A Study on user Problems in Academic Libraries: with Special Reference to Government First Grade Colleges of Kolar District

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Abstract

Academic Libraries have first role to foresee support services to their users by providing books, diurnal and other physical resources and services necessary for learning and researches, They can only do this completely in the instant sparing difficulties by foresee current materials and services relevant to use necessarily, Failure to do this may create problems to users. The study search into such problems users meet in workmanship energetic application of available library resources. Literatures imply that such problems may include insufficient furnish of materials expedient and services inadequate manpower and kindred reading environmental conditions.

Keywords: Academic Libraries; Library resources; user problems; Kolar District.

Introduction

Academic libraries exist in institutions of higher education such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of teaching and technology and research institutes. They are established to back the breeding and research activities of the parent institutions through the furnish of books, diurnal, register, hearsay and other publications for the advancement of wisdom. The sine of academic libraries include:

- Provision of books and non-book materials required for the academic programmes of the faculties, institutes and units of the institutions.
- Provision of information resources for recreation and personal development of the clientele.
- Provision of reference and information services
- Provision of conductive reading accommodation for the users.
- Provision of inter-library loans and co-operation to improve user services.
- Provision of ICT devices such as telephone, e-mail, fax, computer and internet services to facilitate and enhance learning and research.
- Provision of skilled and dedicated personnel to enhance maximum utilization of the library facilities.
- Provision of reprographic services and bindery
- Provision of adequate security facilities to protect library materials and equipment.

Background of the Study

The Libraries of Kolar District is a branch of the Bangaluru North University,Kolar. The Government College Libraries started from 1945 to 2007 and each college libraries has its own collections from 20000 to 1,18,000 volumes of books from academic libraries of kolar district. In this collections nearly 30000 books were weed out due to damage and out of syllabus. In this college libraries the GFGC, Kolar has more number of collections of resources like books, publications & national & international journals than other college libraries.

The library serves five academic faculties and departments with a population of over 18,000 students. During the 2015-2020 academic years, a total of 4,724 library users registered with the library.

Table 1: Registered Users.

Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
UG Students	3845	3669	4245	5045	3860	4572
PG Students	205	117	1	237	47	118
Teaching Staff	34	16	21	15	30	34
Total	4084	3802	4267	5297	3937	4724

The table above indicates that undergraduate students are the main users of the library, recording 3,860 in 2015 and 4,572 in 2016. This calls for more attention to undergraduate users needs.

Staffing: The staff position in Academic Libraries of Kolar District is presented below:

Staff Position	No. of Staff
Prolessional librarians	8
Library assistants	5
Suppporting staff	12
Total	21

Library Opening Hours: Academic Libraries of Kolar District opens for a total of 47 hours a week during full academic session. The openings are however reduced during vacation. The opening periods are given thus.

Monday to Friday	10.00 AM to 5.00 PM
Saturday	10.00 AM to 3.00 PM

Purpose of the Study

Users and their needs must be clearly understood in order to provide effective services. Similarly, the services provided by the libraries must be based on positive objectives and related to the needs and interest of the user community. This can be enhanced through modern information and communication technology, because access to rather than ownership of information resources is today the focus of library services. Library resources procured and services not fashioned along the current needs of the users are bound to create user problems. It is based on the above premise that the study is intended

1. To identify the users problems encounter in the use of library Resources.

2. To identify the problems users encounter in the use of library facilities and services.

3. To identify the problems users encounter with the library staff.

4. To make suggestions and recommendation to ameliorate the users problem.

Scope of the Study

Academic libraries in kolar district are found in the polytechnics, colleges of education, the academic colleges and research institutes. This study is focused on academic library with particular reference to kolar district. The library located in urban and rural area it's affiliated to Bangaluru North University. The academic college library services five academic faculties and departments with a population of over 15,000 students. The library is large enough to provide insight to user problems in an academic library.

Research Questions

In pursuit of the objectives and purpose of the study, answers were sought to the following questions.

1. What are the problems users encounter in the use of library materials?

2. What are the problems users encounter in the use of library facilities and services?

3. What are the problems users encounter with the library staff?

4. What measures can be taken to ameliorate users problems in the use of the library?

Review of Literature

Libraries generally are service institutions that hardly exist alone. Their relevance and needs therefore depend largely on the quality of service rendered to users. Libraries can effectively do this by providing relevant information available in print and non-print materials. This calls for continued user study which can be likened to market research in business. It is aimed at discovering patterns of use and level of awareness of users towards library services to determine the success or otherwise of library services and to identify the areas of improving in service delivery.

The above scenario points to **Fijallbrant (1990)**, that libraries should aim to make all users aware of information sources available both in the library and from external sources to enable users enjoy the search for information. Similarly, **Anyaoku (1994)**, argued that users effort at using the library are not good enough, without sufficient working knowledge of its available tools and resources, they usually end up in a feeling of frustration. Along

this line **(Okay 2000)**, clearly observed that the era when librarians simply assumed that they knew the needs of their clientele and are able to provide such needs adequately without the input of the users is over. The present day problems created by information explosion, coupled with the need to justify appropriate use of the reduced book votes to many libraries particularly in kolar district, demand that the necessary information resources should be acquired to meet the precise needs of users. It can therefore be deduced from the above authorities that user frustrations and problems could arise as a result of lack of knowledge of library resources and how to access and use them. This evidently will affect their quality of education. According to **Joyce (2000)**, there is a significant and positive relationship between knowledge of library use and academic standing of the user.

In a survey study of both graduate and post-graduate library users, **Ezeani (2005)**, noted that a reasonable number of students do not know their way around the library and where to get their resources. She called for an interpretation of library resources to users to ameliorate their problems. Eze (2005) in a related study noted that library environment affects the reading desire and development of users. He pointed out that library users cannot use the library resources to their fullest when the materials have been mutilated, stolen, misplaced or where the reading environment is unconducive for the purpose for which it was designed. User problems, the above showed, could emanate from provision of or lack of resources related to user needs, inadequate guidance to available resources, lack of knowledge of how to use and access library materials, unconducive reading environment and misuse by other users.

Methodology

The research method adopted in this study is a case survey. The study was conducted in March 2006 during the first semester of 2015-2016 academic sessions. The number of registered users/readers for the period under review is 4,724. The study population is the 400 users recorded and administered with questionnaire between the hours of 10 am-5pm the peak periods of library use by students. The sample population is the 300 users who returned their questionnaires ill usable condition. This number constitutes 75% of the study population. Instruments for data collection are questionnaire, documentary sources available in the library and direct observation. The modified four-point Likert scale was used to determine the extent of response to the problems users encounter in the use of library materials, facilities and services. Data presentation is on tables while the computation is in percentage.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table II: Users response to problems encountered in the use of library materials.

Nature of Problems by Users	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Lack of Recent Text Books	210	90	-	-
Inadequate Journals	270	30	-	-
Lack of Reference Books	240	60	-	-
Lack of Newspapers & Magazines	30	30	180	60
Lack of Government Publications	180	120	-	-
Lack of Indexes & Abstracts	150	150	-	-
Theft of Books & Materials by Users	180	120	-	-

Table II indicates that the majority of library books, journals, magazines and reference materials are lacking, obsolete or inadequate. For text books 210 or 70% strongly agreed, 90 or 30% agreed. There was no negative response at all. Similar responses are given for gazettes and government publication 180 (60%) strongly agreed and 120 (40%) agreed; indexes and abstracts have 150 (50%) for each for strongly agreed and agreed. The implication of this is that users are faced with the problems of obsolete, lack and inadequate reading materials which certainly inhibit their studies and research in the library.

On the other hand, the responses to Newspapers provision are encouraging. 180 (60%) strongly disagreed with lack of newspapers as a problem, 60 (30%) disagreed also while 30(10%) each strongly agreed or agreed. The responses emanate from the fact that the library is current with provision of daily newspapers such as the Guardian, Vanguard and the Sun. The library should Endeavour to sustain this. Mutilation of materials poses serious problems to users. To this 120(40%) strongly agreed, 153(50%) agreed. Those that disagreed are only 18 (6%) and strongly disagreed 12(4%). Similarly, hiding and theft of library materials; holding such materials beyond due date are acknowledged user problems. Hiding and theft recorded 180(60%) for strongly agreed and 120(52%) for agreed. Indeed hiding, theft and holding of library materials beyond due

date constitute great problems to users as materials they require for study are not available on demand. These affect level of scholarship and output of research.

Analyses of table III indicate that for the provision of conducive reading environment 98 or 33% strongly agreed 150(50%) agreed; 9 or 3% strongly disagreed and 42 or 14% agreed. The positive response of the number that agreed 150

Table III: Users response to the Uses of library facilities & services.

Nature of library facilities & services	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Conducive reading environment	99	150	9	42
Library Opening hours	135	153	6	6
Lending services	240	60	-	-
Catalogue bibliography Service	210	90	-	-
Current awareness services (CAS) and selective dissemination of information SDI	-	30	150	120
Internet-on-Line facility services	180	120	-	-
Photocopying / Reprography	90	210	-	-
Inter-Library services	-	3	120	150
Reference services	15	69	90	126
Binding services	-	-	240	60
Provision of reading carrels and seats	18	36	126	120

(150%) is traceable to the resuscitated central air-conditioners in all the three floors of the library. However, the less number that strongly agreed is 99(33%) may be attributed to the fact that there is no alternative power supply in times of power failure from the national grid. The negative responses are extreme reactions that can be taken care of if alternative power supply could be put in place. However, some complained of the interrupting music from the adjacent main hall, closure of the library to force users attend university functions even when not willing. In such situations, lack of alternative conducive reading rooms or classes and forceful ejection are problems users encounter which require management attention.

The library opening hours of the library received very impressive responses. 135 (45%) strongly agreed for adequate opening hours, 153(51%) agreed while strongly disagreed and disagreed had 6(2%) each. The above response emanates from the fact that the library is open Monday through Sunday, morning and afternoon, for a total of 84 hours a week. This is encouraging as it will afford many users opportunity to use the library a long time after lectures. This will also eliminate idleness and promote library use and reading culture among students and other interested users.

Provision of reading carrels and seats elicited serious negative responses. 120 (40%) disagreed 126(42%) strongly disagreed while agreed had 36 (12%) and strongly disagreed had 18(6%). The

reaction is not surprising following the fact that the library has a sitting capacity for 500 persons only while registered users in 2015 are 3,938 and 4,724 in 2016. The implication of this is that many users intending to use the library cannot be accommodated thereby creating user problems in terms of space.

Lending services have high acceptance response of 240 (80%) strongly agreed; and 60(20%) agreed. There is no negative response for lending services. The implication of this is that lending services should be maintained to enhance good library practices and remove problems of misuse of library materials.

In the area of catalogue, bibliographic display 210(70%) strongly agreed with the provision and 90(30%) agreed. There are no negative responses. The library has large and conspicuous catalogue display of library holdings. However, the problems hindering their effective utilization are improper filing of the catalogue cards and maintenance. This calls for more attention on the catalogue display to enhance access to materials. Shelf-guideless are labels to guide users on the contents of the shelves.

Those that strongly agreed to shelf guide are 180 (60%) and agreed 120(40%). There are no negative responses. The positive responses indicate that the library shelves have adequate shelf-guides. This is impressive and calls for sustenance. Though self-guides are directional, users complained not finding what they needed on the shelves. The

cause of this maybe wrong shelving by staff, theft of materials or that some students lack searching skills to locate library materials. On the other hand, responses to current awareness services (CAS) and selective dissemination of information (SDI) are not encouraging. Those that strongly disagreed to CAS and SDI services are 150(50%), 120(40%) disagreed. 30(10%) agreed and none strongly agreed. This shows that this very important library services are not provided. Users of the library would therefore encounter problems utilizing current information disseminated through this medium of services. This will affect quality of knowledge and research output.

The provision of internet online services has 180 or 60% for strongly agreed, 120 or 40% agreed. There are no negative responses. This is because the library has cyber cafe inside that provides internet browsing. This service will eliminate the problem of low patronage to the library as users will have the convenience of browsing the internet right inside the library rather than going out to search.

References services received low responses generally. Those that disagreed to the availability of the service are 126 or 42%, strongly disagreed has 90 or 30% while agreed 69 or 23% and strongly agreed 15 or 5%. The low responses are not doubtable as references services has correlation to currency of stock, SDI and CAS, interlibrary services and staff ability which generally were poorly responded to. The implication of this is that users may not be able to meet their needs which certainty will affect the quality of library services.

Bindery services were also negatively responded to. Those that disagreed are 60(20%) and strongly disagreed 240 or 80%. That is to say bindery services do not exist in the library. The user problem associated with non provision of this service is that when such support services are not rendered revenue from this point is lost which would have been used to support other areas.

Table IV: User response to the problems encountered with library staff.

Nature of Problem	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Adequate Staff	-	-	180	120
Regularity of Service	90	120	120	90
Promptness to Service Delivery	75	123	150	120
Knowledge of user information needs	-	96	129	75

Analyses of table IV show that for adequate staff all responses are on the negative. Strongly disagree has 180 or 60% while disagreed has 120 or 40%. The implication is that the library lack adequate staff to cover service points to users. Regularity of staff at service points is generally negative. Responses for agreed have only 90 (30%), strongly disagree 120 (40%): and disagreed 90(30%). Where there is inadequate staff obviously regularity at service point cannot be achieved. The implication of this is that more hands are required to all service areas or points. Again, promptness of staff at delivery services has negative responses. Strongly disagreed have 123 (41%) disagree 102(34%). Only 75 (25%) responded adequate. Responses, here are similar to the above. However, users complained of staff delaying in attending to them. This lack of promptness by staff to attend to the needs of users should be discouraged through closer supervision. Again, inadequate staff at all levels could account for this.

Further negative responses are elicited for staff knowledge of user information needs. Responses for strongly disagreed have 129 or 43%, disagreed 75 or 25% while only 96 or 32% agreed. This problem may have arisen from the fact that most staff employed got in irregularly without being tested at interviews. Another likely cause is the fact that some staff are not dedicated to duty and lack training on the job rather there is rush to acquire certificates for promotion at the expense of the job.

Findings

The study following the research questions, responses and analyses reveals the following problems encountered by users at Enugu Campus library.

1. Most textbooks, journals, reference materials, gazettes are obsolete and in incomplete sets. There are also the findings that hiding of materials, holding beyond due date and mutilation cause problems to users in using the materials for study, research and reference.

2. The conducive reading environment of the library is interrupted by noise from the adjoining main hall usually used for social functions; lack of alternative. Power supply for the library and incessant closure of the library to' force students out to attend university functions disrupt readers' attention.

3. Opening hours of the library was found

adequate but is usually truncated by power failure especially in the night.

4. Improper filing of cards in the catalogue cabinets create problem of access and utilization of needed materials.

5. The numbers of registered users highly out number reading spaces. At examinations and peak periods, many users do not have places to read.

6. References services, current awareness services and selective dissemination of information in the library are not encouraging as a means of improved library services. There is need to improve these areas.

7. The provision of internet facilities in the library has helped to improve information needs thereby alleviating user problems.

8. Photocopying facilities need to be adequately serviced to maintain regular services to users. Also, there is no bindery as a support services and source of revenue to the library.

9. The library has inadequate staff that affects negatively their regularity at services points and promptness to service delivery.

10. Most of the staff responds poorly to user information needs. This may be attributed to lack of knowledge.

Conclusion

Improvement of library and information service delivery in academic libraries call for provision of current print and non-print materials in addition to the provision of adequate and conducive reading environment, maintenance of existing information service facilities and support systems. Above all trained, qualified and dedicated personnel must be ensured at all times to improve user services. This is the only way for academic libraries to remain relevant in the era of changing and challenging ICT facilities in information packaging and delivery. In conclusion, many academic libraries are trying their best in the provision of library services in the midst of harsh economies and poor funding. However, adoption of the recommendations above will place the libraries better than they are presently in library and information services to teaming users.

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