IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARIES IN INDIAN EDUCATION-SYSTEM

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Abstract

The ease of publishing electronic documents has greatly increased the number of publishers and publications available. The speed and convenience of web publishing and easy access to documents make acquisition unnecessary in many cases; more important is access. Today's college library clientele are finding it more easy and comfortable to use the internet when they need to find information. They are unable to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate sources for their assignments, have little time to complete their projects (in part because they procrastinate) and are fascinated by the Web. In many cases, if the information is not available on the Web, it does not exist for them. They want a way to restrict their queries to retrieve just full-text electronic resources, even if the best material for their assignments is available only in print.

Key words: *Libraries, Education-system, Benefits of Libraries, E-libraries.*

Need for the study:

Today's college library clientele are finding it more easy and comfortable to use the internet when they need to find information. They are unable to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate sources for their assignments, have little time to complete their projects (in part because they procrastinate) and are fascinated by the Web. In many cases, if the information is not available on the Web, it does not exist for them. They want a way to restrict their queries to retrieve just full-text electronic resources, even if the best material for their assignments is available only in print. Because of easy access to the Web, undergraduates are using library collections and services less than in the past. Even if undergraduate students turn to the scholarly electronic resources licensed by libraries, their search skills are poor. They rarely if ever use advanced search features, do not understand that result sets are not necessarily organised by relevance to their query, and look only at the first Web page of ten to twenty items retrieved. Even if they come into the library, they seldom consult a reference librarian. This situation is alarming and forcing the academic libraries to modify their resources and services to match or modify the user's changed literate habits. With time, information communication technology is becoming more advanced and economical. This requires the libraries to modify their resources and services.

The ease of publishing electronic documents has greatly increased the number of publishers and publications available. The speed and convenience of web publishing and easy access to documents make acquisition unnecessary in many cases; more important is access. Just as collecting is no longer a primary goal of libraries, other roles are also being assessed in the new context. In the developed world with the establishment of centralized cataloguing, bibliographic utilities and networks, the need to do actual cataloguing has reduced. With the speed and sophistication of search engines the importance of classification has declined. The development in technology has made information search easier which in turn has affected the role of librarians as intermediaries.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language defines the word "Promotion" as "Encouragement of the progress, growth, or acceptance of something; furtherance".

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes "Promotion" as an advertising or publicity campaign for a particular product.

As per Roget's II: The New Thesaurus, Promotion is "A systematic effort or part of this effort to increase the importance or reputation of _by favorable publicity".

Academic Libraries and Concept of Promotion

The concept of promotion is not new to libraries. Library orientations, displays of new arrivals, book exhibitions are some of the conventional modes of promotion. The father of library science - Dr. Ranganathan's basic five laws had the concept of promotion at their core even though he did not use the term.

Ranganathan's Law Embedded promotional concept

First law: Books are for use. Maximise the use of books.

Second law: Every reader his book. Reader is the prime factor and his/her need must be satisfied.

Third law: Every book its reader. Find a reader for every book.

Fourth law: Save the time of the reader. Organise information in such a way that the reader finds the required information promptly.

Fifth law: A library is a growing Emphasis is on comprehensive and organism. evolutionary growth.

Promoting an Updated Image of Library Professionals

Given the traditional role of the libraries the users had a staid image of librarians in their mind. Most users did not see the demanding information management responsibilities of a librarian. The library professionals were not perceived as welltrained, technologically savvy

information experts. Users considered them less approachable. With changing times the role, knowledge and skills of librarians are changing dramatically. The promotion of an updated image of library and librarian is essential.

Old Concepts

According to Motha (2001) many librarians work on the old model of existence by mandate or "should."

• Students should use library databases to locate quality information for their papers.

• Faculty should send their students to librarians for assistance.

• Children should be brought to the library to learn about books.

• Middle managers should tap into the corporate library for information.

These old concepts do not leave space for reaching to users in anticipation. Library personnel are happy with the lock and key system and avoid any exhaustive promotional activities.

Lack of Training and Education

Often librarians do not promote library services well due to lack of training and knowledge of marketing tools and techniques. Sharma (2002) notes that although marketing is more widely discussed and accepted professionally than in the past, this acceptance has not necessarily resulted in more marketing classes in library schools' curricula. Despite the growing literature on library marketing and promotion, there remains a lack of familiarity with the total marketing and promotion concept among librarians.

Findings

During the study, "Library Staff got overall third rank of importance. When compared the existing staff with the recommended standards in terms of quantity and quality, it was observed that the suggested staff formulae were not followed by many college libraries as a result the number of staff in majority of the college libraries were not sufficient and up to given recommendations. Even the Government colleges did not fulfil the said obligation. Lack of staff hampers quality of services of any service industry including college libraries. When referred Government of Maharastra's guidelines for Regular and special course colleges, it was observed that though majority of colleges had sufficient number of staff under the first three categories of Librarian, Assistant Librarian and Library Assistant, they lagged behind in terms of Library attendants. The Professional colleges failed in terms of Assistant Librarian and Library Assistant. To worsen the situation in many college libraries different posts were found vacant leading towards chaos. In Regular and Special colleges many posts of professional as well as supporting

staff were vacant. Professional colleges also faced the similar situation but most of the vacant posts were of professional category.

It was observed that the qualification requirements of other categories of library staff were followed, but in case of Librarians, the private professional colleges try to bend the rules and appoint less qualified staff. Majority of surveyed librarians opined that lack of coverage of soft skills like communication skills, leadership, and customer relationship management in library science syllabi affects the effectiveness of working librarians.

Lack of adequate and well trained staff was the complaint of almost 90-95% colleges under study. Librarians insisted on revising the prerequisite qualifications of library's technical and supporting staff as it did not cover library science background. The average ranks availed by expected and existing condition of various aspects about library staff are shown below in Table 8.4. It reveals the higher expectation of library users in terms of availability in time, expertise and approachability of library staff. It is linked with the unavailability of sufficient staff in terms of quantity and quality.

Majority of library users complained about the courtesy and politeness of the library staff though they ranked the friendliness and flexibility of library staff highest. In the surveyed libraries the library staff was found overloaded due to lack of staff. In addition the provision of motivation to the library staff was marginal. Special efforts in this regard are necessary to encourage the staff The recognition of achievement, reward, training and ongoing feedback motivates the library staff to serve their users in a better way. Provision of autonomy, transparency and manager's support will no doubt encourage them to develop innovative products and services. The core problem was the image of librarians. Students have varying impressions of libraries based on their personal experiences, what they've heard, pictures they've seen, or even worse, stereotypes

depicted on TV and movie screens (Helton & Esrock, 1998). Catherine Voutier (2003) in her survey of depictions of librarians in contemporary culture found that librarians have a well known and hard to shake stereotype of a staid personality, which can include obsessive and fussy traits.

Librarians have to project their role and importance to the society from their every action. Branding their role and advertising it has become the necessity of the field. Small things like using appropriate logos, colours, giving contact details can help to project theprofessional image of libraries and librarians

College library is a part of service industry where the quality of services becomes important. Various aspects of library services, library catalogue and facilities provided by the library define its usage and reputation. The present study tested twenty four null hypotheses to study whether there was any area wise or type of course wise significant difference observed, in opinions about existing condition and expectations of users regarding various evaluation aspects of library services, catalogue and other facilities. The study also checked the current status of available seats in libraries and open access to library collection provided by surveyed libraries.

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