College Library Services and User Community : a study

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Abstract :

The purpose of the study is to assess the performance of the library services of government colleges of Manipur assessing the views and comments of their user community.A semi-structurally designed questionnaire has been used to understand library services of the colleges and assess user's views and comments covering 41 government colleges of the state and 225 users. In some cases x^2 tests have been performed to test the significance of library and information channels, use of services and rating of library facilities. It is found that users are mainly fond of internet access for academic purpose. There are certain aspects on which libraries need to introspect to enhance their way of functioning, mode of delivery of services and facilities they provide.The study is an original one conducted very recently taking into account the government college libraries of Manipur.

Keywords :

Enhanced Accessibility, Government College, Library Service; Manipur, User Community.

1. Introduction :

College libraries play a very crucial role in the higher education sector. Effective delivery of their services enhances the quality of academic and research pursuits. Such libraries are in existence to serve the complex needs of the users who comprise of faculty members, scholars, students and other working staff of the college. Provision of value added services, need based collections, timely response to users demands, etc. are also equally important for meeting the need of the users community being served. However, the evaluation of the services has been prevalent in most of the libraries to understand if the same are to the expectation of the users. In recent years, academic libraries have started to adopt innovative technologies and use of information communication technologies has replacedtheir system from traditional to digital. The changes are also seen in the concept of information searching and seeking behaviour of the users (Guruprasada and Kumbar, 2019). Their mode of access to the information resources has also been changed. Assessment made on the basis of the views and comments of the users can provide clues on various evaluativeperspectives of the library and its services. In this study, government college libraries of Manipur havebeen assessedthrough their usersto assess the performance of their libraries.

2. Past studies :

There is no dearth of literature on related to library services as a number of studies on college library services are found to be conducted by different scholars in different geographical regions. In a study, Town (2011) has focused on libraries that were under pressure to prove their worth and not have achieved fully successful. While factors influencing students' perception towards Digital Library based on Chang's Modelwas analyzed byMuqtadiroh, Astuti, and Zulfasari (2019), in another assessment on awareness and usage of electronic information resources, Kumar (2020) found electronic information resources becoming more and more important for the academic community. In his analysis, Gibson (2019) described how librarians at college and undergraduate libraries contribute to digital humanities research.Dar andMadhusudhan (2020) described the overwhelming growth of mobile devices that have created new challenges of providing access to online content in mobile-accessible formats.Tait, Martzoukou and Reid (2016)

evaluatedthe role of IT utilities in the transformation of academic library services. In a study,Ahmad, LoneandBasharat (2020) have revealed thatthe application of ICT has put a huge impact on InformationIndustry and has revolutionized the way libraries acquire process, organize, store and disseminate information.Keshava, Naik and Lokamma (2020) assessed the information need and use pattern of undergraduate students of UniversityCollege of Science, Tumkur University. In a study,Cox (2020) had focused that the higher education environment was a key operating context for academic libraries and many political, economic, social and technological (PEST) factors shape it. Guruprasada and Kumbar (2019) investigated the adoption of innovative technology in academic libraries, how the innovation of technologies has helped to improve information and library services.Gowridevi, Ramakrishna and Sasikala (2020)discussed pattern of use of online information resources by students for academic purposes in Andhra Pradesh covering various basic aspects.

3. Objectives of the study :

The study has been taken up with the objectives to:

- assess the various library services rendered by different government colleges of Manipur;
- know the existing scenario and significance of the library facilities;
- understand the significance of users access to different library and information channels; and
- identify the problem encountered and suggest suitable measures to be undertaken for improvement of library services through performance evaluation.

4. Scope and limitations of the study :

The present study has covered 41 Government Colleges of Manipur as described above. The study does not cover other category of colleges other than government colleges, which is the limitation of the same.The study covers different group of users, 225 in numbers, such as students, research scholars, faculty members and working staff of these colleges.

5. Methodology :

The performance of the services of the college libraries have been assessed through conducting a survey of their users during September-December 2019 using a semi-structurally designed questionnaire. Likert Scale of 3 and 4 point scales have been used in some of the questions in the questionnaire. Simple manual calculation and MS-Excel in some cases have been used in data analysis and interpretationChi Square tests have been performed to test the level of significance and null hypotheses formulated.

5.1 Chi- Square Test :

Chi- Square Test (x^2 test) is a widely used non-parametric test for testing of hypothesis concerning qualitative or discrete data. Such test can be used to know whether a given difference between actual and expectation has been caused due to chance or whether it has resulted due to inadequacy of the theory to fit the observed data. Such tests have been applied for testing the hypothesis formulated in the study.x^2 test is calculated using the formula :

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where, O = Observed frequency, E = Expected frequency.

x^2 test has been conducted to test the three null hypotheses comparing their calculated and tabulated values at 5% level of significance for the concerned degrees of freedoms. This enables the researchers to accept or reject the same at the appropriate critical regions corresponding to the assumed significance level.

The observed values used in the x^2 test have been calculated assuming the 3-point scale value such as: To a great extent =1, To some extent =1/2=0.5 and Not at all =1/3=0.33.In case of 4 point scale values are assumed similarly such as: Excellent=1, Very good=1/2=0.5, Good= 1/3=0.33 and Poor =1/4 =0.25.On the other hand, the expected frequencies are assumed as the average values of the total observed frequency values because of the nature of data for the study.

6. Hypotheses Formulation :

The study has formulated the following three hypotheses to test their validity. All of

them are null hypotheses as they are stated negatively :

6.1. Null Hypothesis-I : Not much difference is observed among the library and information channels by the users

6.2. Null Hypothesis-II : Type of library services does not influence the users to meet their needs.

6.3. Null Hypothesis-III : There is no difference of the library facilities as rendered by the colleges.

7. Data Analysis and Data Interpretation

7.1: Sample Matrix of Users

The sample matrix of the users covered in the present study is shown under table-1 below:

Table-1: Sample matrix

Sl. No.	User Category	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Received	Response Rate (Percentage)
1	PG Student	36	24	66.67
2	UG student	210	170	80.95
3	Scholar	28	18	64.28
4	Working Staff	12	8	66.67
5	Faculty Member	12	5	41.66
Total		298	225	75.50

Of the total 298 questionnaires administered to 298 users, 225 questionnaires duly filled in were returned making the response rate of 75.5%. The response rates of various groups of users are 80.95%under graduate followed by post graduate and working staff with 66.67% each, scholar 64.28% and faculty member 41.67% respectively.

Gender and community of the users under study can be understood from table-2 below :

Table-2: Sample characteristics   **N = 225**

Sl. No.	User Category	Gender			Community				
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)	UR (%)	OBC (%)	Total (%)
1	PG Student	8(33.33%)	16(66.67%)	24(10.00%)	4(16.66%)	7(29.16%)	5(20.83%)	8(33.33%)	24(10.00%)
2	UG student	78(45.88%)	92(54.11%)	170(100%)	18(10.58%)	44(25.88%)	38(22.35%)	70(41.17%)	170(100%)
3	Scholar	7(38.88%)	11(61.11%)	18(100%)	1(5.55%)	6(33.33%)	3(16.66%)	8(44.44%)	18(100%)
4	Working Staff	5(62.50%)	3(37.50%)	8(100%)	0 (0%)	3(37.50%)	2(25.00%)	3(37.50%)	8(100%)
5	Faculty Member	4(80%)	1(20%)	5(100%)	0(0%)	4(80%)	0(0%)	1(20%)	5(100%)
Total		102(45.33%)	123(54.66%)	225(100%)	23(10.22%)	64(28.44%)	48(21.33%)	90 (40%)	225(100%)

Of the total 225 users under study, 54.67% are female users while 45.33 are male. Again, 40 %of them belong to Economically Backward Classes (OBC), while 28.44% belongs to Scheduled Tribe (ST), 21.33% to Un-Reserved (UR) and 10.22% to Scheduled Caste (SC) categories respectively.When assessing the skills of the users is it found that while maximum users (74.66%) have knowledge of library literacy, 35.11% of them have skills of ICT.

7.2 : Library and Information Channels

Access to different library and information channels by the users under study is shown under table -3 below :

Table - 3: Users on library and information channels   N = 225

Sl No	Channels	Score (O)	E	$(O-E)^2/E$
1	Internet Surfing	161	146.25	1.49
2	Social Media	147	146.25	0.00
3	Mobile Phone	158	146.25	0.94
4	Newspaper	145	146.25	0.01
5	Library	155	146.25	0.52
6	Information Centre	126	146.25	2.80
7	Media	139	146.25	0.36
8	Personal Collection	139	146.25	0.36
Total		1170		6.48

$\bar{x} = 146.25$ $x^2 = 6.48$

On examining the access to different library and information channels using 3 point Likert Scale "to a great extent", "to some extent" and "not at all", the score values are observed for different channels.Considering the mean values as the expected values for each of the channel considered, the x^2 test is performed giving its result as 6.48. While comparing this value with its tabulated value at 5% level of significance with 7 degrees of freedom, it is found to be 14.07 whichis greater than the calculated value of the same. This gives us a strong indication that access to different library and information channels by the college library users are highly significant to meet their complex information needs. There is no difference among the library and information channels to meet the information needs of the users. Hence, the Null Hypothesis-I is accepted. As such, in the process of seeking information for various purposes, the users access to different such channels extensively.

7.3 : College Library Services :

Through different in the observed score values of the library services the same are found to be significant for the users community being served by the libraries, as understood from the given table-4.

Table - 4 : Use of library services   N=225

Sl. No.	Library Service	Score (O)	E	$(O-E)^2/E$
1	Reference Service	101	92.5	0.78
2	Current Awareness service	99	92.5	0.47
3	OPAC	80	92.5	1.69
4	Inter-Library loan	87	92.5	0.33
5	N-LIST	86	92.5	0.46
6	Selective Dissemination of Information	102	92.5	0.97
Total		555		4.7

x = 92.5 x^2 = 4.7

The table - 4 throws light that the x^2- test result of the six different types of services i.e. 4.7 is smaller than that of its tabulated value at 5% level of significance with 5 degrees of freedom i.e., 11.07. Therefore, the services rendered by the libraries of the colleges are significant for the users and does not influence them also. The null hypotheses-I formulated in the study is found to be valid and hence accepted.

7.4 : Using Internet Services :

In order to know if the college libraries provide internet services and the reasons for using the same by the users an assessment has been made, the result of which is shown in table -5 below.

Table-5:Reasons for using library internet services N = 225

Sl No.	Reasons	Total	Percentage
1	Academic Purpose	216	96.00
2	Entertainment	135	60.00
3	Surfing the Internet	27	12.00
4	Self Education	116	51.55
5	Job Search	35	15.55

As the table-5 shows "Academic purpose" is found to be the main reason for using the service (96.00%) followed by "Entertainment" (60%) and "Self Education" (51.55%) respectively. However rate of use of the service by them for "Job search" and "Surfing the internet" are comparatively less.

7.5 : Library Facility :

As the table-6 shows, the different facilities provided by the libraries are not up to the level of satisfaction.

Table- 6: Rate of library facility

Sl No	Library Facility	Score (O)	E	$(O-E)^2/E$
1	Notice Board Display	103	89.43	2.06
2	Washroom	77	89.43	1.72
3	Drinking water	83	89.43	1.72
4	Newly Arrival Display	79	89.43	1.21
5	DropBox Services	73	89.43	3.01
6	Reading Room	104	89.43	2.37
7	Furniture and Lightening System	107	89.43	3.45
Total		626.01		15.54

$\bar{x} = 89.42$ $x^2 = 15.54$

The x^2 test performed on various facilities of the libraries gives 15.54 as its result which is greater than that of its tabulated value at 5% level of significance with 6 degrees of freedom (12.592). Thus, it can be concluded that the library facilities available in the government colleges of Manipur are not significant for the users being served by them. As such, there are differences of the facility rendered by the college libraries as observed by the users under study. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no difference of the library facilities rendered by the libraries is rejected.

7.6 : Towards enhancing accessibility :

When assessing the users's views towards enhancement of access to the library services, majority of them are found not to be aware of the mechanisms to be vibrant in this regard.

Table-7: Ways to enhance accessibility   **N = 225**

Sl No.	Accessibility Mechanism	Response Rate	Percentage
1	Manning with professionally trained staff	31	13.77
2	Enriching with new publication	63	28.00
3	Introducing innovative practices	47	20.88
4	Conducting user education regularly	36	16.00
5	Making library services accessible	48	21.33

However, 28% of them feel the need for enriching the library with new publications, which is highest, followed by making library services accessible (21.33%), introducing innovative practices (20.88%) and so on. But the scenario in this regard is not satisfactory and far below the desired expectation.

7.7: Problems encountered :

Some common problems as encountered by the users community are shown under table-8 below.

Table- 8 Problem encountered by the users   **N = 225**

Sl No.	Problems	Total	Percentage
1	Library staff are not cooperative	156	69.33
2	Lack of Resources	189	84.00
3	ICT technology is poor	195	86.67
4	Lack of Modernization	125	55.56
5	Opening time is not suitable	177	78.67

As observed by the user community most of the college libraries are poor in ICT integration (86.67%) which is highest, followed by problems associated with lack of resources (84%), non-suitability of library opening hours (78.67%), non- co-operative attitude of library staff (69.33%) and lack of modernization (55.56%) respectively.

8. Findings and discussion :

Performance of library services, facilities, etc. can be assessed through user's points of view. Literature review has shown us the truth of the science. There are different libraries providing services to the users. While analyzing the views of the users in the context of Manipur different clues can be drawn on the college libraries of the state. Government college libraries in Manipur are found to render different services which are significant for their users to meet their needs. The user community of such libraries comprise of faculty members, Scholars, PG and UG students and working staff who belong to General, OBC, ST and SC communities. The sample characteristics of the users comprise of 54.67% female, 45.33% male, while 40 % of them belonging to OBC, 28.44% belongs to ST, 21.33% to UR and 10.22% to SC categories respectively. Again while maximum users (74.66%) have knowledge of library literacy, 35.11% of them have ICT skills. They use internet for different purposes giving preference on academic and entertainment.They are also very fond of different library and information channels, the use of which is significant indeed to meet their needs. The type of services however does not influence them to meet the needs. Use of internet for academic purpose is prevalent among them for academic purpose.But, they are not satisfied with the library facilities of the colleges, which need to introspect. While majority of them are ignorant about the mechanisms needed for enhancing access to the library services and facilities, they also face a number of problems in the system.On the basis of these facts, there are certain aspects on which libraries need to introspect their way of functioning, mode of delivery of services and facilities they made available.It is thus suggested that the library services and facilities should be enhanced and improved upon as per the demand of the users with the inclusion of trained and skilled professionals, user awareness programmeand integration of ICT gadgets in the library.

It is also imperative, as the findings show, to chalk out some key areas on which future researchers can think of to study, which is the scope for further study, as noted below :

- Role of authority to enhance library service;
- Influence of professionals towards improving library system and services; and
- Impact of ICT on transforming library system.

9. Conclusion :

The performance of any existing service library can be assessed through conducting a study of their users in different perspectives. When assessed through conducting a survey of 225 samples of users, different aspects of services of 41 government colleges of Manipurhave been ascertained. As the findings show, while library and information channels play a crucial role in meeting the needs of the user, types of service do not matter but the facilities rendered by them are not up to the satisfactory level of the users.The same also have given us indication to make certain suggestions as mentioned. If implemented,in due course of time, the service condition of the libraries could be improved upon in many ways to serve the users in the most effective way. At the same time, researchers can give thrust on the highlighted scope of research in future in the context of college libraries of the state.

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