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Service Evaluation in Special Libraries of Bahawalpur: A Comparative Study of GCT, QMC, and UCET

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Abstract

This study was conducted to reveal the current status of services in the Quaid-e-Azam Medical College library (QMC), Government College of Technology library (GCT) & University College of Engineering & Technology library (UCET) at Bahawalpur. The data were collected through questionnaire survey of library users along with interviews of special librarians. This study was confined only to the three special libraries of Bahawalpur. The data collected were analyzed and conclusions were drawn. The analyses revealed that services provide by the special libraries of Bahawalpur were not up to the mark and users were not satisfied with the quality of services. Libraries had not up to date material. Adequate computers and internet facility was not available in the libraries. Findings of the study can be useful for understanding the problems faced by the special libraries of remote/less-developed areas of Pakistan and other developing countries of the world.

Introduction

Special library is generally concerned with literature of a particular subject or a group of subjects and extends its facilities to a particular type of clientele (Akhtar, 1975). In this age of rapid development, the importance of special libraries in intellectual, social and political sphere of life cannot be denied. The establishment/ development of special libraries is necessary due to the knowledge expansion. No progress can be made in any field especially in science and technology without special libraries holding latest material/research. Special libraries serve as a "broadcasting station" which provide information of the latest development to the scientist, engineers, doctors, traders, etc (Misbah, 1971).

When Pakistan came into being, there were only 25-30 special libraries. The condition of these libraries was very poor and there were no professional staff in these libraries. During the first 10 years no importance were given to libraries and special libraries had no exemption. In early 1960s the importance of special libraries in the fields of

science and technology were recognized and a few more special libraries were developed (Hanif, 1969). Currently there are 330 special libraries in Pakistan having 500,000 volumes (Sabzwari, 2005).

Statement of Problem

The services of a library are designed to facilitate and satisfy the information needs of the users. The services of special libraries are very distinctive. The nature of the clientele and their functions as information center demands that the special library's provide services according to users requirements i.e., what user wants, in the form in which he wants it and the time he wants it. The flood of information and application of new information technology and limited financial resources are the factors which require libraries (special libraries no exemption) to provide relevant and rapid services at the time of need.

However in Bahawalpur the services provided by special libraries are not adequate. Most of them are following outdated practices and fail to provide the satisfactory services by adopting modern libraries techniques and tools. Therefore the present study is aimed to evaluate the current status of services provided by QMC, GCT, & UCET libraries in Bahawalpur.

Review of Literature

In 1969 Hanif in his article on special libraries concluded that these libraries existing in Pakistan are not functioning in a proper manner. Most of them are following outdated practices and the staff is non-professional. He also suggested measures for the improvement of special libraries. Siddiqui in 1977 wrote an article to discuss the situation of Special Libraries in Pakistan and described that most of these libraries are providing only circulation and certain amount of reference services. However, they lack indexing, abstracting, bibliography compilation and current awareness services. Saqlain in 1973 in his article on book Selection in special Libraries concluded that the book selection should be according to the purpose and scope of the clientele who use the library. Haider (1969) in his article on 'Science Technology Libraries in Pakistan' reported that the resources & services of existing science-technology libraries are effected due to poor production of books in the country, inadequate bibliographical control, absence of standards, paucity of science graduate on certain places and insufficient funds. Sadiq (2005) suggested that there is a need to improve the situation of special library in the country. Certain measures such as centralized planning and coordination of the development of special libraries, centralization of acquisition and distribution of foreign literature, preparation and maintenance of union catalogue in certain subject areas, Inter library loan system among special libraries, provision of Internet facility, etc. should be taken.

Singh (2006) found that in most Indian special libraries features such as Internet resources and other electronic/digital resources, subject gateways and networks and consortia, are fast gaining acceptance. New trends include the development of libraries' own web sites, the sophisticated application of digital technology, more professional marketing of information products and services, outsourcing, flexi workforce, knowledge management and participative management, which are becoming the order of the day. Raufullah (2010) found that concept of special libraries is not clear in Pakistan. Most of special libraries attached with scientific organizations are used for employee's gossip and serve as conference room of the organization. Furthermore, special libraries of Pakistan cannot afford to get latest scientific publications and other material due to budget problems and high costs of scientific material. Ahmed (1969) concluded that medical library should be an information laboratory to communicate knowledge to further the purpose of the instructional program, research program and patient care of medical community it serves. Sultana (1999) in her article on the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center library indicated that the library provides bibliographic, reference and document delivery assistance to students and research scholars of the center and other external users writing research papers/thesis/dissertations or preparing articles for professional journals. Midrarullah (2007) did a survey in order to evaluate the awareness of internet and the use of online resources among the postgraduate students of Army Medical College. He found that the students were well aware about the use of internet and online resources. Fatima, Naveed-e-Saher and Alam wrote an article on learning resource center of Ziauddin Medical University and found that due emphasis is being put on availability and quick access to medical journals and electronic resources.

Ismond and Shiri (2007) wrote an article to identify two medical digital libraries from Canada, the USA and the UK. It purpose was to discuss strengths and weaknesses in system design in an effort to provide a basis on which to

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improve the organization of, and the access to, electronic, scholarly information. The study finds that each digital library had a unique set of strengths and weaknesses. Each offered different services to help users identify relevant material and to quickly understand and assess their contents. However, this required that each library have a team of experts to obtain, assess, catalogue, and annotate the information. Where available, user comments were supportive of each effort and very positive.

Haq (2009) reported that there is acute shortage of professional librarians to serve our medical libraries. He also emphasized on need for increase in number of medical librarians to meet the minimal standards and medical librarians should enhance their IT skills. Bhatti & Asghar (2010) conducted a survey on the library services to medical students of Quaid-e-Azam medical college and found that majority of the students were unsatisfied. Most of the respondents show their partial satisfaction with information services, reference services, CAS, SDI, indexing & abstracting and other bibliographic services. Total dissatisfaction was found with inter library loan services, user education and translation service. Similarly the students demanded for more text books and latest journals and internet facility.

Ramazan (1982) reported that Faisal Shaheed Library present in the central Library of the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore has about 110,000 books on almost all fields of pure and applied sciences. Library provides many services like circulation of library material, photocopying services, library material reservation, union catalogue of serials, and reference service. Rehman (1983) discussed the present situation of UET library NWFP and emphasized the need of Orientation program for users, establishment of book bank and microfilm section etc. He also suggested for the subscription of National & International Science Journals. Anwar and Safdar (2004) described in their article on Central Library, University of Engineering and Technology, Taxila found out that the library is providing a variety of services to satisfy users' needs. Kaur and Manhas (2008) reported that in the engineering colleges of Punjab and Haryana states of India, the majority of the respondents (65.6%), access the Internet from college or their workplace. More than 75% of the respondent's use the Internet services mainly for educational and research purposes. Google and Yahoo are most commonly used search engines. More than 70% of the respondents feel that the Internet is useful, informative, easy to use, inexpensive and time saving.

Research Questions

- What is the status of special library services at Bahawalpur?
- What is the level of users' satisfaction with library services of GCT, QMC and UCT?
- Which recommendations can be given for the improvement of special library services?

Methodology

For this study, a mix methods approach was used i.e., questionnaire survey and personal interviews. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed among the students of each sample institute. Four librarians from these libraries were also interviewed.

Analysis of data (Questionnaire)

Departments/Institutes of Respondents

Analysis of the data regarding number of respondents indicates that most of the respondents were from Government College of Technology, Bahawalpur.

Table. 1 Frequency Distribution of Responses from each Institute
Class/ Program of Study of the Respondents

	Institutes	Frequency	Percent
1.	GCT	90	34.9
2.	QMC	85	32.9
3.	UCET	77	29.8
	Total	258	100.0

The result shows that majority response came from 3rd year students (42.6%), while 22.5% & 18.2% response came from 2nd and 1st year students respectively.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of the year of Study of the Respondents

Sr	Academic Year	Frequency	Percent
1.	1st year	47	18.2
1.	2nd Year	58	22.5
2.	3rd Year	110	42.6
3.	4th Year	28	10.9
4.	5th year	1	.4
5.	System	14	5.4
	Total	258	100

The table shows that most of the respondents (33.3%) use library twice in a Week, while 27.9% of the respondents were who use library daily.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Library Visit by the respondents

	Frequency	Frequency	Percent
1.	Rarely	30	11.6
2.	Monthly	22	8.5
3.	Fortnightly	24	9.3
4.	Twice a week	86	33.3
5.	Daily	72	27.9
6.	System	24	9.3
	Total	258	100

User Opinion on Library Services

Different statements related to the library services, collection, staff, environment etc were given to the users to acquire their opinion. The responses were as followed.

When the respondents were asked about the library access the respondents from GCT & UCET agreed (mean=4.05 & 4.07 respectively) that their library is easy to approach. However, QMC respondents were neutral (mean=3.48) about it. However, the respondents from GCT and QMC were neutral (mean=3.44 & 3.26) about their library timings, while respondents from UCET agreed with the statement that opening hours of their library are adequate (mean=4). The respondents from all institute agreed (mean=3.66, 3.61 & v3.64) that their library has well-organized collection. When the respondents were questioned about the library up to date collection, they all were neutral (mean=3.02, 3.28 & 3.26) in their opinion. However, the respondents were found neutral from GCT, UCET & QMC (mean=2.78, 2.59 & 3.22) about the books purchase on their request. Respondents from UCET agreed (mean=4.07) that their libraries have open shelf system and books are easy to use, but the respondents from QMC disagreed (mean=2.09) the statement & students from GCT were neutral (mean=2.75). The respondents from GCT & QMC disagreed (mean=2.22 & 2.01) that their library provides material in other formats. While the students from UCET remained neutral (mean=2.72). Students from all institutes remained neutral (mean=3.09, 3.22 & 3.38) with statement "Library has appropriate material for locating information". Respondents from GCT & QMC were neutral (mean=3.34 & 2.95) that library catalogue is easy to use. However, UCET respondents agreed (mean=3.55) to it. The respondents from GCT and UCET agreed (mean=3.64 & 3.87) to the statement, "issue and return of library material is easy", while respondents from QMC were found neutral (mean=3.48). Students from GCT agreed (mean=4.18) that their library provides book reservation services, whereas the respondents from UCET and QMC remained neutral (mean=3.22 & 3.44) about it. The respondents from GCT, QMC & UCET agreed (mean=4.10, 3.70 & 3.82) that their library staff is competent and helpful. The respondents from all institutes remained neutral (mean=3.45, 3.38 & 3.40) that library staff demonstrates good communication skills. When the respondents were asked that does the Library staff provides adequate training/ orientation on the use of services and resource. Students from GCT, UCET and QMC were found neutral (mean=3.10, 2.87 & 3.34 respectively) about this statement, GCT & UCET students agreed (mean=3.90 & 3.59) that they are satisfied with the way they are treated at the library, while the students from QMC was neutral (mean=3.37) about this. The respondents GCT & UCET institutes agreed (4.10 & 3.65) that library environment is conducive to study. While QMC respondents remained neutral about it (mean=3). The respondents from all institutes agreed (mean=4.03, 3.55 & 3.77) that their library furniture is comfortable. The respondents from GCT and QMC agreed (mean=3.69 & 3.81) that the library provides heating/cooling facilities. However, the respondents from UCET were found neutral (mean=3.41). All the respondents from GCT, QMC & UCET remained neutral (mean=2.98, 3.34 & 3.21) about the Library reference services provision. All the respondents from GCT, QMC & UCET remained neutral (mean=2.89, 2.84 & 2.62 respectively) about the statement, the Library Document Delivery Services. The respondents from all institutes were neutral (mean=2.86, 2.58 & 2.91) that library provides Indexing and Abstracting Services. GCT students disagreed (mean=2.47) that library provides User Advisory Service while QMC & UCET were neutral (mean=2.75 & 2.94). Students from GCT and UCET disagreed (mean=1.82 & 2.42) that their libraries provide Photocopying Services, but the respondents from QMC were neutral (mean=2.55) that the library photocopying services meet their needs. . GCT & QMC respondents were neutral (mean=3.22 & 3.38) about the statement, "Library provides News paper Clipping Services", however respondents from UCET agreed (mean=3.51) with the statement. Students from GCT, QMC and UCET disagreed (mean=1.53, 2.08 & 2.37) the statement, "Adequate computers are available for use of electronic sources". The respondents from all the three institutes had different opinion that their library provides good internet facility. Respondents from GCT strongly disagreed (mean=1.43), while students of QMC disagreed with the statement. However, UCET respondents remained neutral (mean=2.70) with it. The respondents from GCT strongly disagreed (mean=1.36) that library provides access to CD-ROM databases, while QMC & UCET were disagree (mean=2.11 & 2.44) about the statement. The respondents from GCT strongly disagreed (mean=1.37) that their library provides access to adequate online sources. However, QMC & UCET respondents disagreed (mean=2.26 & 2.25) with this. The respondents from all the three institutes had different opinion about the statement, "Library web page is informative, helpful and easy to use for services".

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Opinion About Library Services

Sr. No.	Statements	GCT (Mean)	QMC (Mean)	UCET (Mean)	Standard Deviation
1.	Library is convenient for visitors to approach	4.05	3.48	4.07	1.602
2.	Opening hours of library meet user needs	3.44	3.26	4	.837
3.	Library provides well-organized collection	3.66	3.61	33.64	1.169
4.	Library provides up-to-date collection	3.02	3.28	3.26	.753
5.	Library purchases books on users' request	2.78	2.59	3.22	.983
6.	Library has open book shelf system	2.75	2.09	4.07	.000
7.	Library provides material in other formats as well (Audiovisual, Microform, etc.)	2.22	2.01	2.72	.816
8.	Library has appropriate material for locating information	3.09	3.22	3.38	.753
9.	Catalog of library material is easy to use	3.34	2.95	3.55	.753
10.	Issue and return of library material is easy	3.64	3.48	3.87	.548
11.	Library provides Book Reservation Service	4.18	3.44	3.22	.548
12.	Library staff is competent and helpful	4.10	3.70	3.82	.548
13.	Library staff demonstrates good communication skill	3.45	3.38	3.40	.894
14.	Library staff provides adequate training/orientation on the use of Services and Resources	3.10	2.87	3.34	.753
15.	I am satisfied with the way in which I am treated at the library	3.90	3.37	3.59	.837
16.	Library environment (noise level, lights, cleanliness, etc.) is conducive to study	4.10	3	3.65	.837
17.	Library furniture is comfortable	4.03	3.55	3.77	1.169
18.	Library provides heating/cooling facilities	3.69	3.81	3.41	1.049
19.	Library provides reference services	2.98	3.34	3.21	1.211
20.	Library provides Document Delivery Services	2.89	2.84	2.62	1.517
21.	Library provides Indexing and Abstracting services	2.86	2.58	2.91	1.817
22.	Library provides User Advisory Service	2.47	2.75	2.94	1.506
23.	Library provides Photo-copying Services	1.82	2.55	2.42	1.366
24.	Library provides Newspaper Clipping Services	3.22	3.38	3.51	1.033
25.	Adequate computers are available for use of electronic sources	1.53	2.08	2.37	1.673
26.	Library provides good internet facility	1.43	2.11	2.70	1.472
27.	Library provides access to CD-ROM Databases	1.36	2.11	2.44	1.049
28.	Library provides access to adequate online-sources	1.37	2.26	2.25	1.169
29.	Library Web page is informative, helpful, and easy-to-use for Services	1.42	2.27	2.79	1.225
30.	Library provides On-line reference service (Ask a Librarian)	1.47	2.19	2.67	1.483
31.	Library offers computer catalogue (OPAC)	1.43	2.18	2.95	1.789
32.	Library maintains my research interest profile	1.65	2.36	2.69	1.789
33.	Library sends me updated information related to my research interest (SDI, CAS)	1.7	2.36	2.64	1.304
34.	Library keeps me informed about all of its services	1.94	2.46	2.81	1.378
35.	I am satisfied with the overall quality of services	3.34	3.11	3.27	1.673

Note: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly disagree

Respondents from GCT strongly disagreed (mean=1.42) and QMC disagreed (mean=2.27) to it. While respondents from UCET remained neutral with the statement (mean=2.79). Students from GCT strongly disagreed (mean=1.47) and respondents from QMC disagreed (mean=2.19) when they were asked to give opinion on Library provides online Reference Service". While UCET respondents were neutral (mean=2.67). Respondents from GCT strongly disagreed (mean=1.43) and QMC respondents disagree (mean=2.18) that their library offers computer catalogue, while UCET were neutral (mean=2.95) to it. The respondents from GCT and QMC disagreed (mean=1.65 & 2.36 respectively) with the statement, "Library maintains my research interest profile". However UCET respondents were neutral (mean=2.69) about it. The respondents from GCT and QMC disagreed (mean=1.7 & 2.36) with the statement; "Library sends me updated information related to my research interest". However UCET respondents remained neutral (mean=2) about it. The respondents from GCT and QMC disagreed (mean=1.94 & 2.46) that their Library keeps them informed about all of its services. However UCET respondents were neutral (mean=2.81) about it. Students from all institutes were neutral (mean=3.34, 3.11 & 3.27) that they are satisfied with the overall quality of services.

Other comments:
- Library environment should be conducive to study.
- There should be alternate arrangement in case of electricity failure.
- There should be up to date collection of books in the library.
- Library staff should provide orientation program.
- Library should provide reference services.
- Library should provide good Internet facility.

Interview Analysis

Distinction of special libraries:

Special libraries are different from other types of libraries regarding their audience (N=02), their collection (N=04), and their services (N=04).

Services provided in special libraries:
Special libraries should provide services according to the need of specific user like current awareness service (N=04), selective dissemination of information (N=04), article alert/ RSS (N=02), digital reference (N=02), manual reference (N=04), door to door information (N=01), and Email alert service (N=01).

Competencies needed for special librarians

A special librarian should be a good psychiatrist and a good researcher (N=01). He should have the knowledge of computer and internet (web 2.0) (N=04). He should have specific subject knowledge (N=04) and good communication (speaking, writing, reading) skills (N=02). He should be aware about the domain/ objectives of parent institute (N=1). He should have the skill to abstract things for researcher (N=01). He should have good searching skills for both off line and on line material (N=01).

Situation of budget in special libraries

Special libraries attached with research institutes have enough/ appropriate budget (N=03), while maximum government special libraries don't have appropriate budget (N=02). International economic crisis effect the purchasing power of libraries (N=01). In some cases budget allocated for special libraries are used on other things (N=01).

Situation of special libraries in Pakistan

Situation of special libraries is better as compare to academic and public libraries (N=02). These are providing different services (online and offline) according to the need of the user (N=02). These libraries have better skill set (N=01).

Other comments

There should be refresher courses for special librarians by library associations /PLA (N=02). Workshops and trainings should be conducted (N=01). There should be special courses at master level (N=01). There should be research on special libraries to draw weaknesses and strengths (N=01).

Conclusion

The findings of the study show that special libraries of Bahawalpur are not in a good condition. Specialized services (SDI, CAS, OPAC, etc.) are not provided in these libraries. Libraries lack open shelf system, online or CD-ROM databases, Internet facility, and many other services and facilities that are necessary in special libraries. It is found that most of the respondents were not satisfied with the majority of the services being provided in their libraries and were of the view that overall quality of services should be improved. There is a dire need to improve the situation of

special libraries in Pakistan. Use of new and specialized technology should be adopted in these libraries. Specialized services (CAS, SDI, TOC, etc.) should be provided to the users. Trained staff should be appointed.

Suggestions

Based on the above findings the following suggestions are put forth for improving the special library services.
- New technology should be used in special libraries of Bahawalpur.
- Electronic sources should be provided to the students.
- Reference services (manual and online) should be provided.
- Libraries should create and maintain their web sites.
- Librarians should improve their communication skills.
- Orientation program should be started on regular bases.
- Regular user survey should be conducted to evaluate and improve the services.

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