of marketing libraries is not new. Gupta\textsuperscript{10} points out that public libraries were the first to embrace the concept of marketing, with the main thrust in the 1980s aiming at the four Ps – product, price, place and promotion– and academic libraries were the leaders in marketing their services. In the next decade, libraries continued to emphasize traditional marketing strategies such as recruiting new customers, but also began to understand the importance of satisfying patrons’ needs. According to him the concept of marketing libraries is based on the following assumptions:

1. Libraries have long been non-profit organizations; the development of marketing libraries was influenced by Kotler and Levy’s \textsuperscript{11} theories about marketing for non-profit organizations;
2. Libraries are involved in service operations. Because services are different from products, service marketing is different from product marketing;
3. Libraries must establish relationships with users, suppliers, governments, parent organizations and so forth; they have to satisfy all stakeholders, not only the users;
4. Libraries are not the sole providers of information and must be competitive; and
5. The Internet allows libraries to offer services anytime, anywhere and to anyone.

Marketing is beneficial to libraries because an effective marketing programme can help the library to create competitive advantage through the development of new services or changes of the existing ones to satisfy their users better; improvement of their organizational status and image to different stakeholders; and there by improve their performance in general.

The marketing of information has been a popular topic in the library profession in recent years. But at the same time there has been much controversy regarding the concept of marketing in the library and information services profession. There is
still much resistance in the library and information services field to the use of 'marketing' approach to management. The information product and services are like customer product and services in many respects. But there is reluctance on the part of librarians to employ marketing principles in libraries. Marketing as a concept and as a practice, still seems alien to many library and information personnel. Within the profession, there is a residual feeling that marketing is somehow inappropriate for a public service institution such as library. Some librarians still hold this view and see no room for such practice in a not-for-profit profession like librarianship. Now it is high time to change our attitude. Marketing of information means transference of information to the potential user/customer.

1.1.2 Marketing of information in the university libraries

The marketing of information in the university libraries happens to be a recent phenomenon. In India, the universities are being funded by the UGC and state governments. This may be the reason that the information providers in the university libraries are not seriously thinking in terms of marketing their products and services. The university libraries until now depended upon common sense standards for the acquiring of information and disseminating of the same to the users. Their efforts in this direction can at best be described as casual or immature. The result is that information services provided by the libraries have not proved very beneficial to the scholars. The libraries have failed to provide the required information support to the users because the services provided by them are often not user-oriented or need based. The reason for this sad state of affairs is that users are not involved in the design of services and they are not made aware of the potentialities of information services and how these services can benefit them in their pursuits. The result is that whatever services are available, remain either unutilized or underutilized. However, this state of affairs can be activated by adopting suitable marketing strategy.\(^\text{12}\)

In this era of the Internet and e-books, it is imperative to market the library for its survival. To increase the visibility of a library and ensure it remains a vital part of a community, proper marketing and rising of public awareness are needed.
Libraries offer a world of knowledge as well as personal service and assistance in finding what is needed. As libraries go digital and the higher education environment grows ever more complicated, new opportunities for academic libraries to market their services arise.\(^\text{13}\)

Marketing approach is very useful to university libraries to improve their image and to attract more users. The librarians in the university libraries can play a significant role in catering to the needs of different groups of the academic community - students, teachers and research scholars – for furthering their educational research. They are more responsive to their user's needs and wants and more effectively achieve the library goals and objectives. They are not fully exploiting the comparative advantages that they possess in comparison to private sector information agencies. Rising prices of reading material, information explosion, introduction of new information technology, shrinking funds, devaluation of money, declining support to libraries have made it necessary for the university libraries to reconsider their position and to utilize some of the tools that have made it possible for profit organizations to operate efficiently, effectively and profitably. One of the tools which is appropriate is marketing their products and services. No doubt, marketing helps the librarians to upgrade their reputation within their organizations and as a profession within the society.

Many librarians have their view that marketing products and services is not possible in academic libraries. Kotler\(^\text{14}\) is of the view that marketing is not limited to large corporations seeking profits only. It is equally applicable to non-profit organizations as well as colleges, universities, charitable institutions, libraries, information centres and service organizations of all kinds.

1.1.2.1 Market and potential market of a university library
Library and information products and services are now being recognized as commodities that can be sold, exchanged, lent, and transmitted. University libraries rely on their host organizations for operational costs. To gain some self sufficiency, university libraries think seriously about not only recovering the costs
incurred but also making a profit through their services. Information marketing by university libraries in India is essential in order to:

- Promote the use of information resources;
- Create perception of need and thereby create demand;
- Ensure the optimum use of information;
- Improve the image and status of the libraries and library professionals;
- Tackle the problems of rising costs of reading materials, journals, and databases;
- Cope with the information explosion;
- Introduce cutting-edge information technology system in library services;
- Balance shrinking funds;
- Save libraries from declining reader-support; and
- Uphold the dictum that information is power.15

The market of the university library consists of various segments;

- Academic staff members, who engage in teaching of various subject disciplines, conduct research, and maintain scholarly projects to develop their respective profession. Non-academic staff and other people such as researchers, professionals and general public outside the university;
- Needs, wants and demand of the library are centered on academic and educational requirements such as bibliographic information, textbooks, full text in digital formats, reference and reading space, information consultancy, and facilities for learning environment;
- Tools and facilities for entertainment, leisure and social activities;
- Information required for day to day life, know-how technology, and community information;
- Strengths and opportunities of university libraries;
- Availability of resources collections covering various disciplines practiced in the university;
- Availability of professional staff with expertise in different subject areas and the paraprofessional staff to help with the dissemination of desired information;
- Possibility of obtaining funds under comprehensive project proposals;
Infrastructure facilities and links with expertise; and

Information skills of the staff.

As Herron\textsuperscript{16} states that, “due largely to an increasingly competitive environment, our program services must be more market sensitive and purposeful today”. Academic libraries can no longer afford the belief that, because they are part of a “public good” with resources and services people value, users should and, therefore, will always continue to value and use the library.\textsuperscript{17} By considering a more updated definition of marketing as the creating and packaging of products, users want, marketing should be viewed as an essential tool that will help libraries be more successful. By knowing users and their expectations, as well as how best to communicate with them, marketing can give the library the means to better serve and communicate with users. Marketing, therefore, should not be a bad word in university libraries, but rather a part of the management style of the library. Just as administrators know the processes of information delivery, they should also know the basics of marketing and that when applied to the library, can better prepare it to serve users and to inform all audiences of the value and benefit of academic libraries to the general wellbeing of all involved.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The marketing of information services is an emerging area of interest in the academic library profession in recent years. The library budgets for primary sources are not keeping pace with the increase in the cost of publications. Also library budgets are subjected to drastic cuts due to economic consideration, Government policies etc. The operational and service costs in university libraries are increasing on account of labor, equipment and other infrastructural inputs. Each university library has some kind of information products and services to offer commercially. Now it is the time to shift from fully free-based information services and make a beginning to meet at least some of its operational expenses. Development of a proper marketing plan would greatly help not only in generating revenue for the library but also to serve as a model for other academic libraries of similar nature.
Raja presented a select bibliography comprised 289 entries on the marketing of library and information products and services as a contribution to the special issue of DESIDOC bulletin of information technology on information marketing. The main bulk of entries date from 1990’s, showed an increasing trend in the studies of the marketing of information products and services.

Continued research is needed to assist information professionals to identify changing information needs of increasingly international and multicultural populations, to inform decision-makers of the value of libraries and information services, and to market these services and systems effectively. The role of university libraries on information transfer in higher education has raised the value of research in the field of marketing of information services. Underutilization of university libraries has become a common issue. It is also a researchable point which needs to find out why the underutilization of libraries still exists and how we can tackle the problem. Experiences from marketing oriented organizations may provide a spotlight on addressing of this issue.

It is worthwhile to consider whether librarians have focused our services on user requirements and considers whether we have able to identify the potential demand in the university libraries of Kerala. We need to ascertain whether our services and programmes are potential enough to continue even in changing circumstances. We need to ascertain whether our strategies are able to draw more users and retain them with our services. It is important to verify whether our resources- man and material are used efficiently, and see whether we have innovations when required. In a study, Vinod found that the information dissemination activities of the university libraries in Kerala have a moderate degree of marketing orientation. Hence it is appropriate to investigate the marketing of information products and services and to establish a marketing plan for information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala.

1.3 Title of the Study

The study is entitled as “Marketing of information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala: an investigative study”.

11
1.4 Definition of key terms

Marketing: A set of tasks and business activities with which to find and stimulate buyers to consume the firm's output through the relationship between producers and consumers, and the central notion of an exchange between participants. In this study the term “marketing” is basically providing the right product to the right user at the right price and at the right place.

Information Products: Information bearing objects that are produced and distributed to meet general needs, e.g., database of facts, various synthesis or repackaged information for general distribution. The term “information product” is used as anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption and that might satisfy a human need or want.

Information Services: The activity of providing information products and related services according to users’ needs. In broader sense, it refers to providing users with information through any form of product and service. The term “Information service” is used as activities which are aimed at collection, processing, storage, retrieval, analysis and dissemination of information.

University Library: University libraries are libraries attached to universities. It is the collective name applied to the library, established, administered and funded by universities that serve the information, research and curriculum needs of the students, researchers, faculty, staff and members of the various academic bodies of the universities. In this study the university libraries refer to the central library maintained by the universities in Kerala for their academic community.

Kerala: Kerala\textsuperscript{20} stands for the Southern State of India where principal language is Malayalam, which lies between north latitudes 8\textdegree{} 04’ and 12\textdegree{} 44’ and east longitudes 74\textdegree{} 54’ and 77\textdegree{} 12’.

Investigative study: Study which examines or inquire into.
1.5 Objectives

The objectives are:

i. To study the existing state of university libraries in Kerala with respect to the administrative and organizational setup, collection, manpower, finance and infrastructure facilities and the changes and improvements in these areas during the last 5 years.

ii. To make an objective analysis of the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats of university libraries in Kerala.

iii. To study the awareness, use pattern and usefulness of information sources, products and services of the university libraries in Kerala.

iv. To assess the market potentiality of information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala.

v. To formulate the pricing policies of information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala.

vi. To study the attitude of users towards marketing of information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala.

vii. To evaluate the service quality and customer satisfaction in the university libraries in Kerala.

viii. To work out a strategy for the marketing of information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala.

ix. To establish a marketing plan for information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala.

1.6 Hypotheses

i. The utilization of information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala is inadequate in the absence of a strong marketing strategy, even though the libraries have a sizable collection and a large number of users.

ii. The information products and services of the university libraries have a strong market potential.

iii. Users differ significantly in their perceptions regarding the marketing of information products and services.
iv. Users are moderately satisfied with the information products and services of the university libraries in Kerala.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

In Kerala there are 8 Universities viz. University of Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi University, Cochin University of Science and Technology, University of Calicut, University of Kannur, Kerala Agricultural University, Sree Sankaracharya Sanskrit University and Central University of Kerala, Kasaragod. Of these, University of Kannur and Central University of Kerala are newly established universities and have only just started to building up their library. Kerala Agricultural University and Sree Sankaracharya Sanskrit University are specialized universities. Hence the study is limited to four university libraries viz. Kerala University Library (KUL), Mahatma Gandhi University Library (MGUL), Cochin University of Science and Technology Library (CUSATL) and CH Mohammed Koya Library of University of Calicut (CHMKL).

The university library system normally consists of one central library and several department libraries. But the span of the present study is restricted to the central library only. Though the users of the university library represent a cross section of the society, priority has been given to teachers, research scholars, students, non-teaching staff and public on the ground that they form the core target group of the university library system.

1.8 Significance of the study

In Kerala, Government has already started a number of colleges and courses under various universities. Universities adopted credit and semester system at the graduate and the post-graduate levels. Consequently, the number of users and their needs in the university libraries increased. Computers and networking have tremendously enhanced information storage, retrieval and dissemination capabilities. Also, the existing channels for disseminating information in university libraries are inadequate for the changing demands of the user community. In the competitive information market, university libraries are forced
to introduce various information products and services for their own survival. Even though, the university libraries in Kerala offers various information services to its clients viz students, researchers, teachers, non-teaching staff and the public within its collection, manpower, finance and infrastructure facilities, do not function at the desired level of adequacy and efficiency to fulfill the objectives of higher education. The major problem confronted by the university libraries in Kerala is the underutilization of its resources by the users’ community. This may be because the inadequacy of a proper strategy for the marketing of their information products and services.

The resources available in the university libraries in Kerala have a greater demand from inside and outside the user community. The following may be the reasons:

- Introduction of credit and semester system at the graduate and postgraduate levels;
- Establishment of a number of self financing colleges offering various courses with limited library facilities;
- Increase in the number of students who enroll for various courses through distance education; and
- Increase in the number of M. Phil. and Ph.D. students.

The adoption of a clear marketing plan is essential for the university libraries to satisfy the diverse demands of the users effectively and continuously. The application of marketing is justified for the following reasons:

- Through the application of marketing, the library can identify the different category of users and develop appropriate information products and services for them;
- The library shall be able to generate a considerable amount of income to supplement its budget for the purchase of resources and equipments;
- Standardization of services, facilities and products can be achieved in a marketing plan;
- Equal opportunity for access and utilization of all resources is ensured in a fee based services;
- The information products once developed can be used for long term reference with additions and modifications;
- The speed and quality of library services can be enhanced by offering services through different channels; and
- Library can attract more users for information products and services available in the library.
- No research study conducted so far on the marketing of information products and services in the university libraries of Kerala.

Considering the above factors here is an attempt to analyze the marketing potentiality of university libraries in Kerala with the objective of establishing a comprehensive marketing strategy for the university libraries in Kerala.

1.9 Organization of the Report

The study is organized in 8 chapters. The body of the report is organized as detailed below.

The first chapter constitutes “Introduction” which contains the definition of the term marketing, marketing of information changes and challenges, a picture of marketing of information in the university libraries and its market potential, statement of the research problem, title of the study, operational definition of key terms, objectives, hypotheses, scope and limitations, significance of the study and organization of the report.

The literature, which are relevant to the study, are presented under five headings such as marketing of information products and services, marketing orientation, marketing strategy, attitude towards marketing and user satisfaction and marketing, each arranged according to chronological order as the second chapter under the heading “Review of related literature”.

The data, sample and methodology used for the study is presented in chapter three.
Each university library in Kerala under study with respect to the administrative and organizational setup, collection, manpower, finance and infrastructure facilities and the changes and improvements in collection, budget, finance, members and annual issue of books is provided in chapter four as a background to the field of study.

Chapter five contains the analysis of the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats of the university libraries in Kerala. Comparative account of the information products and services and university librarian’s attitude towards marketing in the university libraries under study is also attempted here.

Analysis of the questionnaire to identify the products and services that can be marketed by the university libraries of Kerala and to assess the market potentiality of information products and services of the university libraries of Kerala with respect to the users’ point of view in terms of use pattern, awareness, the quality of service and user satisfaction is presented as chapter six.

Sample marketing plan for each of the university library under study and proposed a marketing plan for university libraries in Kerala is given as chapter seven.

Chapter eight is devoted to the important findings, areas for further study, suggestions and conclusion.

The following appendices are also provided at the end.

Appendix I : Interview schedule for university librarians
Appendix II : Questionnaire for the users of the university libraries
Bibliography
References:


