Vandalism as A Crime in Engineering College Libraries A Social Issue: A Study

Dattatraya Trayambak Kalbande   **Subhash P Chavan**   **Madanshing D Golwal**

Abstract

Reports a study carried out at the Engineering Colleges in Marathwada region, to find out students' perception and attitudes towards vandalism in the library. To elicit the necessary information, a questionnaire was distributed to 1000 randomly selected students of the colleges spread across the eleven colleges out of which 505 responded. Analysis of their responses showed that vandalism in library materials in the form of theft, mutilation and handing books and journals, is largely regarded as a form of academic self-survival strategy that is hardly frowned at by majority of the respondents. Factor that predispose to vandalism include limited library collection; unaffordable cost of personal text books, high cost of photocopying as well as peer-influence. Recommendations are made for liberalisation of loans, intensification of user education, provision of multiple copies of text books as well as use of effective security measures.

Keywords: Vandalism, Engineering College Libraries, User Studies, Crime

1. Introduction

Libraries are considered venerable, quite peaceful, and safe places for study, learning, and research. Libraries are considered as soul of the educational institutions, and these play vital role by providing resources and services according to curriculum to the faculty and the students. It has been observed that there is a noticeable growth in number of the students and faculty in the colleges. It has resulted in the growth in library users. Hence college libraries are finding it difficult to cope up with the increasing need of the users. The infrastructure available in the library is less and resulting in the dissatisfaction amongst the young users, which sometimes leads the users to do unwanted activities. The vandal purposely or ignorantly destructs the beautiful, valuable reading material, library building, furniture, and equipment of the college libraries. They also indulge in physical and verbal abuse with library staff and other users. Library being a social institution, preserving and disseminating knowledge in the form of documents, anything which defiles its sanctity, decorum, discipline, beauty, is called as vandalism in library. All forms of library abuse and crimes in the library come under vandalism in the library. (Garad, 2011).

Vandalism is recognized as crime, when a person wilfully damages or defaces the property of others or the commons. Some vandalism qualifies as culture jamming on sniggling. It is artistic in nature as well as being carried out illegally or without the property owner's permission. An example of vandalism includes graffiti art, billboard liberation and possibly crop circles. Criminal vandalism has many forms, graffiti, salting lawns, cutting trees, egg throwing, breaking windows, arson, spraying paint on public property tagging placing glue into locks, tire slashing, scratching paint, engraving, ransacking a place and flooding someone's house by clogging a sink and leaving the water on is common in many inner cities as a part of gang culture. Other

devastating forms such as rioting, involve the wilful destruction of public and private property, vandalism is serious common crime.

Vandalism is not senseless property damage, individuals vandalise intentionally property, popularly referred to vandalism such as equipment, buildings, furniture, etc, for variety of reasons such as to convey a message, to express frustration, to take revenge, to make money, or as a part of fun and competition, or game, vandals may work alone or as a members of a loose or organised group.(Vaishnav, 2003)

2. Definitional Analysis

Marathwada is one of the six divisions of Maharashtra state which includes, eight districts they are Aurangabad, Jalna, Beed, Parbhani, Hingoli, Nanded, Latur and Osmanabad. Aurangabad is capital of Marathwada region.

Swami Ramanand Theerth Marathwada University (SRTMU) was established at Nanded by bi-furcating the Marathwada University, Aurangabad on 17th September 1994.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study has been undertaken with a view;

1. To identify different types of vandal activities.
2. To find out causes of vandal activities.
3. To undertake opinions of users on vandal activities.
4. To survey steps taken by library staff, committee, management and Government to control the vandalism.

4. Hypothesis

Following hypotheses were formulated for the study;

1. Unsatisfied users are root cause of vandalism.
2. Male users are more prone to vandal activities.

5. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study is confined to vandalism in engineering college libraries affiliated to Swami Ramanand Tirth University Nanded.

6. Methodology

The present study used survey method to collect the data from Engineering College Libraries affiliated to SRTU to find out the prevailing situations.

"The survey method is one of the most effective and sensitive instrument of research survey research can produce much needed knowledge" (Kasyap 1969, p95).

7. Data Analysis

7.1 Gender wise Analysis of Respondents

Table 1: Gender wise Analysis of Respondents

Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
Male	348	68.91
Female	157	31.09
Total	**505**	**100.00**

As it is generally contended that number and types of vandal acts depend largely on the gender, hence an attempt was made to find out the participation of students according to their gender. Of the total 505 respondents, 348 (68.91%) were male, while 157 (31.09%) were female.

7.2 Age and Gender of Respondent

Table 2: Age and Gender of Respondent

Gender	Age group & Percentage			
	17-20	21-25	More than 25	Total
Male	188 (54.02)	124 (35.63)	36 (10.34)	**348 (100.00)**
Female	86 (54.78)	48 (30.57)	23 (14.35)	**157 (100.00)**

The Table 2 depicts that in the 17-20 age group, out of the 505 respondents, 188 (54.03%) were male, while 86 (54.78%) were female. It is a fact that out of the total 348 male respondents, 312 (89.66%) from the age 17 to 25 have come forward in majority to express their opinion on the topic vandalism in engineering college libraries.

7.3 Monthly Income Group of Respondents

As the lower income group causes deprivation and frustration in the society, it can tempt users for vandalism for some or the other reason; hence an attempt was made to find out respondents' income group. The responses received have been analyzed and represented below.

Table 3: Monthly Income Group of Respondents

Monthly Income Group	No of Respondents	Percentage
Below 5000	12	2.376
5000-10000	107	21.188
10000-15000	227	44.950
15000-20000	97	19.208
20000-30000	32	6.337
Above 30000	30	5.941
Total	**505**	**100.000**

It can be observed from the Table 3 that out of the total 505 respondents, 443 (87.72%) were from income group of 5000-20000, while 125 (11.8%) respondents were from the income group more than 20000, while 62 (12.28%) respondents were from the income group more than 20000. Further it can be concluded that 87.72% respondents were from monthly income group of less than 20000, which indicates that majority of the respondents were from middle class families.

7.4 Frequency of Library Use

As frequency of library use depends on the availability of efficient library services, if not provided promptly, can tempt for vandalism, hence an attempt was made to find out frequency of library use. The responses received have been calculated and represented in Table 4.

Table 4   Frequency of Library use

Frequency	No of Respondents	Percentage
Almost Daily	294	58.22
Once a Week	157	31.09
Sometimes	41	8.12
Monthly	12	2.38
Rare	1	0.20
Total-	**505**	**100.00**

The collected data analysed in Table 4, indicates that of the total 505 respondents, 294 (58.22%) were attending the library daily, while 157 (31.09%) respondents were using the library Once in a week.

7.5 Satisfaction Level

As vandal acts are supposed to depend upon satisfaction level of users, an attempt was made to find out satisfaction level of the respondents. This has been calculated and analysed in Table 5.

Table 5:   Users Satisfaction about Library Services

Satisfaction	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	157	31.09
No	348	68.91
Total	**505**	**100.00**

The Table 5 indicated that out of the total 505 users, 348 (68.91%) were dissatisfied with the library services, while 157 (31.09%) users were satisfied with library services. The higher percentage of dissatisfaction among the users about library services leads them towards the illegal practices in the library.

7.6 Access Facility

As the open access facility in the library may cause more vandalism than close access facility, hence the respondents were asked about the access facility in the library and presented below.

Table 6 Access Facility in the Library

Access Facility	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Open Access	69	13.66
Close Access	436	86.34
Total-	**505**	**100.00**

The Table 6 reveals that out of the total 505 respondents, 436 (86.34%) were not allowed to enter inside the library to select his or her book, while 69 (13.66%) users reported that they were allowed to enter inside the library to select the required book, It means close access facility in the surveyed engineering college libraries are more prevalent than open access. Theft of books, mutilation of journals and books, vandalism to library property are prevalent in engineering college libraries, because of huge enrolment of the student and insufficient staff & books available in the library to provide service hence libraries preferred close access facility.

7.7 Reasons for Theft

The delinquent reader intentionally creates many illegal activities in engineering college libraries and outside the libraries. Hence the researcher has made an effort to find out the extent of the problem and common reasons of theft of books & other reading material from the libraries. In the literature reviewed, there are number of reasons for theft problem in libraries. The investigator applied nine reasons in the survey according to the environment and library situation in this region and asked the respondents to know the perceived causes. They were asked to tick more than one option in yes/no columns for each reason given. The data collected from the respondents are analysed and presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Respondents' Opinion on Reasons for Theft

Reasons for theft	Number of respondent	Percentage
Poverty	156	30.89
Low Income	47	9.31
Social Environment	18	3.56
Cultural Background	92	18.22
Library Environment	103	20.40
Over Due Fines	11	2.18
Slackness in the Counter Checking	19	3.76
No Guard at Exit Counter	7	1.39
Un-Circulated Volumes	4	0.79
Not specified	48	9.50
Total-	**505**	**100.00**

Table 7 reveals that of the 505 respondents, 203 (40.20%) were feeling that poverty & low income of their parents was the major reason for theft. Another 254 (50.30%) respondents have indicated that the reasons were: library environment, cultural background, social environment, overdue fines, and attributed them towards theft, as well as no exit guard, slackness in counter checking, and un-circulated volumes respectively. Hence it is concluded that among the nine reasons, poverty, library environment, and low income of the respondent may influence them towards the theft, while 48 (9.50 %) respondents have not specified any reason.

7.8 Methods of Theft and Mutilating Library Material

Method of theft and mutilating library material are differing from library to library and user to user. The delinquent readers adopts various methods to steal or mutilate the reading material for example; by hiding in the clothes or dresses, by offering inducement, throwing the book through the library window, removing due date slip, tearing out pages. Hence an attempt was made by asking in questionnaire that 'Do you have any idea how the mutilated pages or stolen books are taken out of the library? And users were asked to tick more than one response. The response given by the users are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Methods of Theft and Mutilating Library Material

Methods of Theft & Mutilation	Respond	Percentage
Hiding in the Clothes	325	64.36
By Offering Inducements	168	33.27
Throwing Book	119	23.56
Removal Due Date Slip	93	18.42
Tearing of Pages	425	84.16
Not Specified	68	13.47

Multiple responses: It can be observed from the Table 8 that of the method for mutilating library material i.e. hiding in the cloth and tearing out pages, while 325 (64.36 %) respondents, were of the opinion that throwing books out of the windows, by offering inducements & removing due date slip is the common methods of theft and mutilation among the respondents. Another 68 (13.47%) respondents have not specified any methods of theft and mutilation.

7.9 Preventive Measures

The respondents were asked to state preventive measure they would like the library to put in place to reduce theft, mutilation, non-return of books, misplacement, vandalism to property, and disruptive behaviour. Users were free to give responses since it was open ended question. All the preventive measures suggested by the respondents are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Preventive Measures Suggested by the Users

Sl No.	Preventive Measures	Respondents	%
1	Fine and Punishment	348	68.91
2	Provision of multiple copies of Textbook	415	82.18
3	Provision of photocopier Facility	289	57.23
4	Security Guard/ Exit Control	45	8.91
5	Exhibit the Vandals' name on notice board	89	17.62
6	Security of High-Cost Material	13	2.57
7	CCTV	328	64.95
8	RFID Technology	45	8.91
9	Exhibit the mutilated material	125	24.75
10	Building & Library Material Insurance	12	2.38
11	Library Rules and Regulation	278	55.05
12	Reduce the Fine	112	22.18
13	Provision of Internet Facility	287	56.83
14	Provide a set of books for Low Income Group Students	78	15.45
15	Page Bowler Machine Must in the Charging and Discharging Section	18	3.56
16	Appoint Book Recovery Attendant	9	1.78
17	Repair, Repainting Furniture, & Building	117	23.17
19	Binding Section Must in Library for Minor Repair for Damaged Books	103	20.40

Multiple responses: A provision of multiple copies of text books 82.18% was the most population option with 68.91% provision of a fine and punishment, 57.23%, provision of photocopier 40.51%,CCTV 64.95%, library rules and regulations 55.05%, binding section must for minor repairing damaged books 20.40 %, Internet facility 56.83%, while remaining respondents supported Security Guard, R F I D Technology, Exit Control, Exhibit the vandals name on notice board, Secure Highly Cost Material, Building & Library Material Insurance, Page Bowler Machine Must in the Charging and Discharging Section, Appoint Book Recovery Attendant were the preventive measures suggested by the users to prevent illegal activities from engineering college libraries.

8. Conclusion

The users' opinions on various forms of vandalism, which consciously or unconsciously cause damage to library property, were examined. It is quite obvious from the study that theft and mutilation within the library affects students' education.

All librarians should have a plan for dealing with vandalism as and when it occurs and for preventing its occurrence in the first place. Hence the researcher was of the opinion that all these illegal problem and vandal activities from the engineering college libraries are likely to be reduced but not stopped completely.

References

1. Kasyap, M.M. (1969). Planning of Survey, Library Herald, 2 (1&2), P,95

2. Kirkpatrilk John T. (1984). Explaining crime & disorder in libraries. Library Trend. 33(1). 13-26.

3. Vaishnav A.A. and Dixit Ganesh M. (2003). Vandalism in academic libraries: A case study. Information Management, Trends & Issues. 124-128.

4. Vidyanidhi (2010). http://www.vidyanidhi.org (accessed on 10th January, 2010).

5. Garad,M. D. (2011). Vandalism in College Libraries in Marathwada. Published thesis in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University. Aurangabad.

6. Mulikat,O. S. & Fehintola, N. O. (2010). Perception and attitude of students in relation to vandalism in a university Library. Annals of Library and Information Studies.57, 147-149.

About Authors

Mr. Dattatraya Trayambak Kalbande, Librarian, Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri.
E- mail: kalbanded@gmail.com

Mr. Subhash P Chavan, Librarian, Shri. Asaramji Bhandwaldar College, Deogaion (R).
E-mail: subhashchavan05@gmail.com

Mr. Madanshing D Golwal, Librarian, Law College, Osmanabad (M.S).
E-mail: mgolwal4@gmail.com