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EVALUATION OF INFORMATION SOURCES AND SERVICES OF PROF. S. S. BASAVANAL LIBRARY, KARNATAK UNIVERSITY DHARWAD: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

User is the foci of any library and satisfaction level of the users with information sources and services justifies the existence and relevance of the library. As libraries play an important role in the teaching, research and development activities of the university, it is necessary to assess to what extent the users are satisfied with different information services offered by the library and the kind of information sources the library is equipped with and also to measure the extent of their utility. In this study, an effort has been made to evaluate the information sources and services offered by Prof. S. S. Basavanal Library, Karnatak University Dharwad.

Keywords: *User, Study, Sources, Services, Resources, services.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today libraries are not mere repositories of books and other publications which cater to the information needs of a few elite people and they are also not confined to the circulation of documents only. The kind of information sources and services the libraries provide has changed drastically with the adoption of emerging Information Communication Technology (ICT), coupled with large scale proliferation of information in several electronic forms and formats. However, the uncontrolled proliferation of knowledge poses problems for librarians in the organization and dissemination of information. Therefore in order to reach the large community of users and to maximize the usage of information sources among them and to satisfy their information needs, several innovative services are being offered by the libraries at different levels to bring the library closer to its users. Simultaneously the libraries are facing problems like financial crunch, shrinking budgets and also spending large portion of library

budget on collection development, processing and storage and maintenance of information sources, but often these sources of information remain unutilized or underutilized which ultimately results in sheer waste of money, time, energy and space invested on the library. In order to overcome these challenges libraries need to identify its target users, their precise information needs and develop information products and services in a way that satisfies the maximum number of users who make use of the library resulting in best practices. In view of this, the library professionals have the responsibility to evaluate and assess the quality of information products and information services being provided by the library and ensure to get users feedback regularly to prepare guidelines on a standardized way based on the best practices adopted by libraries, which will ultimately enhance the value based services and information products of academic libraries.

2. BRIEF PROFILE OF KARNATAK UNIVERSITY AND LIBRARY

Karnatak University, Dharwad (KUD) is the second oldest University in Karnataka located at Pavate Nagar Dharwad. The University was established in the year 1949, during the last 66 years, the University has made tremendous progress in the research and development activities. The University is proud of some of its fraternity being the recipients of Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award, FNAs, American Patents and other significant recognitions. There are 48 postgraduate departments and recently the University was awarded “University with a Potential for Excellence” (UPE status) by the UGC, as part of it the University has been presided with 50 crore Grants. In 2014 the university was awarded “A” Grade by the NAAC. The University library which is named after Prof. S. S. Basavanal is rich and diverse in collection, especially in terms of breadth and depth of coverage and is growing at a very fast pace to match the changing needs of the users. It has collection of over 3 lakh books, 7784 theses and more than 46000 bound volumes. It subscribes to 350 periodicals and few online databases such as Scopus and Indiastat.com, UGC-INFONET consortium. The library is a longstanding repository of UN publications since June 1967 and designated as depository center for the publications of United Nations, UNESCO, FAO, GATT, and the World Bank. The present collection of UNO section is around 33000, the government publications, reports and rare book and valuable collection are maintained as a separate section.

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Library and information centers play a key role in enhancing the quality of academic and research environment. The National Accreditation and Assessment council considers the assessment of a library pivotal to any education institute. Further the NAAC has decided to identify the set of best practices in library services which will promote the use of library

resources. Therefore excellence in each and every aspect of the library has become philosophy, policy, strategy and practice of many institutions for achieving overall institutional excellence in academic and research activities to create benchmark. Hence the study has been undertaken to identify the strengths and weaknesses of library in terms of both services and quality of information products perspectives.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are

- To enlist all the services and products of the library.
- To assess the quality of information services provided by the library.
- To evaluate the user satisfaction with respect to information sources in the library.
- To suggest measures for improving the quality of services and information resources in the library.

5. METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

To collect the required data, survey method has been adopted, a well structured Questionnaire was designed and distributed among the users of the library using simple random sampling. Around 100 Questionnaires were distributed, out of which 91 were returned with a response rate of 91%. However this study is limited to users (PG students) of Prof. S. S. Basavanal library, Karnatak University Dharwad.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Gender wise distribution of respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	%
Male	53	58.24
Female	38	41.78
Total	91	100

Table 1 shows that among 91 respondents, it is observed that 53(58.24%) are Male and 38(41.78%) are Female.

Table 2: Discipline wise distribution of respondents

Discipline	No of respondents	%
Arts	21	23.07
Social science	25	27.47
Science	37	40.65
Commerce	08	8.79
Total	91	100

TABLE 2 DEPICTS THE DISCIPLINE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS, I.E. 37(40.65%) OF THEM ARE FROM SCIENCE STREAM WHILE 25(27.47%)

RESPONDENTS ARE FROM SOCIAL SCIENCE FOLLOWED BY 21(23.07%) FROM ARTS AND 08(8.79%) FROM COMMERCE.

Table 3: Library Services:

Services	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DN/NA*
Circulation service	23(25.27%)	50(54.94%)	11(12.08%)	03(3.29%)	04(4.39%)
Reference service	05(5.49%)	42(46.15%)	11(12.08%)	33(36.26%)	00
Current Awareness Service	05(5.49%)	03(3.29%)	23(25.27%)	56(61.53%)	04(4.39%)
Photocopy Service	25(27.47%)	36(39.56%)	15(16.48%)	10(10.98%)	05(5.49%)
Book Lending Service (Number of Books to Borrow)	23(25.27%)	46(50.54%)	15(16.48%)	07(7.69%)	00
Hours of operation	29(31.86%)	44(48.35%)	14(15.38%)	04(4.39%)	00
Reservation of Books	15(16.48%)	10(10.98%)	23(25.27%)	37(40.65%)	00
News paper clipping	16(17.58%)	07(7.69%)	24(26.37%)	42(46.15%)	02(2.19%)
OPAC	17(18.68%)	39(42.85%)	05(5.49%)	22(24.17%)	08(8.79%)
Library website	14(15.38%)	07(7.69%)	18(19.78%)	48(52.74%)	04(4.39%)
Internet service	19(20.87%)	42(46.15%)	18(19.78%)	12(13.18%)	00
Facilities (Seating, Lighting, Cleanliness)	53(58.24%)	30(32.96%)	06(6.59%)	02(2.19%)	00
Support from library staff	23(25.27%)	48(52.74%)	16(17.58%)	03(3.29%)	01(1.09%)

*DN= Don't Know/NA=Not Aware

A question was raised to the users to rate the services being provided by the library. Table-3 shows that the majority of the library users i.e. 50(54.94%) consider circulation service as Good while 23(25.27%) of them rated it as excellent. Regarding Reference service which is considered as a backbone of the library, though large number of users i.e. 42(46.15%) adjudged that reference service is good, 33(36.26%) users perceived it as poor. More than half of the users i.e. 56(61.53%) think that current awareness service is poor whereas only 23(25.27%) users observed it as fair. The users provided different opinion towards photocopy service in the library, 36(39.56%) respondents felt that this service is good and 25(27.47%) users felt it as excellent. Book lending service which is the most used service in the library, it can be observed that whether the users are satisfied with the number of books that they are allowed to borrow from the library, majority of the respondents i.e. 46(50.54%) identified it as good and 23(25.27%) rated it as excellent. With regard to hours of library operation 44(48.35%) respondents felt good, while 29(31.86%) rated it as excellent. However, it was noticed that majority of the users i.e. 37(40.65%) rated reservation of book service as poor

whereas only 23(25.27%) respondents felt that the service is fair which is a poor reflection. It was observed that most of the respondents i.e. 42(46.15%) rate that news paper clipping service is poor and 24(26.37%) students rated it as fair. Regarding OPAC in the library 39(42.85%) and 22(24.17%) respondents rated as good and poor respectively. Further a question was raised to rate the information services provided on the library website, a large number of respondents i.e. 48(52.74%) rated it as poor. It is also found that majority of the users i.e. 42(46.15%) rated internet service being provided in the library as good. Regarding facilities like seating, lighting and cleanliness etc. extended by the library, 53(58.24%) of the respondents rated it as excellent. With regard to the support from the library staff which is vital as it connects the user with relevant source of information by saving the time of the user, the majority of the users i.e. 48(52.74%) found it good.

Table 4: Information Products

Information Products	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DN/NA*
Books	48(52.74%)	31(34.06%)	08(08.79%)	04(04.39%)	00
Journals	24(26.37%)	53(58.24%)	13(14.28%)	01(01.09%)	00
Newspapers	04(04.39%)	15(16.48%)	30(32.96%)	42(46.15%)	00
Magazines	03(03.29%)	17(18.68%)	34(37.36%)	36(39.56%)	01(01.09%)
Reports	08(08.79%)	15(16.48%)	24(26.37%)	38(41.75%)	06(06.59%)
Databases	07(07.69%)	36(39.56%)	25(27.47%)	16(17.58%)	07(07.69%)
E-resources	13(17.58%)	10(10.98)	19(20.87%)	45(49.45%)	04(04.39%)

*DN= Don't Know. NA=Not Aware

Table-4 reveals that the ratings given by the respondents on the accessibility/ availability of different information products in the library. Books form a major collection in the library and serve the most of the information needs of the users. From the above table it can be observed that more than half of the respondents i.e. 48(52.74%) rate the collection and availability of books in the library as excellent, while 31(34.06%) rated good. With reference to availability of journals 53(58.24%) respondents felt good and 24(26.37%) felt the collection of journals as excellent. With regard to the availability of different newspapers in the library most of the respondents i.e. 42(46.15%) identified it as poor and 30(32.96%) users felt fair with the same. With respect to the availability of the magazines which are helpful in keeping the users abreast with current events, majority of them i.e. 36(39.56%) observed as poor and almost equal number of users i.e. 34(37.36%) rated it as fair. Further it can be observed that 38(41.75%) respondents identified collection and availability of reports is poor and 36(39.56%) users adjudged the accessibility to databases as good followed by 25(27.47%)

rated it as fair. With respect to the availability of e-resources 45(49.45%) respondents rated it as poor while 19(20.87%) users observed it as fair.

Table-5: Overall perception about library

Overall Perception	No of respondents	Percentage
Excellent	18	19.78
Good	60	65.93
Fair	13	14.28
Poor	00	00
Total	91	100

Table-5 reflects that the respondents overall perception towards the library. Majority of respondents i.e. 60(65.93%) rate the overall services and products of the library as good, while 18(19.78%) of them rated excellent, followed by 13(14.28%) users felt that the services and information products of the library are fair.

7. MAJOR FINDINGS

Some of the important findings of the study are as follows.

- From the study it is found that the majority of the library users i.e. 50(54.94%) rated circulation service as good while 23(25.27%) of them rated it as excellent.
- Though large number of users i.e. 42(46.15%) adjudged that reference service is good, 33(36.26%) users perceived it as poor.
- More than half of the users i.e. 56(61.53%) felt that current awareness service is poor whereas only 23(25.27%) users observed it as fair.
- Majority of the respondents i.e. 46(50.54%) identified book lending service as good and 23(25.27%) perceived it as excellent.
- Majority of the users i.e. 37(40.65%) rated that reservation of book service is poor in the library while 23(25.27%) respondents responded as fair.
- A majority of the respondents i.e. 42(46.15%) felt that newspaper clipping service is poor and 24(26.37%) students rated it as fair.
- With respect to the information services provided on the library website a majority of the respondents i.e. 48(52.74%) adjudged it as poor and more number of users i.e. 42(46.15%) rated internet service in the library is good.
- With respect to the facilities like Seating, Lighting and cleanliness etc. extended by the library to its users, 53(58.24%) respondents rated it as excellent. With regard to the support from the library staff 48(52.74%) respondents rated it as good.
- It is observed that more than half of the respondents i.e. 48(52.74%) consider the collection and availability of books in the library as excellent while 31(34.06%) rated as good.
- With regard to the availability of journals 53(58.24%) respondents opined that the collection is good and 24(26.37%) felt as excellent.

- With respect to the availability of different newspapers in the library most of the respondents i.e. 42(46.15%) identified it as poor and 30(32.96%) users felt fair with the same.
- It can be observed from the study that 38(41.75%) respondents identified collection and availability of reports is poor
- 36(39.56%) users adjudged the accessibility to databases is good followed by 25(27.47%) respondents rated as fair.
- With regard to the accessibility to the e-resources 45(49.45%) respondents considered as poor while 19(20.87%) users observed it as fair.
- Majority of the respondents i.e. 60(65.93%) feel that overall services and information products of the library is good, while 18(19.78%) of them rated excellent.

8. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and opinion of the respondents the following suggestions are made to improve the quality of services and information products of Prof. S.S. Basavanal Library, Karnatak University Dharwad.

- From the above study it can be observed that there is positive as well as negative opinion given by the students of the university about the services of the library. Though most of the respondents rated circulation service, photocopy service, book lending service, hours of operation, facilities and support from library staff as excellent, good and fair rating but there is scope for improvement while it is poor with other services like reference service, current awareness service, reservation of books service, newspaper clipping, library presence on website, therefore the library professionals need to make efforts to bridge the gaps observed in this study.
- With reference to the respondent's opinion about the availability/accessibility to Newspapers, Reports, Databases, E-resources in the library, majority of the users expressed it as poor. Therefore the library authorities must overcome these shortcomings by subscribing and acquiring adequate resources in print as well as electronic forms for its collection. Visibility should be brought to the existing sources of information by providing adequate information in the user education programmes.
- With regard to electronic information resources of the library, though the library is subscribing to databases like UGC-Infonet and acquiring E-books, E-journals for the library users, users are not aware of their accessibility and use, so that it is the responsibility of the library staff to bring it to the notice of the library users and make them use effectively.
- ICT has made a tremendous impact on the use of library services and information resources, since it has changed the mode of delivery of information services, users are more inclined towards web based library services and become more tech savvy. Therefore the concerned

authorities need to create a website for the library which brings all the services on a single platform and promotes the use of services and sources of the library.

9. CONCLUSION

The assessment studies play a key role in the improvement of an information system and provide a baseline for determining benchmarks for delivering quality information products and services. Service oriented organizations should always strive to grow and distinguish themselves with the motto of service with distinction. Timely re-invention and re-engineering is a necessity for libraries to cope up with the challenges and to be relevant to the present requirements of the users. In this regard, libraries need to integrate the traditional system with technology in developing its information sources as well as services to meet the changing nature and landscape of information and its use. The present study reveals that though the users are satisfied with few services and information products of the library, there is ample scope for further improvement, particularly in the areas where the users have rated the services as poor and fair. Therefore the library professionals need to put efforts to bridge the gaps. The professionals working in the library need to clearly understand the overall needs and requirements of the users and make efforts to bring the library resources and services closer to the user community.

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