CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction of the Study

A Library, be it traditional or digital, has a vital role to play in any institution. A Library should not be a static stock of information but be a dynamic center providing for an exchange of information to promote the knowledge available. The special Libraries also recognizes the values of Ranganathan’s Law “Save the time of the user”, and that of slogan such as “The right information to the right person at the right time”. Special Libraries exists to serve the information pinpointedly, exhaustively and promptly in a usable form. For this purpose, the library should either build up its own collection or store of information or should be able to depend on other sources.

Medical science is a very fascinating subject and covers a very fast field. It deals with all aspects of human culture and affords the best outlet for ideation. So medical libraries are considered to the nerve center of the colleges and must support teaching, research and other academic programmes. In the context of information explosion, users would not even know what they are missing without proper Library services. Role of Library and the Librarian in a Medical institution can go beyond its traditional functions. Some people believe that it can even reduce medical errors.
1.1 Needs and Purpose:

The need today is not more for information resources. The challenge is to apply new technologies appropriately and to assist all library users to develop skills to make new and better uses of the knowledge-base that is available. Past studies in India, there are no available facilities in medical libraries. So there is a need to evaluate the present status of medical libraries in West Bengal.

The purpose of this study is to survey and assess the current status of medical college libraries in West Bengal in terms of staff, information resources, facilities, use of information technology, user services and co-operation. It also aim to suggest on the basis of findings, recommendations for future development. The name of the medical Libraries whose users been studied are given below:

1. Medical Collage Library, Kolkata.
2. R.G. Kar Medical Collage Library, Kolkata
3. N.R.S Medial Collage Library, Kolkata.
4. Calcutta National Medical Collage Library, Kolkata
5. Institute of Postgraduates Medical Education & Research Library, Kolkata.
6. B.S. Medical Collage Library Bankura.
7. Burdwan Medical Collage Library, Burdwan
8. Midhnapore Medical Collage Library, Midnapore (West)
9. North Bengal Medical Collage Library, Siliguri
10. K. P. C. Medical College Library, Kolkata
1.2 Scope of the Study:

The study is delimited to the medical libraries in West Bengal. The libraries of only those Allopathic Medical Colleges are included which have been approved by the Medical Council of India (M.C.I) to run MBBS course of study and entitled to award the degree of MBBS and other degrees related Allopathic Medical & Surgery.
1.3 Methodology of the study :-

The methodology used for the present study is questionnaire-based survey. The questionnaire consists of both open ended and close ended, arranged according to various aspect of investigation such as

a) Information about the Library
b) Physical arrangement of resources
c) Structure and Organization.
d) Services and facilities
e) Nature of computerization, software, networking etc.
f) Overview was designed.

This questionnaires was used for personal interview. The purpose of questionnaire was explained to the users before it was distributed personally among those visiting the library on different working days. The user’s schedules were collected personally after completion. Information received through user’s schedules were analysed and tabulated for presentation in the concerned chapter.

1.4 Objectives of the study:-

The main objectives of this study are given below:

a) Availability of services to the users and their needs.
b) Survey of the existing human resources.
c) Method for collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of information.
d) Availability of modern technology.
e) Problems of the existing system.
f) Expectation of users in providing quality services.
g) Attitude of the human resources about modern technology.
h) To offer suggestion for strengthening the future role of medical libraries.
1.5 Review of Literature:

Various studies and surveys conducted, shows that the problem faced by the medical libraries in various aspect.

Lt. Col. D.P. McDonald (1945), an Indian Medical Service officer conducted a survey of libraries in 25 medical collages and seven research institute. He found that no library in India subscribed to more than 230 journals. He strongly recommended that a Central Library Bureau should be established for abstracting translating and microfilming. He also recommended special training in medical librarianship, grants for library purchases, and a comprehensive collection on the history of medicine.

Bhore Committee (1946) (Health Survey and Development Committee) also took note of the existing conditions of medical libraries in India and strongly recommended the establishment of Central Medical Library. The committee noted that there was no medical library in India with more than 11,000 books apart from bound, periodicals, while the library of D.G.I.M.S. (now National Medical Library) contained about 20,000 books.

D.T. Lakshminaryanan (1959) remarks his report on medical education in India (submitted to the health division of the U.S. Technical Cooperation Mission, New Delhi) that medical college libraries suffer from all the disadvantages, namely, lack of space, lack of fund, lack of trained librarians and adequate staff to assist the librarians. He further commented that steps should be taken to stimulate proper development of libraries in the medical institution in the country by offering required assistance.

The National Medical Library (Mid 1960's) conducted a survey of the medical collage libraries in India. From this survey revels that most of these libraries offer
skeleton services to their clientele and suffer from all the typical disadvantages such as lack of space inadequacy of financial support, dearth of trained staff and the total lack of any training in the use of a library. Most of the libraries were run in traditional ways.

Udupa Committee (1960) which reviewed the working of seventy-six Ayurvedic colleges pointed out that only thirty-one of them had some sort of library facility. The committee recommended that at a) every Ayurvedic institution should maintain a proper library under charge of trained medical librarian; b) a central reference library should be established; and c) collection and review of old manuscripts scattered all over the country and publication of the more important ones. Translation of old tests and preparation of suitable textbooks should be undertaken.

Dr. A. Krishna Rao (1965), Principal and Dean, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, conducted a survey of medical college libraries. This survey revealed that many of old colleges did not even have a sizeable collection of books and journals; many colleges did not have adequate qualified staff, in 7 colleges non-professional were in charge of libraries. Half of the college had a collection of less than 5,000 volumes and subscribed to less than 100 current journals. The paucity of founds for the purchase of books and journals, inadequately of space for library, and the working hours of the libraries which varied from six and a half hours to fifteen hours, were the other findings of the survey. In 32 medical colleges, libraries were closed on Sundays and holidays. Of 32 medical colleges, only 25 lent books to students for home reading.

National Medical Library (1979-80), made a survey of 1000 libraries of all systems of medicine. This survey reveal that half of them did not have trained manpower;
75 percent of libraries did not entertain ILL requests; 81 percent did not prepare any bibliographies; 08 percent did answer even reference queries; only 36.3 percent libraries offered CAS and only 15 percent availed MEDLINE, while 68 percent were not even aware of this service.

Satpathy and Mukhopadyaya (1980), made a cursory survey of different types of medical libraries revealed that condition of those libraries had not changed much and found that paucity of founds, inadequate staff, collections etc, were common features in most of the libraries.

R.P. Dixit (1988), conducted a survey on the use, collection, organization and services of National Medical Library (India). The results divulge that journals are the more preferred sources, and users are satisfied with the collection; ILL (48%), and MEDLINE search (48%) are more valued followed by documentation service (18%).

Varalakshmi (1990) has conducted a user survey of medical collage libraries of Andhra Pradesh. This survey reveal that these libraries suffer from the paucity of funds, lack of adequate manpower, reading facilities, services etc; they are far behind the MCL standards. A startling revelation is the absence of resources sharing activity; only 3 percent have access to MEDLINE, while EX-MED and BIOSIS were never used. Hence the users not fully satisfied with the existing provisions.

R.P. Dixit (1990) conducted another survey that was user survey on health science libraries of Delhi. He observed that existing services are not up to the standard and they need improvement in terms of faculty, facilities and services up to a level where they can function as active parts of the network.
Soloman Raju (1997) conducted a survey on situation of health science research libraries in India. He observed that the collections are by no means comprehensive, and periodical collections, supposed to be the backbone for research, are particularly sparse. The manpower finances, sources, services and physical facilities are in no way comparable with norms and guidelines recommended by MCI, NLM and ICMR. There is another obvious finding in the absence of cooperation among these libraries.
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