New Models, Old Values of Reference Service

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Abstract

In libraries users frequently need some personal assistance. This is considered one of the most important tasks of libraries and information centers. However assistance in locating specific pieces of information is generally called reference service. Thus reference service can be defined as that phase of library work which is directly concerned with assistance to readers in securing information and in using the resources of the library in study and research. Service is based upon a set of core functions that have remained valid since the earliest days of the public library movement. Inherent in those functions is a set of core values, including accuracy, thoroughness, timeliness, authority, instruction, access, individualization, and knowledge. Models of reference service that emphasize different aspects of those values take very different forms. In determining the best model for a specific library, the values of the community that the library serves must be taken into account. For anyone using libraries today, a reference service is a standard feature. Regardless of the type of library, the size of its collections, or the demo- graphics of its users, patrons expect to get help with everything from complex research projects to finding materials in the collections. Service has become almost synonymous with libraries. This was not always the case. Reference service is a relatively recent development in library history, and the methods in which reference services are provided are still evolving.

Keywords: *Information, services, knowledge, synonymous, patrons, models.*

Introduction

Library has the duty to thoroughly acquaint users with information resources, and to teach them to effectively use these resources. Given librarians' expertise in evaluating, purchasing and using high quality information resources from the Internet, they are well-placed to teach users about the scope of resources and how to use them efficiently. Recent studies and statistics show that an evaluation of the traditional methods of delivering reference services in academic libraries is long overdue. New reference service models are needed that respond to virtual library users and take advantage of new technologies.

Many who do reference work are performing information service. Thus in a case, reference service is simply reference work in depth. On the analog of Ranganathan, one can say that information service is long range reference service by putting emphasis on the following:

- Nascent thought far more than on old thoughts.
- Micro documents far more than on micro documents
- Specialist reader far more than on general reader.

Thus information service can aptly be defined as service provided by or for any information centre which draws attention to information processed in its department in application of demand, this is done by preparing and circulating news sheets, literature surveys, readers lists, abstracts particulars of articles in current periodicals etc., which is anticipated will be interest to potential users of the services.

Information services can be categorized into two broad groups as follows :

- **Anticipating Information Service –** It is a service rendered in anticipation of the demand for it. All the national and international indexing and abstracting service fall under this category. Its purpose is to analyse the literature.
- **Information Service on Demand –** It called passive information or information service. The purpose is to reach and information as well as its provision of the information containing documents.

  In reference service most often, the user is directed to the tools containing information; he is expected to locate information is made to provide information pin-pointedly, exhaustively and expeditiously.
  Reference service is more concerned with the provision of information on demand that is the provision of answer to the specific queries. On the other hand, information service lays emphasis on providing information in anticipation of demand for it.

Reference Service

Reference Service is the ultimate goal of all library services. It is the service that connects the users with their document and information need and helps in the processing of prompting use of the collections built up in a library. This service represents an area of specialized study in library science. It is considered the hall mark of library service. It is a personalized service offered to users when they visit the library seeking information from books and other documents. It is generally termed as responsive service as this is given with reference to a specific of user's information needs; hence it is called as anticipatory reference service.

Information service

Each library or information centre must determine the best way of keeping informed of pertinent information as it is published. Experimentation is required to determine the most effective method for communicating the right information to the right the user, in the right amount, in the right form and at the right time. Hence information service has the following aspects.

- Communication of information that will keep its users well informed and up-to-date in their fields of interests.
- Retrospective searching which is concerned with provision of answers to specific enquiries.

Hence communication of information is an essential aspect of information service.

Merits of Reference Service

Speaking broadly the reference service and information service are two different types of service and there are apparent differences in them as follows:

- Reference service refers to the traditional approach of connecting every reader to his document to his document. In reference service most often, the user is directed to the tools containing information; he is expected to locate information is made to provide information pin-pointedly, exhaustively and expeditiously.
- Reference service is more concerned with the provision of information on demand that is the provision of answer to the specific queries.
- As a corollary in reference service the reference staff a waits the user to approach and makes demand for a document/information.

Models of Service Values

While the individual values upon which reference service is based re- main unchanged, the emphasis among those values can vary greatly. Different models of reference service exist because each model emphasizes a different set of basic values. when a model that is based upon one value is evaluated on the basis of another, misunderstanding arid

conflict arises. Even within a single function of the reference process, such as answering patron questions, values of accuracy, timeliness, thoroughness, and authority are frequently in direct conflict with each other. To guarantee that an answer is thorough and accurate, the librarian may have to compromise on timeliness. For an answer to be timely, the librarian may not be able to guarantee authority or accuracy. The model of reference service chosen by an institution is an indication of which values are considered most important to the library-and to the community that it serves. Debates on models of reference service are nothing new.

Obviously, neither of these extremes is the "right" model for all reference departments. In fact, most libraries offer services that fall between these two extremes. Reference librarians tend to value both the teaching aspects of reference work and their ability to answer specific questions. Both models can even exist simultaneously within the same institution. Some large universities have general, undergraduate-oriented libraries that emphasize the teaching side of reference work, and small, discipline-oriented departmental libraries that emphasize factual knowledge. Even within the same reference department, librarians may practice one model with one group of users and another model with a different group. In some libraries, it is standard policy to show students how to conduct research conservative/mirnuni model) while librarians will actually conduct extensive searches for Faculty. Departmental guidelines on how much work to do for any given patron or how much the to spend with a single user stand as attempts by reference librarians to regulate the relative strengths of these two opposing viewpoints.

Objectives
- To find out the different Models to Reference service.
- To evaluate the current trends in Reference service based on Models.

Hypothesis
- Though reference service user time will be saved.
- Users will be benefited through model based services.

Scope
Traditionally, the library has been seen as the heart of the academic institution, a place of fundamental importance to every researcher, teacher and student on campus. Traditionally, too, researchers as well as students visited the library regularly, reference service helps user to consult the contents of its shelves, and answer to their query user's talked to library staff, filled in forms to order books or articles from that library or one in another institution, and spent time browsing, reading and working within its walls.

Review of Literature
Wildemuth (2003) reported that in article titled "Why Conduct User Studies The Role of

Empirical Evidence in Improving the Practice of Librarianship" emphasized that by gathering evidences about library users, their interactions with library services and materials and context in which those materials and services are used, librarians can make sound decisions for the future. Author discussed on the methodology for conducting user studies and utilization of results as basis for decision making.

Sharma et al. (2008) reported that concluded that growing dissatisfaction of the Users arising from no availability of needed documents and lack of provision of services could Be boiled down to some extent, by rendering at least CAS or current contents or information About latest addition to users.

Nazim (2011) reported that the library manager has a responsibility to enable users with Visual impairment to develop their skills and to have options in using service. For Example visually impaired people often find browsing hard and require more Guidance in choosing materials. Also they need indicative catalogues with details of content. It is important to market and promote service to people with visual Impairment in all libraries paying particular attention to design of promotion and Exploiting strategic partnership with target groups relative and organization. The Need of visually impaired people should be recognized in the library induction Sessions and information skills training programmers.

Result and Discussions
The reference service is organized in the libraries describe as:
Reference services are the measure of the strength of the library in meeting the information needs of users. User's needs determine the success or failure of the library. Therefore almost all large and middle sized libraries make the provision almost all large and middle sized libraries make the provision of a separate section for providing these services. Let us examine the organization and management of the reference section in the light of the elements of management viz. planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting as follows:

- **Planning –** The planning is a process which deals with mobilization of resources for a reference section in terms of its short and long range requirements and draw a working programmers for it s implementation over a period of time. For a reference section the following points should be involved in planning.

- Assessment of information needs of the users.
- Range of services to be offered both responsive and anticipatory.
- Reference collections their organization and maintenance.
- Reference Staff.
- Physical facilities.

- Finance and budget.

- **Organizing** – Organizing means the creation of an operational structure of the reference section to divide and distribute the work of the section of homogeneous units. The structure is determined on the basis of analysis of work and jobs of all different activities of the section.

- **Staffing** – Staffing means the kind, quality and the number or workers required to perform various function of the section. The head of the section should have the competence and ability to lead the section. The other persons should have academic background and professional experience in handling users and reference work. The others must have experience and proficiency in handling people. The strength of the staff is determined on the basis of the volume of the work in each of the different operations. Evaluation of performance standards in terms of quality and efficiency are vital to the functional character of the section.

- **Directing** – Directing means the directions to each person working in the section should be given by the head of the section of that he may get best out of the. He always remembers that proper motivation of the staff in work will result in high productivity. Establishments of proper methods for operational routines is a means of achieve qualitative and quantitative results.

- **Coordinating** – The reference section of the library is at a junction point and is connected to other sections of the library. Coordination of all the activities at this junction is quite necessary for the reference section to face users with conference and alertness.

- **Reporting** – Reporting means the report on the performance of the section. Its achievements and shortfalls during a year or at the other periodic intervals is essential to build the image and reputation of the section. The report carries vital statistics on the various activities of the section in their analysed forms. The statistical information is kept in appropriate records about the number and type of visitors seeking assistance in a day.

- **Budgeting** – Most of the services offered by the reference section are of the continuing nature. Therefore there should not be any paucity of finance in operations, particularly those which need financial supports CAS, SDI and the preparation of indexing and abstracting services are depend on their use, thus provision must always be made for their continuation. The full attention should also be given to equipments and machinery for production of the information

bulletins. Thus budgetary allocations should be made for each of the activities on the basis of the cost of production and distribution for a given period usually annually.

In the end we can conclude that a rhythm and tempo must be maintained for all the reference services.

New Models, Old Values of Reference Service

The key to understanding and evaluating the new models of reference service is to examine them in light of the traditional values. The new models of reference service do not dismiss the traditional values; they simply emphasize different combinations or aspects of those values. The most effective way of evaluating a new model of reference is to compare the values associated with that model to those of the community that the model is designed to serve. Some examples of this analysis follow.

- ❖ **Traditional Reference Model** The traditional reference service is closest to the liberal/maximum model. In the traditional model, the reference librarian works at a desk or counter and handles all types of queries, from directional questions to in- depth research. The role of the librarian is primarily to answer patron questions and secondarily to provide reader's advisory services. Patrons receive individual attention and service, although they may have to wait in line when the library is busy. The traditional model of reference service emphasizes the values of personal service, access to information, knowledge of the discipline and collections, accuracy, and timeliness. Traditional service deemphasizes the values of instruction and thoroughness.

- ❖ **The Teaching-Library Model** The teaching-library model represents the extreme opposite of the traditional model and is a primary example of the conservative/minimum approach. The role of the librarian is not to answer questions, but to pro- vide instruction in the research process. Reference librarians working under this model often work with patrons in groups in classroom settings rather than individually at a reference desk. Patrons do not approach the librarian when they have information need, but are introduced to the librarian before such a need arises. The teaching-library model highly values all of the educational aspects of librarianship, including factual knowledge, the research process, and critical thinking. This model also values authority and thoroughness over accuracy and timeliness. Personal ser- vice is not as important as in the traditional model. Knowledge of the discipline and collection is also considered subordinate to knowledge of the research process.

❖ **Tiered Reference Services** In tiered reference services, different librarians or staff answer different kinds of questions. Initially made popular as the Brandeis model of reference service, tiered reference has subsequently developed several different variations. Their common feature is that support staff or students answer the majority of the simple queries and that reference librarians are reserved for answering in-depth research questions. In some cases patrons are required to make appointments for research consultations, whereas in others they are simply referred to a different desk or area of the library. One of the primary goals of tiered-reference service is to allow reference librarians to make better use of their subject and research skills. Tiered-reference service places very high value on a librarian's knowledge of the discipline and of the collection. Since its primary goal is to allow librarians to spend more time with patrons, this model also values accuracy, authority, and thoroughness. Tiered reference also values personal assistance, but places less value on access and timeliness. It is more difficult to reach a librarian, so patrons who need answers quickly may not take advantage of the benefits. Tiered service does not place a high value on the educational aspects of reference service, although those patrons who receive in-depth ser- vice may also receive personal instruction in the research process.

❖ **Virtual Reference Model** One of the more recent models of reference service is the virtual reference desk or online reference service. These services are designed to help patrons using technology-especially when those patrons are not physically within the library. Using email, chat, and call-center-based software, librarians help patrons in real time over computer networks. Virtual reference is advertised as being able to reach patrons at any time of day or night at any location in the world. As such, virtual reference service places the highest value on access, accuracy, and timeliness. Virtual reference also values personal service, although without having the librarian and patron meet in person. Values associated with the educational and reader's advisory aspects of reference service are not as important in virtual reference ser- vice, since the focus is usually on providing answers rather than instructing users. Interestingly, some commercial information services that provide virtual reference service confuse reader's advisory with answers to queries. Instead of providing information in response to a patron question, they recommend sources These services often end up disappointing and confusing their customers, who generally expect the quality of service provided by library reference departments.

The "Right" Model of Reference Service
Each model mentioned above is based upon the same set of core ser- vice values, but each emphasizes a different subset of those values. For any model to be successful there

is one value that must be emphasized above all others: knowledge of the community that the library serves. A library staff that understands its users and their needs will develop a service model that best supports those needs. Models that work well in one library will not necessarily apply to another that serves a different type of community. For example, a library serving a high school in which every student is given a laptop and an Internet account may wish to set up a virtual reference desk to support homework and after-school programs. However, this model would not be appropriate for a public library serving a low-income community where few families have computers at home. Similarly, a teaching-library model may work very well in an undergraduate liberal arts environment, but it would be totally out of place for a corporate library. No single model of reference service applies to all libraries. Many new models have been proposed over the past two decades, and many others will be proposed in the future. These models receive attention in the professional literature precisely because they are innovative. However, the fact that they receive attention does not imply that they must be adopted. The needs of the community must remain foremost in the minds of reference librarians, who should not feel pressured to change models of service simply for the sake of change. Just as CD-ROM replaced mediated searching and the Internet is replacing CD-ROM, good new ideas will continue to be incorporated into the mix of library services. Traditional reference service remains the predominant model in libraries today not because reference librarians lack initiative or are stubborn or resist change, but simply because that model still meets the needs of many communities that libraries serve.

Each model of reference service should be measured against its ability to support the values upon which it is based. A model that emphasizes instruction should not be criticized for failing to provide accurate, thorough, and timely answers to patrons' questions. Conversely, a model that values factual information should not be criticized for failing to teach the research process. Most important, any model should be measured against community values. As new models are proposed, librarians should study those models to determine if they offer advantages over existing systems. Over time, communities change, libraries change, and models of reference ser- vice change. Determining the best model of service for an individual library should be a process of evolution, not revolution.

Reference   Models in Mnnit, Allahabad

Table 4.1

S.No.	Reference Models	Response
1.	Traditional Models	60
2.	Reference Models	69
3.	Teaching Library Models	75

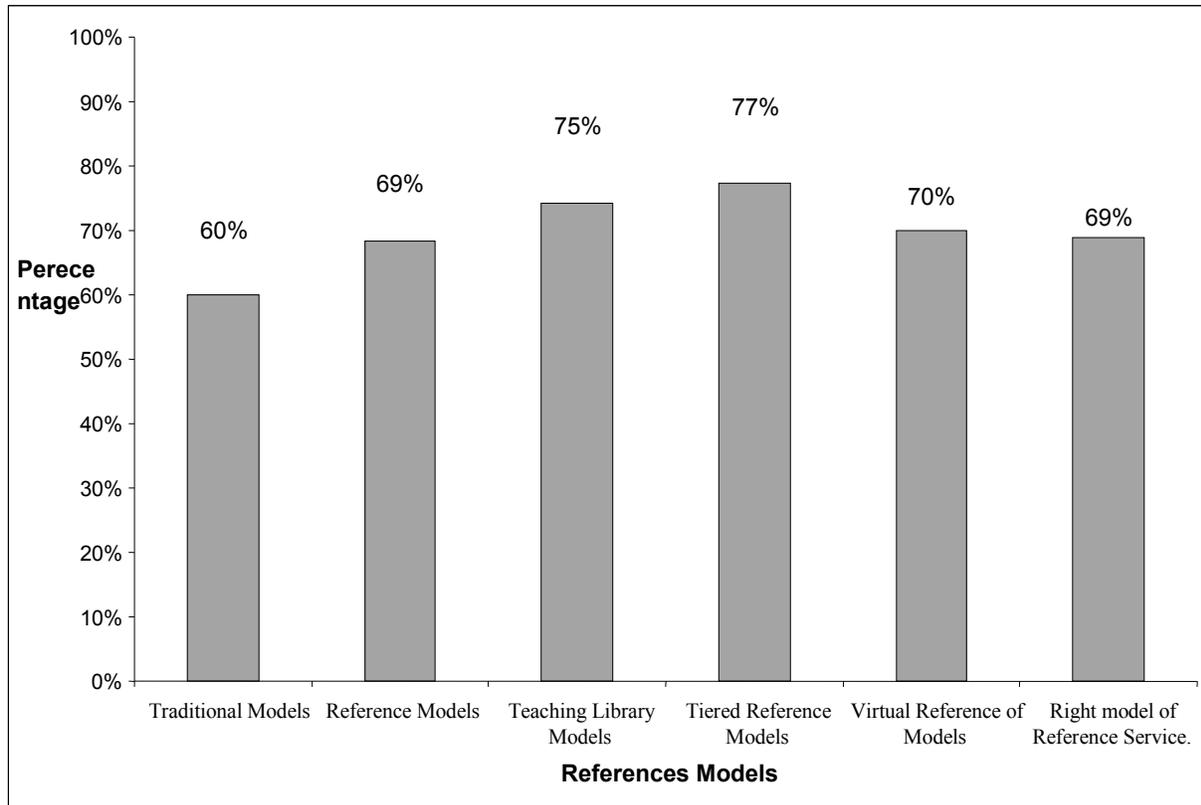| 4.	Tiered Reference Models	77
5.	Virtual Reference of Models	70
6.	Right model of Reference Service.	69

Figure 4.1

Data appearing in Table 1. (Types of Models of reference service used in MNNIT) reveals. That Traditional Models 60%, Reference Models 69%, Teaching Library Models 75%, Tiered Reference Models 77%, Virtual Reference of Models 70%, Right model of Reference Service 69% in MNNIT.

Table -4.2 Models MNNIT Allahabad

Sr. No.	Particulars	Response
1.	Trandional models	69%
2.	Reference models	80%

3.	Virtual reference models	74

Data appearing in Table 4.2 (Types of computerized library models, used in MNNIT Allahabad) reveals. That Traditional models 65%, Reference models 77%, virtual reference models 70% in MNNIT Allahabad
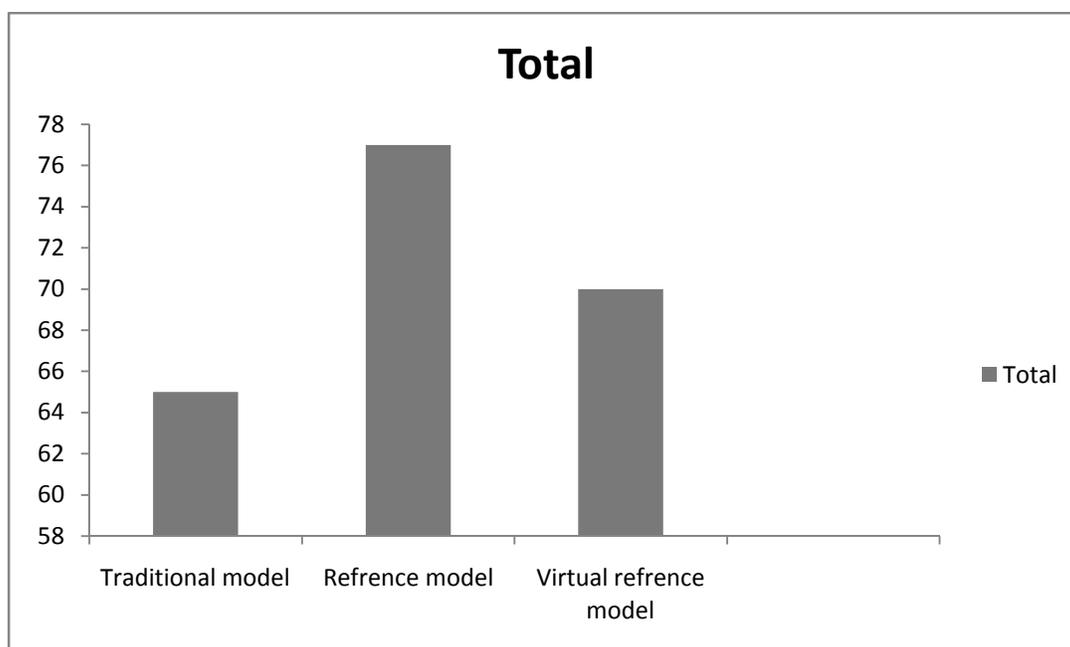

Fig -4.2 Models in MNNIT Allahabad

In Respect Of Users

Table 4.3: Gender wise number and percentage of users of reference section

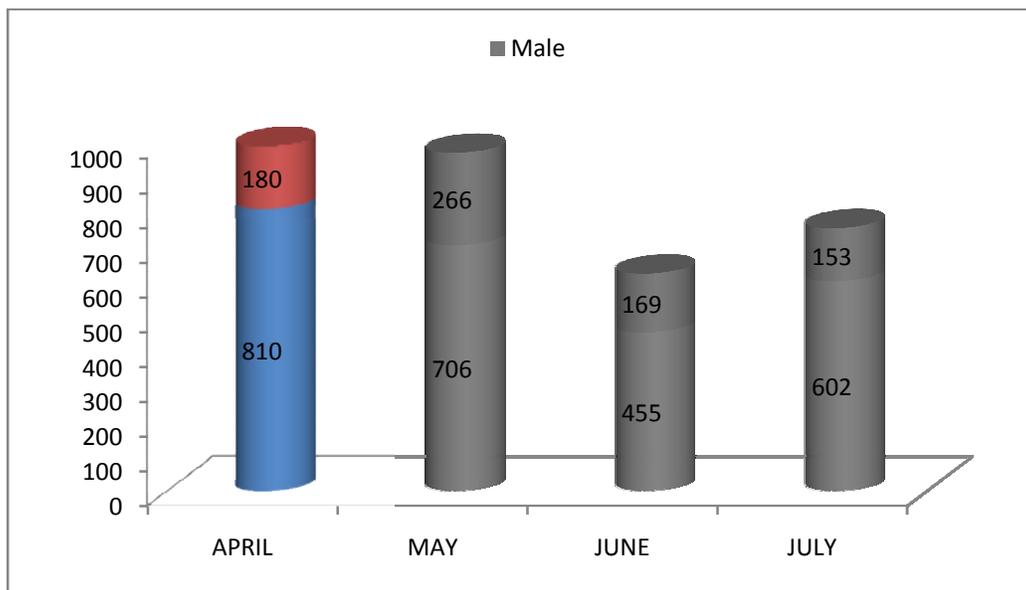| Month	Number of User		Total	Percentage (%)	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
April	810	180	990	81	18
May	706	266	972	70.6	26.6
June	455	169	624	45.5	16.9
July	602	153	755	60.2	15.3

Fig 4.3: Gender wise number of users of reference section

From Figure 4.3 above it is seen that the number of reference users was highest in the month of April, whereas, it was lowest in the month of June. If we like to consider the percentage of users in respect to gender then it is seen that the female users' number is very low, the range of which is from 15.3 to 26.6.

In respect of Document use

Table 4.4: Number and percentage of documents used by the users of reference section

Month	No. of Document used			Total	Percentage (%)		
	Reference	Stack	Rare		Reference	Stack	Rare
April	255	48	25	328	77.74	14.63	7.62
May	206	33	27	266	77.44	12.40	10.15
June	301	135	39	475	63.36	28.42	8.21
July	227	122	34	383	59.26	31.85	8.87
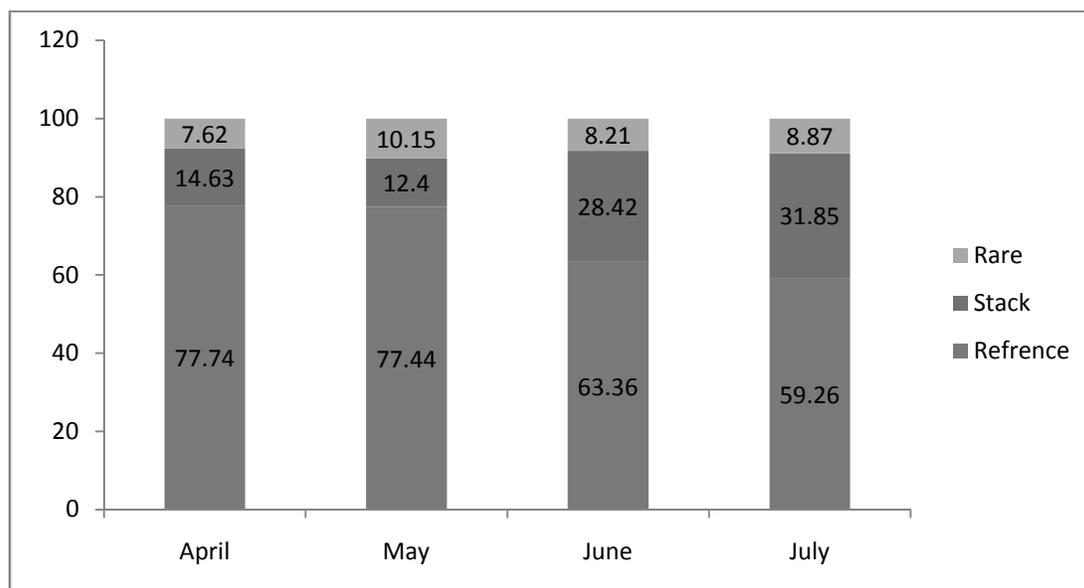
From the Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4 it is seen that, the reference section in addition with its reference collection it has served to its clienteles with the documents of rare and general collection. Documents used for reference purpose from Stack 31.85 percent are the highest during the month of July while 28.42 percent from rare stock in june. The statistics show an overall use of documents increase during the month of May. Number of document used by the users is highest in the month of June, i.e. 475. .

Table 4.5 Number and percentage of documents used by the different type of users in reference section

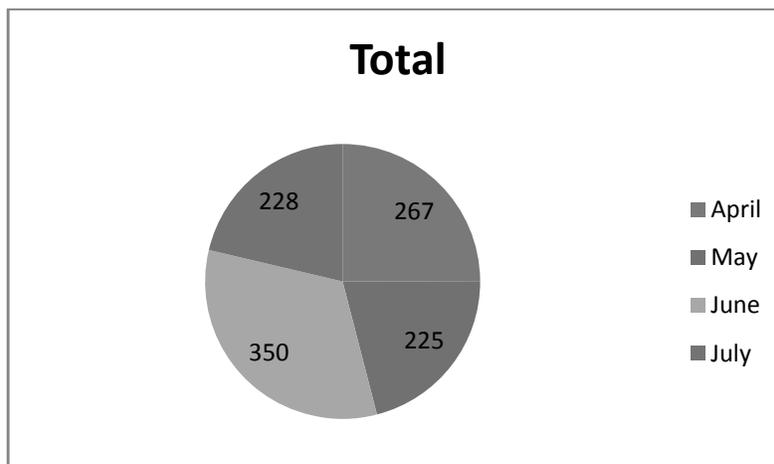| Month	No. of document used by different Users					Percentage			
	Student	Scholar	Faculty	Staff	Total	Student	Scholar	Faculty	Staff
April	152	75	18	22	267	56.92	28.08	6.74	8.23
May	140	56	13	16	225	62.22	24.88	5.77	7.11
June	161	155	11	23	350	46	44.28	3.14	6.57
July	65	122	15	26	228	28.50	53.50	6.57	11.40

Fig 4.5 Number of documents used by the different type of users in reference section
Fig 4.5 shows that the maximum Number of documents used by the different type of users in reference section where highest in the month of june and the lowest in may ie.225.

Summary and Conclusion
Reference services would be tiered and provided in all full-service libraries. Circulation and information desks would remain the front-line for directional questions, referring complex reference questions to reference desks, on-call reference staff, chat reference, research advisory services, and/or liaisons as appropriate. Online services (including chat reference, subject guides, FAQ, and for more on modeling, would be expanded and improved. Libraries may offer reference internship opportunities to local library school students.

Reference service is the most intensive kind of personal service, which attempts to bring together the user and information in a personal way. Periodical evaluation of reference services can fulfill its goal. Evaluation of reference services can be significantly improved if evaluator uses a specific model or strategy to increase the standard of data that they collect. Evaluations of reference services can be much more useful for decision-making and planning regarding services if the evaluator takes care in designing and implementing specific model of the evaluation. Success of any model depends on the knowledge of the community that the library serves. A library staff that understands its users and their needs will develop a service model that best supports those needs. Models that work well in one library will not necessarily apply to other that serves a different type of community .This case study focuses on evaluating the current trends of reference services, which has the potential to improve our knowledge regarding current reference services. Through the effective use of this case study the professionals would be able to build a guide for practices of reference services.

Reference service is the most intensive kind of personal service, which attempts to bring together the user and information in a personal way. Periodical evaluation of reference services can fulfill its goal. Evaluation of reference services can be significantly improved if evaluator uses a specific model or strategy to increase the standard of data that they collect. Evaluations of reference services can be much more useful for decision-making and planning regarding services if the evaluator takes care in designing and implementing specific model of the evaluation. Success of any model depends on the knowledge of the community that the library serves. Alibrary staff that understands its users and their needs will develop a service model that best supports those needs.Models that work well in one library will not necessarily apply to other that serves a different type of community .

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