MAJOR OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

From the foregoing analysis and interpretation of data presented in the previous chapter, an attempt has been made in this chapter to list out the major observations and findings that have been arrived at in the study of user attitude towards OPACs in the libraries under study.

In this connection it is to be mentioned that, based on the presentation made in Chapter - III, the OPACs of the libraries under study are menu driven. MIT developed its OPAC in 1987, the RECT in 1994 and BCL in 1995. Thus the design and development of OPAC is of recent development.

On comparison with the check points developed by the "Consortium to Develop an Online Catalogue" (CONDOC) for the evaluation of OPAC, all the libraries under study have fulfilled those check points ranging from 47% to 55% (Chapter - III).

5.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

5.1.1 It was found that a majority of the respondents ranging from 55% to 80% were undergraduates in the libraries under study (Table 4.1).

5.1.2 It is interesting to note that a majority of the respondents ranging from 83% to 88.5% constitute the male community (Table 4.2).
5.1.3 It was found that a majority of the respondents ranging from 56% to 75% fall in the age group of 15 to 25 years (Table 4.3).

5.1.4 While 33% to 40% of the respondents visited their respective libraries almost daily, 40% to 52% visited once in a week. (Table 4.4).

5.2 PREFERENCE TO THE PHYSICAL FORM OF CATALOGUE

5.2.1 It is interesting to note that a majority of the respondents ranging from 69% to 98% preferred to consult OPAC. However, with an exception to BCL, the other libraries under study were maintaining both card from catalogue and OPAC (Table 4.5).

5.3 AWARENESS AND ACQUAINTANCE WITH OPAC

5.3.1 It was found that respondents ranging from 56.3% to 85% expressed that the existence of computer terminals in the libraries under study created awareness about the provision of OPAC (Table 4.6).

5.3.2 While self learning (ranging from 32% to 47%) is one of the avenues in getting acquaintance with the OPAC, a very meager percent in BCL and RECT and none in the MIT expressed that orientation caused acquaintance with the OPAC in their respective libraries. (Table 4.7).

5.4 OPAC SEARCH

5.4.1 Among the various search options, the keyword searching seems to be more predominant that can be seen as expressed by the respondents ranging from 32% to 41.5%. Further, 34.5% to 43% of the respondents
have used the combination of author, title and keyword search. (Table 4.8).

5.4.2 It was observed that none of the OPACs understudy had direct browsing facility (Chapter III).

5.4.3 While about 2/3rd of the respondents in MIT and RECT consulted OPACs for the purpose of preparing course work, 41.5% in BCL consulted for the same purpose (Table 4.9).

5.5. USER EXPERIENCE WITH OPAC

5.5.1 In BCL, at 60% distance level in the dendrogram, the variables concerning user experience with OPAC formed into three interpretable clusters (Figure No.4 and Table 4.15).

5.5.2 In MIT, at 53% distance level in the dendrogram, the variables concerning user experience with OPAC formed into three interpretable clusters (Figure No.5 and Table 4.19).

5.5.3 In RECT, at 55% distance level in the dendrogram, the variables concerning user experience with OPAC formed into three interpretable clusters (Figure No.6 and Table 4.24).

5.5.4 In BCL, the clusters formed have been named as:

i. Ease of understanding display (Table 4.11)

ii. Ease of search aids and display modes (Table 4.12)

iii. Difficulties in logical search (Table 4.13).
5.5.5 In MIT, the clusters formed have been named as:
i. Difficulties in logical search (Table 4.16)
ii. Ease of search aids and display modes (Table 4.17)
iii. Ease of truncation search (Table 4.18)

5.5.6 In RECT, the clusters formed have been named as:
i. Difficulties in logical search (Table 4.21)
ii. Ease of search aids and display (Table 4.22)
iii. Easy search modes (Table 4.23)

5.5.7 There existed uniformity in the formation of clusters in all the libraries understudy, although the cluster names vary from one to another.

5.5.8 It was found that, the second cluster formed uniformly named as "Ease of search aids and display modes".

5.5.9 In BCL it was found that the agree and disagree ratio for the second cluster namely "Ease of search aids and display modes is 9:1, whereas it is 3:1 in both MIT and RECT (Tables 4.15; 4.19 and 4.24).

5.5.10 In MIT and RECT, it was found that first cluster with regard to user experience with OPAC, formed as "Difficulties in logical search", whereas the same formed as third cluster in BCL (Tables 4.13; 4.16; and 4.21).
5.5.11 In BCL, it was found that the agree and disagree ratio for the third cluster namely, "Difficulties in logical search" is 1:1 where as it is 1:1.5 in MIT and 1:2 in RECT (Tables 4.15; 4.19; and 4.24).

5.5.12 In BCL, it was found that the first cluster namely the "Ease of truncation search" formed with agree and disagree ratio as 4:1, while the same formed as third cluster in MIT with agree and disagree ratio as 2:1 (Tables 4.15 and 4.19).

5.6 IMPROVEMENT OF OPAC SYSTEM ENVIRONMENT

5.6.1 It was observed that the system configuration of the OPACs under study did not possess the latest configuration both hardware and software such as Windows, Icons, Menus and Pointers (Chapter - III).

5.6.2 In BCL, only 9 variables out of 11 (Table 4.26) have been tested concerning the improvement of OPAC system environment, out of which four variables namely:

'ABILCOD' Ability to search the codes (0.692)
'ABILCHAN' Ability to change the order of items displayed (0.709)
'ABILVIEW' Ability to view a list of words related to search (0.611)
'ABILTELL' Ability to tell the status of a book (0.500)

have been loaded in the first component that suggested an overall improvement of OPAC system environment sought by the respondents (Table 4.27).
5.6.3 In MIT, seven out of eleven variables (Table 4.26), namely:

'SWORD' - Searching by word or words in a title (0.650)
'SSUB' - Searching by subject heading (0.656)
'ALTER' - Alteration of search according to user wish (0.491)
'ABIL COD' - Ability to search the codes (0.628)
'ABILCHAN' - Ability to change the order of items displayed (0.636)
'ABILVIEW' - Ability to view a list of words related to user search (0.615)
'ABILPRIN' - Ability to print the search results (0.630)

have been loaded in the first component that suggested an overall improvement to OPAC system environment sought by the respondents (Table 4.28).

5.6.4 In RECT, three out of eleven variables (Table 4.26), namely:

'STEP' - Step by step instructions (0.567)
'ABILPRIN' - Print the search results (0.682)
'ABILILL' - Ability to search the illustrations (0.581)

have been loaded in the first component that suggested and overall improvement of OPAC system environment sought by the respondents (Table 4.29).

5.6.5 It was found that, seven variables with 30% of variance in MIT, three variables with 24% of variance in RECT and four variables with 21% of variance in BCL are loaded in the first component with respect to
the OPAC system environment improvement (Tables 4.27; 4.28 and 4.29).

5.6.6 It was found that both in BCL and MIT, three variables were loaded in the first component namely

'ABILCOD' - Ability to search the codes/acronyms of subject

'ABILCHAN' - Ability to change the order of items displayed

'ABILVIEW' - Ability to view a list of words related to users search

(Tables 4.27 and 4.28).

5.6.7 It was found that both in MIT and RECT, one variable namely

'ABILPRIN' - "Ability to print search results" has been loaded in the first component (Tables 4.28 and 4.29).

5.6.8 It was found that there exists difference of opinions among the respondents with respect to certain variables and similarity of opinions with respect to certain variables concerning OPAC system environment improvement. (Tables 4.27; 4.28 and 4.29).

5.7 IMPROVEMENT OF OPAC WORKING ENVIRONMENT

5.7.1 It was observed that only one OPAC terminal in MIT and RECT and four OPAC terminals in BCL, were made available to serve the entire user community in the respective libraries. Further it was observed that in RECT, the OPAC was made available through RECT LAN to all the teaching departments including students hostels but only one terminal was placed in the library (Chapter - III).
5.7.2 In BCL, only six variables out of nine (Table 4.30) have been tested concerning improvement features of the OPAC working environment, out of which three variables namely.

'LIGHT' - Lighting around the terminals is sufficient (0.728)

'NOISE' - Noise near by is distracting (0.761)

'IMPRO' - Improvement in the orientation programmes (0.725)

have been loaded in the first component that suggested an overall improvement in the OPAC working environment sought by the respondents (Table 4.31).

5.7.3 In MIT seven out of nine variables namely

'LIGHT' - Lighting around the terminals is sufficient (0.634)

'NOISE' - Near by noise is distracting (0.827)

'PRINT' - Printer is required to print the search results (0.652)

'INST RES' - Installation of terminals inside the library (0.601)

'COMMEN' - Posting of commands near the terminals (0.624)

'MANUAL' - Placing Manual near the terminal (0.698)

'IMPRO' - Improvement in the orientation programmes (0.722)

have been loaded in the first component that suggested an overall improvement in the OPAC working environment sought by the respondents (Table 4.32).

5.7.4 In RECT, seven out of nine variables, namely:

'LIGHT' - Lighting around the terminal is sufficient (0.571)

'NOISE' - Near by noise is distracting (0.661)

'PRINT' - Printer is required to print the search results (0.662)
'MORTER' - More terminals are required (0.533)

'COMMAN' - Posting of commands near the terminal (0.622)

'MANUAL' - Placing manual near the terminal (0.678)

'IMPROK' - Improvement in the training programme (0.631)

have been loaded in the first components that suggested overall an improvement in the working environment sought by the respondents. (Table 4.33).

5.7.5 It was found that, seven variables each in MIT and RECT with variance as 41.87% and 33.51% respectively, and three variables in BCL with 35.80% of variance are loaded in the first component concerning OPAC working environment improvement variables (Tables 4.31; 4.32 and 4.33).

5.7.6 It was found that, there exists uniformity in the libraries understudy with regard to the three variables concerning working environment improvement loaded in the first component (Tables 4.31, 3.32 & 4.33) namely:

'LIGHT' - Lighting around the terminals is sufficient

'NOISE' - Noise nearby distracting

'IMPROR' - Improvement in orientation programme

5.7.7 It was found that both in MIT and RECT, three variable were loaded in the first component (Tables 4.32 & 4.33), namely:

'PRINT' - Printer is required to print the search results

'COMMAN' - List of components to be displayed near the terminal

'MANUAL' - Manual or brochures to be placed near the terminal
5.7.8 It was found that the variables, concerning working environment, that are not available in the respective library have been loaded in the first component (Tables 4.31; 4.32 and 4.33).

5.7.9 It was found that, there exists similarity of opinions among the respondents with respect to the most of the variables concerning OPAC working environment improvement. (Tables 4.31; 4.32 and 4.33).

5.8 IMPROVEMENT OF COVERAGE IN OPAC

5.8.1 It was found that five variables each in BCL and MIT with 29.036 and 34.554% of variance respectively, and three variables with 30.714% of variance in RECT were loaded in the first component (Tables 4.35; 4.36 and 4.37).

5.8.2 It was found that one variable namely GOVTPUB - "Government Publications" was loaded in the first component in all the libraries (Tables 4.35; 4.36 and 4.37).

5.8.3 It was found that both in BCL and MIT, one variable namely FILM - "Films / Audio Visual Media" was loaded in the first component with higher loadings (Tables 4.36 and 4.37).

5.8.4 It was found that both MIT and RECT two variables namely MAPS - "Maps", MANUS - "Manuscripts" were loaded in the first component with higher loadings (Tables 4.36 and 4.37).
5.8.5 It was found that, there existed difference of opinions among the respondents with respect to the most of the variables concerning the improvement of coverage in OPAC.

In the next chapter, based on the findings a few suggestions have been made for the improvement of OPACs in the libraries under study.