Issues and Challenges of Kerala University Library: An Analytical Study Based on Problems and Expectations of Users

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Abstract - Kerala University Library provides various resources, services and products for its academic community. All activities in the library are centred to changing needs of users and their satisfaction. Due to the advancement of Information and communication Technology, libraries have also begun to cope with revolutionary changes in its housekeeping activities. The study examines what are the problems faced by users of Kerala University Library while accessing e- resources, what are the expectations which cater from this service oriented institution. For this purpose Structured Questionnaire based Survey method was used and data analysis done by SPSS Package, Chi Square test is used to assess the statistically significant association between services offered by the library and services get to users. The population covered under this study mainly pertaining to the research scholars and students in the library. Out of 175 distributed questionnaires, 150 were returned back with sufficient retorts consisted of 85 regular students and 65 research scholars. Which was subjected to for detailed data analysis. The result of the study revealed that there is an incongruity between the services delivered and the services offered by the library. In order to improve the quality of services in the library, in view of this study, the users in Kerala University Library have supplemented some valuable suggestions. The study also found that attitudes and perceptions in respect of Information Professionals which influences the level of utilization of resources.
Keywords: Chi Square Test, Information and Communication Technology, Information Professionals, Kerala University Library, SPSS Package

I. INTRODUCTION

In library and information field, 'User' is the most frequently used term, which represents a person who uses the library for his or her information needs. All the information resources and services provided by libraries are centered to the requirements of users and for their satisfaction. In Kerala University Library, main users are students, research scholars and faculty members. Users are of different categories, some users may be frequent visitors of the library and use many of the services and resources provided by the library and others may use one or two services. As a service oriented institution, the Kerala University Library has the restraint to satisfy the end users by effective use of resources, services and products. In the present scenario, the rapid explosion of Information and Communication Technology had made revolutionary changes in all housekeeping activities and services. Now, libraries are not only a store house of books and journals,

but also a huge reservoir of e-resources. While accessing e – resources, so many problems are come about and sometimes users do not get relevant information and it will affects the service quality and provides defamation to the prestigious institution. Here, to make user's satisfaction and improve the quality of services is a big challenge faced by libraries. The present study is an effort to find what are the problems faced by users of Kerala University Library while accessing e-resources and services, and what are their suggestions to improve the quality of services.

A. Kerala University Library

Kerala University Library is a service oriented institution. It was established in 1942 for providing information to academic community. As a research centre, the library facilitates teaching, learning and research activities. The Kerala University Library System consists of the University Central Library Palayam, Campus Library at Karyavattom and 41 department libraries and three study centres. Kerala University Library provides very rich collection of resources such as books, periodicals, journals, thesis and dissertations CD ROMs, Maps etc. Library offers digital information services- UGC NFONET and special collections- Kerala Studies, Women Studies, Government Publications, General Publications, General Biographies, bound volumes of Newspapers, Journals and rare books, UN and World Bank Publications etc. Kerala University Library exists as depository of UN and World Bank Publications in Kerala. Kerala University Library also provides electronic information resources such as bibliographic database, UGC –INFONET e- journals, Open access journals, Gate way Portals etc.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are,
1. To identify the problems faced by users in Kerala University Library
2. To understand problems faced by users based on gender-wise analysis
3. To identify problems faced by users based on category
4. To understand what are the expectations of users from the library
5. To understand the suggestions made by users based on gender-wise analysis
6. To understand the suggestions made by users based on category.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are many relevant studies have been carried out based on problems or challenges faced by users while accessing e-resources and services.

The study conducted by Mahwasane and Mudzielwana (2017) focused on the different challenges that the students face in accessing information in the library. Information retrieval skills are of paramount importance for one to be able to access information resources in different formats in the library. The study found that there are challenges faced by users are, lack of proper knowledge on how to use information retrieval skills, insufficient user education, lack of computer knowledge, Information Communication Technology (ICT) in accessing information in the library etc. The study also recommended that information literacy skills training be compulsory for first year students so that they will be able to advance to higher level and become information literate. Library Education should also form part of the university curriculum. ICT specialists who are focused on library issues are of paramount importance.

Ugwoke (2017) investigated the need for professional assistance to users of information retrieval tools at the National Library of Nigeria. A total of 38 users of the library were randomly selected and used for the study. It was found that most of the respondents 18(47.3%) consulted the card catalogue provided by the librarians to make location and use of information easy. This was followed by 10(26.3%) of them who made use of online databases. While 9(23.6%) of the respondents always made use of the catalogue, 11(28.9%) others sometimes did so. It was also noted that most of the respondents 27(71%) needed the help of the librarians in making effective use of the card catalogue. 13(34.2%) of the respondents agreed they needed the help of the librarians in making use of the index to journal articles and the online databases. The major problems identified in the study were the out-datedness of some of the resources 24(63.1%), lack of Internet services 24(63.1%) and lack of knowledge of how to use the card catalogue.

Library users today are faced with many challenges in finding necessary information for their various needs and assignments. The study conducted by Jelagat (2016) examined challenges faced by Moi university library staff in creating awareness of library services and their solutions. From a target population of 32 library staff and 10,470 students, quantitative data were analysed by use of descriptive statistics and presented in form of tables while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Indiscipline among library users, low number of library staff and lack of cooperation among the students and the staff are among others some of the challenges that were identified. The study recommends the need to increase the number of library staff so that they can efficiently meet the needs of library users.

Another study was conducted by Bennet (2015) in a digital library environment of Calgary University, Canada which discussed issues were involved in setting up a digital library. The study went into user expectations for the digital library, which are often focused on the distributive function of the library to provide rapid and easy access to resources such as licensed e-journals and e-books. The study found that , although digital materials are becoming more popular with Calgary University Library users, university libraries are not yet ready to abandon print library materials altogether for a wide variety of reasons.

The study by Pauline (2011) analysed the challenges and issues faced by academic libraries as a result of the introduction of information technology which has led to an increase in competition among information providers. Libraries must improve the quality of their services to enable them face the challenges of information explosion in the 21st century. Service oriented organizations have identified the customer or user as the most critical voice in assessing service quality. For assessment of service quality to be effectively carried out in academic libraries, it is imperative to investigate what service quality is to users. This study examined the relationship between service quality and users' satisfaction at Redeemer's University and examines how user surveys have been employed in a number of previously published literatures. A questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument for the study. The study revealed that of the academic staff and students who formed the population for the study, students were found to have used the library most; the College of Management Sciences had the highest frequency of use and it also showed that users were satisfied with the services of the library.

Margam, (2010) focused on the use of e-resources by research scholars of Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (India). The purpose of the study was to determine the use of e-resources, users' skills in handling e-resources, and the purpose of their use. The study also discusses the problems faced by research scholars in accessing e-resources, their opinions on feature of e-resources, and their views on usefulness of e-resources compared to that of conventional sources.

Natarajan and *et al.* (2010) conducted a survey of 117 faculty members and research scholars on use and user perception of electronic resources in Annamalai University. The study reveals that despite the availability of wide range of e-resources, the frequency of their use was low. The study analysed the problems faced by users in Annamalai University Library are, lack of time, lack of awareness, lack of subject coverage; and slow downloading of e –resources.

Constant Okello-Obura (2010) analysed the e-resources seeking behaviour of LIS post graduate students in Makerere University, Uganda. Its purpose was to present and discuss specifically the problems LIS postgraduate students' face in accessing e-resources. The survey research

found that the respondents have positive attitudes towards e-resources utilization and they indicated varied problems faced in e-resources utilization and proposed different strategies to improve on e-resources in the University. The problems identified are slow Internet connectivity, inadequate networked computers, lack of access to low cost printers in the library, using advanced search strategies of most databases and lack of awareness of most of the e-resources.

Another study by Margam (2008) in Delhi University, examined use of UGC Info net Library and Information Science e-Journals by research scholars and students.. The main aim was to identify the needs and requirements of users in general and to know the use of UGC-Infonet Library and Information Science e-journals in the University of Delhi by research scholars and students of DLIS in particular. A survey method was conducted through a questionnaire circulated among 40 research scholars (PhD and MPhil) and 28 students (MLISc) studying in the DLIS, University of Delhi, for the academic year 2006-07. The study shows that e-journals perform an increasingly important role in research at DLIS. Not only current e-journals are required, but research scholars and students need to be provided the use of significant electronic back runs as well. There is an ever increasing demand for subscriptions of more e-journal titles in LIS. There appears to be some need for academics to be provided with training in using e-journals.

Wangasooriya (2007) tried to find out information needs of university community and find out the problems they encounter when they search OPAC of Sri Lankan university libraries. Attempts are also made to make proposals to upgrade the OPAC in university libraries in Sri Lanka. All the university libraries in Sri Lanka identified by UGC annual statistic report in year 2006 were considered as the population of this study. The study found that there are ten major issues are faced by OPAC users in Srilankan University Library. The author suggested that to overcome these problems the users need to have a high level of computer literacy, make aware of bibliographic database.

IV. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The analytical study provides feedback about the strength and weak area of library activities and services. As a service oriented institution, libraries can identify what are user's expectations and suggestions to improve the quality of the library. The population of the study is limited to research scholars and students, faculties are excluded.

V. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire based Survey method is used for the study to find out Issues and challenges faced by Kerala University Library based on problems of users while accessing resources and services. The study was restricted only to 65 research scholars and 85 students. A total of 175 questionnaires were distributed and 150were subjected for data analysis. It was done by percentage analysis and chi-squire test. Probability value (p) helps to determine our study significant or not. The p value indicates mismatch or disparity between user's expectations and services provided by the library, p value is a number between 0 and 1.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical techniques to describe, evaluating, studying and transforming the data with the objective of finding valuable information and conclusion. The purpose of data collection, analysis and interpretation is to acquire useful and valuable information and supporting the authorities to decision making. About 175 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents including research scholars and students in Kerala University Library and 150 questionnaires were returned back i.e., 65 research scholars and 85 students responded. Data analysis was done by using and SPSS statistical packages. Analyses of data obtained are given below.

VII. PROBLEMS FACED BY USERS IN KERALA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

TABLE I PROBLEMS FACED BY USERS IN KERALA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Problems	Count	Percent
Charges to access e-resources	60	40.0
Slow access speed	122	81.3
Difficulty to find relevant information	43	28.7
Information Overload on the internet	40	26.7
It takes too long to view or download pages	106	70.7
Privacy problem	35	23.3
Insufficient printing facility	94	62.7
Poor internet connectivity	125	83.3
Lack of support and guidance from staff	89	59.3
I don't know how to access database	70	46.7
Accessibility of OPAC is not easy due to unfamiliarity	29	19.3
Lack of current resources	50	33.3

The Table I highlights the problems faced by users in Kerala University Library. It is clear from that majority of the respondents 125 (83%) out of 150, pointed out poor internet connectivity of the library. About 19.3% users in the Kerala University Library are unfamiliar to use OPAC and 46.7% of them are unskilled to access database. The respondents of 59.3% viewed that they have no support and guidance from library staff and 28.7% users opined about their difficulty to find relevant information. A number of users (62.7%) are responded to insufficient printing facility and 23.3% have the opinion about privacy problem in the library. When there are 70.7% respondents complained with delay to view downloaded pages, 26.7% among them about information overload on the internet.

About 81.3% respondents out of 122 noticed slow access speed of the internet and 40%opined against charges to access e- resources.

TABLE II GENDER WISE ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS FACED BY USERS

Problems	Male		Female		χ^2	P
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent		
Charges to access e-resources	25	35.7	35	43.8	1	0.316
Slow access speed	59	84.3	63	78.8	0.75	0.385
Difficulty to find relevant information	23	32.9	20	25.0	1.13	0.288
Information Overload on the internet	15	21.4	25	31.3	1.84	0.175
It takes too long to view or download pages	50	71.4	56	70.0	0.04	0.848
Privacy problem	13	18.6	22	27.5	1.66	0.197
Insufficient printing facility	42	60.0	52	65.0	0.4	0.528
Poor internet connectivity	59	84.3	66	82.5	0.09	0.770
Lack of support and guidance from staff	48	68.6	41	51.3	4.64*	0.031
I don't know how to access database	36	51.4	34	42.5	1.2	0.274
Accessibility of OPAC is not easy due to unfamiliarity	17	24.3	12	15.0	2.06	0.151
Lack of current resources	25	35.7	25	31.3	0.33	0.563

*: Significant at 0.05 level

The gender wise analysis from the Table II, it is clear that majority of the male (84.3%) and 78.8% female respondents have the opinion to slow access speed and poor connectivity of the internet. About 35.7% male users and 43.8% female users opined about charges to access e-resources in the library. Chi- square test was used to ascertain the significant association between male and female respondents and their problems.

Difficulty to find relevant information is another problem faced by 32.9% male and 25% female respondents. About 21.4% male and 31.3% female respondents were pointed about information overload on the internet. Another problem is being faced by Kerala University Library is delay to view downloaded pages; it was pointed out by most of the male (71.4%) and female (70%) respondents. But, only 18.6% male and 27.5% female users complained about the privacy problem.

Insufficient printing facility is another serious issue in the library supported by 60% male and 65% female respondents and 35.7% male and 31.3% female users are not satisfied with current resources. About 51.4% male and 42.5% female respondents are unskilled to access databases and 24.3% male and 15% female users are unfamiliar with OPAC in the library. From the Table II it is observed that there exists a statistically significant association between services offered by the library and what they get. About 68.6% male respondents and 51.3% female respondents are not satisfied with support and guidance from the library staff. The p value is 0.031 and it is significant.

TABLE III CATEGORY WISE ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS FACED BY USERS

Problems	Research scholars		Students		χ^2	P
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent		
Charges to access e-resources	32	50.0	28	32.6	4.65*	0.031
Slow access speed	56	87.5	66	76.7	2.8	0.094
Difficulty to find relevant information	15	23.4	28	32.6	1.49	0.222
Information Overload on the internet	21	32.8	19	22.1	2.16	0.142
It takes too long to view or download pages	50	78.1	56	65.1	3	0.083
Privacy problem	14	21.9	21	24.4	0.13	0.716
Insufficient printing facility	47	73.4	47	54.7	5.54*	0.019
Poor internet connectivity	54	84.4	71	82.6	0.09	0.768
Lack of support and guidance from staff	41	64.1	48	55.8	1.03	0.309
I don't know how to access database	28	43.8	42	48.8	0.38	0.537
Accessibility of OPAC is not easy due to unfamiliarity	10	15.6	19	22.1	0.98	0.321
Lack of current resources	24	37.5	26	30.2	0.87	0.350

*: - Significant at 0.05 level

Kerala University Library has been existing as a resource centre to academic community. The main users in the Kerala University Library are research scholars and students. The following Table 6.3 highlights various issues faced by users and Chi- squire test was used to ascertain the significant association between their issues and services provided by library. In the present scenario, due to tremendous growth of Information and Communication Technology, a large no of internet resources and internet search tools are available on internet, which are useful for study and research. The respondents in Kerala University Library pointed out the following issues were come out while accessing e- resources. As a facilitator of research and learning, Kerala University Library can provide e –sources free of charge to its academic community. About 50% research scholars and 32.6% students agreed to this opinion and there is a statistically significant association between services provided by the library and what all are get to them. Here, the p value is 0.031 and it is more significant.

Slow access speed is another issue faced by 86.5% research scholars and 76.7% students. But, 23.4% research scholars and 32.6% students have difficulty to find relevant information. When, Information Overload on the internet complained by 32.8% research scholars and 22.1% students, most of the respondents including 78.1% research scholars and 65.1% students are opposed to the delay of viewing downloaded pages. But, only 21.9% research scholars and 24.4% students have privacy problem inside the library.

As a service oriented research center, printing service is being offered by the library. But majority of the respondents of 73.4% and 54.7% students are not satisfied and there is a disparity between service offered by the library and what they get. It has statistically significant association and p value is 0.019, clear from the Table III. Poor internet connectivity is another serious issue is being suffered by 84.4% research scholars and 82.2% students in the Kerala University Library. Lack of support and guidance from staff was opined by 64.1% research scholars and 55.8% students. But, about 43.8% research scholars and 48.8% students are unskilled to retrieve information through databases and only 15.6% research scholars and 22.1% students are unfamiliar to OPAC. Lack of current resources is another issue in the library affected by 37.5% research scholars and 30.2% students.

As any other organisation, the goal of Kerala University Library is customers or user's satisfaction. Though, the library provides various resources, services and products sometimes it does not meet user's expectations. This study is an attempt to analyse what are the suggestions from the users to improve the quality of services and what are their expectations from this goal oriented institution. It is clear from the Table IV that majority of the respondents 87.3% suggested to make availability of more copies of text books. 'Library should inform services to Users' is another requirement of 83.3% users and about 80.7% wanted to improve the seating facility for users. But, another 80.7% users suggested 'to promote e-mail alert to users'.

TABLE IV EXPECTATIONS OF USERS IN THE KERALA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Expectations	Count	Percent
Provide Computer facility for research scholars	107	71.3
To facilitate inter library loan service	78	52.0
Provide group study facility	109	72.7
Provide e-mail alert to users	121	80.7
Provide telephone facility	98	65.3
Provide referral services	60	40.0
Enhance user orientation program	102	68.0
Improve seating facility for users	121	80.7
Library should inform about services to users	125	83.3
Library staff should have service mind	91	60.7
Enhance library extension programs	88	58.7
Library should inform overdue of books	109	72.7
Provide cafeteria/snack corner for users	108	72.0
Reduce overdue charges	75	50.0
Provide lift facility	85	56.7
To make availability of more copies of text books	io2131	87.3
To provide more periodicals and journals	115	76.7
To provide free access of E resources to research scholars	109	72.7

'To provide more periodicals and journals' was supported by 76.7% respondents and 'provide group study facility' and 'to provide free access to e –resources to research scholars' was suggested by 72.7% respondents.

Another 72.7% respondents have the suggestion that 'Library should inform overdue of books' and 'Provide Cafeteria or snack corner' is another requirement by 72.0% respondents. Meanwhile, 71.3% respondents suggested to 'Provide Computer facility for research scholars'. From the Table IV respondents, 68.0% out of 102 pointed 'To enhance user orientation programme'. But, about 65.3% respondents have opined 'To provide telephone facility'.

'Library staff should have service mind' is a valuable suggestion offered by 60.7% respondents and 58.7% suggested 'To enhance library extension programmes'. But, 56.7% of them wanted lift facility in the library. 'To facilitate inter library loan' was suggested by 52.0% respondents and 50.0% urged to reduce overdue charges. It is clear from the Table IV, only a 40.0% respondents have the suggestion 'To provide referral services'

VIII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

While the library is providing many resources, services and products, sometimes there is a mismatch between user's needs and services by the library. It will adversely affects the quality of this prestigious institution.

1. The study found that poor internet connectivity and slow access speed is another severe issue faced by users of Kerala University Library.
2. Most of the respondents (70.7%) complained to delay of viewing downloaded pages in the internet.
3. When library offers printing facility service, 62.7% respondents do not get sufficient printing facility in the library
4. Lack of support and guidance from library staff is another problem encountered by 59.3%   users.
5. The study found that most of the users are familiar with OPAC
6. The study revealed that 46.7% users are unskilled to access e-resources in the library
7. Lack of current resources is another issue pointed out by users
8. In Kerala University Library, 23.3% users encountered with privacy problems
9. Information overload on the internet is another serious issue while accessing e- resources.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

As a goal oriented institution, Kerala University Library has to satisfy changing needs of users. The customer or users satisfaction is a challenge to every service oriented institution in a technologically advanced environment. The study makes some valuable suggestions from the users of Kerala University Library, it may be a feedback to this institution to improve its service quality.

Suggestions from the users are the following;
1. Provide Computer facility for research scholars is the urgent requirement of research scholars (90.6%) in Kerala University Library.
2. Another opinion made by research scholars (90.6%) is to provide free access of e- resources to them.
3. Majority of research scholars (92.2%) and students (83.7%) opined to make availability of more copies of text books, periodicals and journals
4. The users in Kerala University Library require group study facility (79.1%) and they wanted to facilitate interlibrary loan facility.
5. Provide lift facility is another requirement, 65.6% research scholars and 50% students suggested.
6. The library should provide e mail alert to users
7. Provide telephone facility and improve seating facility are another suggestions made by users.
8. The respondents (84.4%) suggested that library should inform about services provided by them, it leads to the necessity to enhance user orientation program

9. The respondents (64.1% research scholars and 58.1% students) pointed out that library staff should have service mind.
10. To enhance library extension program and provide cafeteria or snack corner is another requirements of users in Kerala University Library.
11. Another suggestions made by users are Library should inform overdue of books and reduce overdue charges.

X. CONCLUSION

The study analyzed various issues and challenges faced by Kerala University Library based on user's problems. The users get no support and guidance from library staff is a serious issue which will harmfully affects library service quality. To make free access of e –resources and insufficient printing facility, provide computer facility for research scholars are most wanted requirements of users in Kerala University Library.

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