SPECIAL STUDENTS AND COLLEGE LIBRARY: A STUDY

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Abstract

At the research work in higher-level education the user is on his own and gains information and new knowledge as a result of his work and study in the library. Library and information centers as social institutions are ultimately meant to satisfy the information requirements of users. The libraries can play a vital role in the academic sense as well as rehabilitation of the special students by way of planning, designing and directing appropriate services and reference/referral services for career advancement and counseling to help to overcome their limitations. This study was conducted to assess the needs of the special students who are in higher education.

'A' grade accredited college libraries in Nashik city (Maharashtra, India) is the study area of present study. Findings focused on the inadequacy of the infrastructure, collection and facilities for special students in these college libraries and this major population is neglected by the College Libraries and authorities.

Keywords: College Libraries, Special Students, Higher Education, Special Needs, Accredited College Libraries.

Introduction

The libraries of the 21st Century will be in fact look like a Computer Centre rather than a 'Pustakalaya' or 'Granthalaya' as it is at present. The Librarian has to act as the manager of knowledge system rather than the custodian of the rich intellectual wealth kept in the library. Therefore, there is a paradigm shift that has taken place in the modern education system. The teacher-centered education system has changed to a learner–centered system. In the changed environment the teacher is performing the role of a facilitator rather than that of a preacher. It is this shift, which is to be supported and facilitated by the books and libraries of the 21st Century. A well-equipped and well-managed library is the foundation of modern educational structure. Educationists, education commission and committees of librarians have often emphasized the importance of the library in higher education

Customer oriented approach; design and evaluation are the founding pillars of any enterprise. Library and information centers as social institutions are ultimately meant to satisfy the information requirements of users. They are regarded now-a-days as high technology social

1

institutions which have the responsibility of providing right information to right clientele at the time.

Role of College Library in Higher Education

According to Devrajan, G. (1999) it is at the higher levels of education; the library becomes more central to one's academic needs. By depending solely on classroom teaching education is made a procreation bed, where the average above and the below average are treated alike. The infinite development of a student according to their capability is possible only when libraries provide unhindered access to information. At the research work in higher-level education the user is on his own and gains information and new knowledge as a result of his work and study in the library. According to Malcom Adiseshiah a renowned educationist, "If the purpose of higher education at the higher level post graduate, doctorate and post doctorate is to develop new knowledge then there should be no alternative to the library."

The important indicator of country's future may be the state of higher education. Higher education enables people to reflect on the critical, social, economical, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. It contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skill, college and university are important agencies for importing higher education.

Devrajan, (1999) implied that, the college libraries importance is emphasized in the various education and library commissions appointed in the pre-independent and post-independent India. These commissions have pointed out the crucial role of college and university libraries in the educational process. A number of seminars and conferences on the college libraries have been organized in order to discuss and strengthen the role of college libraries in higher education.

Today, the college library is considered an indispensable part of education. It exists to serve the objectives of its institution. It is a hub of the academic and intellectual life of the college. The college library plays a key role as it provides opportunities for the well being of the individual student, who can pursue his own studies according to his own tastes. It provides an access to a wide range and variety of documents.

The responsibilities of the college library are manifold. In the present context it has not only to support and supplement the teaching-learning process of the institution, but it has to promote and spread knowledge by providing exposure to the world of books and the wisdom contained in them. To prevent the degradation of the system it has to formulate innovative programmes and display keen interest to become effective instrument of the teaching-learning process. 'Librarians should see themselves in the communication industry and not the book supply industry.'

The role of library is perhaps more important than a teacher. The teachers deliver good relating to the course work that too within a limited span of teaching hours, but the college librarian through its library can fulfill their lifelong needs by penetrating deep into requirements and by being more responsive to their needs. It is at this juncture that the finer tastes of life and

intellect could be cultivated in individuals particularly in adolescents. Library has the capability and the urge, to learn and capture new ideas. Library can assume the role as a learning resource centre where they are provided with food for thought. Use of a library is a part of active process of learning of handling and sifting ideas and information and is likely to be stimulated by less formal teaching method such as seminars, group discussion and project assignments.

Thus, the library is an important instrument of education. The role of academic libraries especially college and university libraries is well recognized as tools and integral part of higher education.

Special Students

As define by 'Webster's Dictionary the term "Special" is distinguished by some unusual quality, uncommon, noteworthy, extra-ordinary, additional to the regular extra, utilized or employed for a certain purpose in addition to the ordinary'.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines (Education) denoting or relating to the education of physically or mentally handicapped children: a special school.

In the United States, special need is a term used in clinical diagnostic and functional development to describe individuals who require assistance for disabilities that may be medical, mental, or psychological.

In the United Kingdom, special needs often refer to special needs within an educational context. This is also referred to as special educational needs (SEN). In the United States, 18.5 percent of all children under the age of 18 (over 13.5 million children) had special health care needs as of 2005.

In a democratic country like India every child/ person has the right to education- the right to receive help in learning to the limits of his capacity, whether they are average, bright, dull, retarded, blind, deaf, crippled, delinquent, emotionally disturbed or otherwise limited or deviant in their capacities to learn. These students need a little extra help for their learning and have special needs to complete their course. These students with special needs are called exceptional/ special.

Role of College Library for Special Users

While collection building, the libraries should make special efforts to generate special collection in a selected area. This special collection not only adds value to the collection but also promotes the library and improves image and usage.

As the library services have developed, distinct groups of readers have emerged as targets for specialized services, special resources and allocations would be inevitable. The librarian should therefore become aware of changing needs and demand on the library services and equip themselves to meet the challenges as and when they present themselves. This requires an awareness and vigilance to understand the society around him and also calls for an integrated approach roping in the several other institutions serving the society.

According to the Census, 2001, total disabled population in India noted 21million people and within this 1.6 million noted in State of Maharashtra. In Census, 2011 total disabled

population in India is 26,810,557. (http//:wwwcensusindia.gov.in). (Source: C-Series, Table C-20, Census of India 2001 and 2011)

Normally all the library and information services available to the handicapped individual in a manner which does not stress the individual's handicapping condition or ignore the consequences of that handicap for information access and format. Library services can be made more effective in catering to their needs and that a medium to promote these services can be effectively employed. There are various factors to be considered in the study of college library for special users.

Overview of the Study:

In concern with the special users there is an urgent need to realize the important role that academic libraries have to play in the scientific and technological revolution which is now taking place. A necessary function of the library now-a-days in the academic world is to bring constantly to the notice of the students and teachers information which they ought to have. Libraries must be attached by corresponding advances in library services.

The present study is "User study of College Libraries: with special needs of the special users". All the five colleges under this study are affiliated to University of Pune. These colleges are grant in aid by UGC and accredited with 'A' grade certification by NAAC. In the assessment of college library there is great importance for user demands, stack holder satisfaction and physical status of the library. These colleges have well established library. These libraries have users with special needs.

Objectives

- To know about the 'A' grade college libraries situated in Nashik city, Maharashtra.
- To identify the special needs of the users from these college libraries in concern with the library collection, infrastructure and services.
- To assess the satisfaction of these users who are with special needs.

Methodology

This study was conducted with survey technique, pre structured questionnaires and interview method where necessary was used as a primary source of data collection and College prospectus, journals college websites and Internet these are secondary sources of data collection.

Review of Literature

Total 112 documents are reviewed by the researcher. Within this 92 primary sources (Journals and Websites) and 20 (books etc.) secondary sources reviewed. Some reviews are here.

Kumbhar T.S., (1986) has presented a questionnaire survey of College Libraries under Gulbarga University area. The survey reports colleges under Gulbarga University area. Besides the questionnaire method, he also collected data by observing the actual working of libraries. He analyzed different aspects of college libraries like, management, collection, finance and building, reader services, library personnel etc. and offered 25 suggestions for the smooth functioning of the library and to improve library status

Pantry Sheila OBE and Griffiths Peter (2005) suggested the use of monthly reports for the management of libraries. They noted once everything is in place and running the center manager will find it useful to compile a monthly report both for the benefit of senior management or the supplier of funding, and for the center staff themselves to interpret. This report should give a continuous narrative on the developments of the center, and the measures could be used to highlight the results of the activities.

Rajhansa Vijaya, (2001) has stressed the need to perform the function of quality collection development as a management function and highlights various concepts and tools available for the acquisition. Librarian in academic library which will ensure quality collection development, viz. book selection models, budget allocation, use and user studies, half life of periodicals obsolescence of literature, self–renewing library, weeding techniques, RLG-conspectus, collection development policy.

In this context of libraries it needs to be registered that size is not always synonymous with excellence. The quantity of a collection does not assure quality. And just as no newspaper can really print all the news items that are fit to be printed similarly no library can collect all the books worth collecting and to seek and even to acquire everything is not to have the best collection. Quality means never having to say, "I am sorry". Ultimately, the collection would be of quality, if the user gets his information needs satisfied by consulting the collection. Hence, the collection development should be use-based and demand-driven, which will lead to achievement of quality control in collection development.

Dash M. (2003) given an introduction to education of exceptional children. It incorporates modern trends and practices in the identification, assessment, placement and education of children with special needs.

Karen E. McAulay, (2005) written an article. The aim of this article is to interview three academic library users with different special needs, one of whom is a current undergraduate, whilst the others graduated two and five years ago. Acknowledging that disabled people in earlier generations have often been barred from the student experience, it was hoped that the interview process would serve to identify ways in which our modern, up-to-date libraries now made it possible for users with special needs to use our facilities with a better level of parity, and thus to achieve academic success. The paper examines the measures that libraries can take to improve the learning experience for users with special needs.

Data Analysis

In the year 2012-13 and 2013-14 College-wise special students in number is as follows:

➢ H.P.T. ARTS & R.Y.K. SCIENCE COLLEGE: 02
➢ B.Y.K. COLLEGE OF COMMERCE: 04
➢ K. T. H. M. COLLEGE: 38
➢ KSKW ARTS, SCIENCE AND COMMERCE COLLEGE: 09

Total 53 disabled/special students are covered in this study. Within this population 17(32%) students are blind and 36 (68%) are handicapped.

Findings

At the beginning of the questionnaire the personal information about the user data revels that there are 13(24.5%) special students from junior classes and 26 (49%) special students from senior classes and 14(26.5%) special students are from Post graduate classes. Total 26 (49%) special students are from Arts faculty, 21(40%) special students are from Commerce faculty, four (7.5%) from Science faculty and two (3.5%) from Professional courses. 50(94.33%) special students are studying in Marathi medium and only three (5.66%) are studying in English medium.

Library Usage:

To provide more and more services and facilities to the peer group of the users is the main objective of any library. Well-organized facilities and services makes library very effective. To know about the extent of use of available facilities and services a question was asked with four options.

Table 1: Uses of College Library

Daily	Twice in Week	Weekly	Never
14 (26.5%)	16 (30%)	6 (11.5%)	17 (32%)

Above table describes the responses that 14 (26.5%) special students are use library daily, 16 (30%) special students are use library for twice in a week, 6 (11.5%) students used library after eight days and 17 (32%) special students are not using their college library.

To know the purpose to visit the library a question was asked and responses are presented in table 2.

6

Table 2: Purpose to Visit Library

To study in the reading room	For Issue/ Return book	Completing assignment	For reading Newspapers	Any other	Not Responded
36 (68%)	35 (66%)	22 (41.5%)	9 (17%)	4 (7.5%)	17 (32%)

Table 2 shows that 36 (68%) special students are visited their college library for the study purpose. They use the study room. 35 (66%) special students visit to library for borrowing books from Issue counter. 22 (41.5%) special students visit to complete their home work. There are nine (17%) special students use their library to read news papers and four (7.5%) special students use Internet from library. 17 (32%) special students have not responded to this question. As these students may are the blind.

Another question was asked to know their purpose for the reading. The responses are received and presented in following figure.
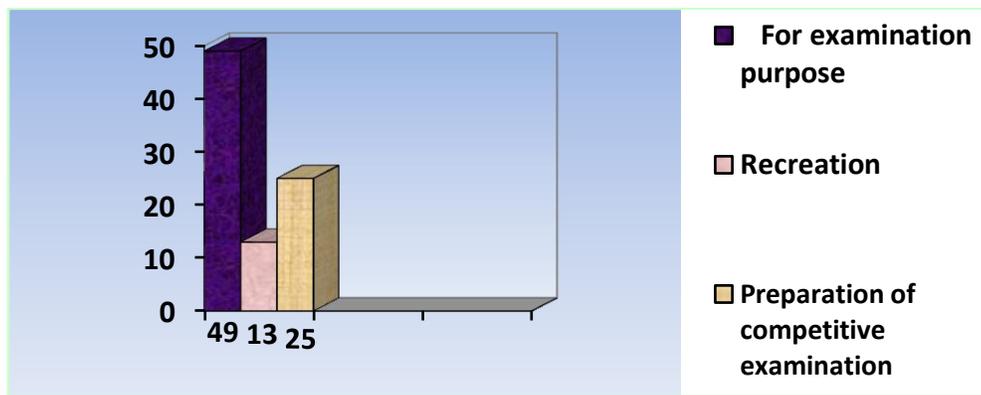

Figure 1: Purpose for Reading

The figure 1 presents that maximum i.e. 49 (92.5%) special students read for examination purpose. Minimum i.e. 13(24.5%) special students read for entertainment and 25 (47%) special students noted their purpose for reading is to prepare competitive examination.

Library Services:

An issue of the library access directly relates to the use of library. To get the opinion about the access of college library next question was asked. In response, majority i.e. 50 (95%) special students preferred open access and three (5.5%) special students preferred for closed access.

In concern with the convenience of college library time respondents noted their opinion. These are presented in figure 2.
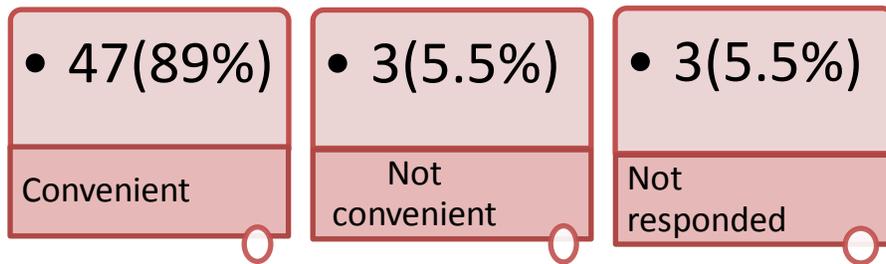
Figure 2: Convenience of College Library Time

The above figure shows that there were 47(89%) special students noted existing library time of their college library is convenient for them and three (5.5%) special students noted that this time is not convenient for them. For the inconvenience, these students could not give preferred time or any reason of their inconvenience. Three (5.5%) special students have not responded.

According to the demand of the user provide college library have responsibility to cater for them. Is the college library provides additional facility or service to these special students? To know about this issue a question was asked. The responses are elaborated in figure 3.
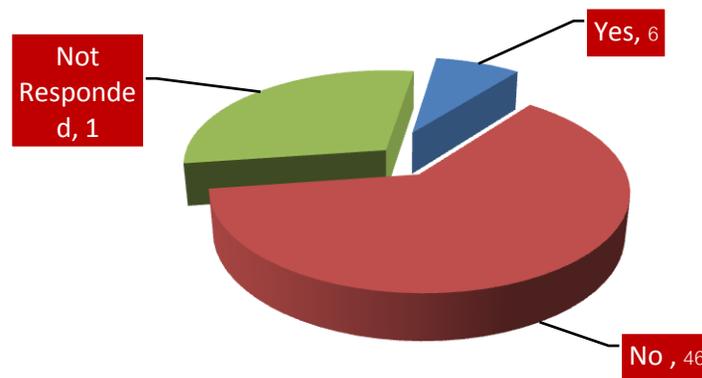
Figure 3: Additional Facility/Services

Above figure shows that majority of i.e. 46(86.79%) special students expressed that they have no any extra or special facility and service provided by their college library. Only six (11.32%) special students marked that they get book bank facility. One (1.88%) special student has not responded to this question.

Library Collection:

Opinion about the adequacy of available collection was asked through three questions. In relation to this 32(61%) special students expressed that they are satisfied with their library collection and 12(22.5%) special students noted that they are not satisfied with their college library's existing collection. Nine (16.5%) special students not responded to this question. These students clarify that they are blind and they could not read normal books. They preferred audio books and Braille books. This type of collection is not available in their college library. Some are explain that they could not access collection as they are disabled. A respondent remarked that there should be more text book copies and biographical collection.

From which sources you collect the information, this question was asked with six options. The responses noted in figure 4.
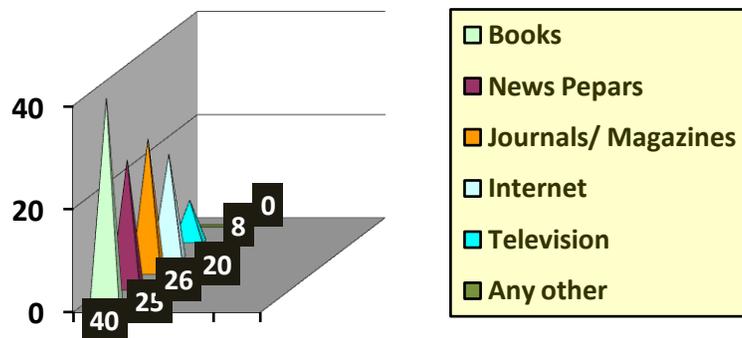

Figure 4: Sources of Information

Above figure presents that 40(75.5%) special students use books to get the information 25(47%) special students use newspapers, 26 (49%) special students use journals and magazines, 20(38%) special students use Internet, eight (15%) special students get information from Television. No any respondent specified any other source of information.

Library Accessibility:

To know about from where these students get the information sources a question was asked with the preference order of the five options.

Table 3: Preferred Information Sources

Sources	Preference given by Respondent				
	1	2	3	4	5
College Library	30 (56.60%)	1 (1.88%)	6 (11.31%)	-	-
Public Library	-	18	2	2	-

		(34%)	(3.77%)	(3.77%)	
Personal reading material	5 (9.43%)	10 (19%)	13 (24.5%)	1 (1.88%)	-
Borrow from friends	11 (21%)	13 (24.5%)	4 (7.54%)	1 (1.88%)	-
Other Libraries	5 (9.43%)	2 (3.77%)	-	-	-

Table 3 describes that the option 'College library' was option selected by 30 (56.60%) special students as a first preference, one (1.88%) student selected as a second preference and six (11.31%) special students selected as a third preference. 'Public library' this option was selected as a second preference by 18 (34%) special students, two (3.77%) special students each selected as third and fourth preference. For 'Personal reading material' five (9.43%) special students have given first preference and 10(19%) special students have given second preference, 13 (24.5%) special students have given third preference and one (1.88%) student has given fourth preference for this option. 'Borrow from friends' this option was selected as a first preference by 11(21%) special students, 13 (24.5%) special students selected as a second preference, four (7.54%) special students have given third preference and one (1.88%) student has given as a fourth preference. Five (9.43%) special students have given first preference and two (3.77%) special students gave second preference to 'Other libraries'. They specify other libraries as National Association for Blind (NAB), Mumbai and Nashik, Niwant Sanstha, Pune, Brialle Library, Pune. One (1.88%) special student has not responded to this question.

How do you come to know about reading material of your interest? This question was asked and respondent expressed in table 4.

Table 4: Information about Reading Material

Information Get From	Responses
Recommendation from Teacher	45 (85%)
Recommendation from Librarian	24(45.28%)
Library Display	32(60.37%)
From Friends/Parents	27(51%)
Advertisement	9(17%)
Any other	7(13.20%)

Above table shows that 45 (85%) special students gets information about reading material from recommendation given by their teacher. 24(45.28%) special students get information

through recommendation from Librarian. 32(60.37%) special students noted that they get information from library display. 27(51%) special students noted that they get information about reading material from their friends/ parents. 9(17%) special students get information from advertisement and 7(13.20%) students noted that they get information from other sources like other institutions, NGO's etc.

Library Infrastructure:

To know the availability and suitability of infrastructure specifically about the seating arrangement and light, a question was asked. Received responses presented in figure 5.
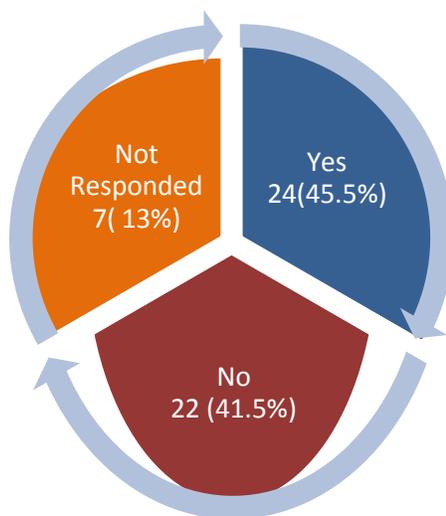

Figure 5: Provision of Seating Arrangement and Light Arrangement

In concern with the infrastructure, 24(45.5%) special students are expressed that seating arrangement and light in college library is suitable for them. 22 (41.5%) special students are expressed that existing seating arrangement is not suitable for them as they are handicapped and could not use furniture comfortably. Seven (13%) special students have not responded. Majority of the students told that the arrangement is suitable for normal students and not for them. They demand for separate seating arrangement with convenient furniture particularly customized furniture which is made for handicap.

To get the information about how these students use college library, do they have any difficulty in using their college library a question was asked. The responses of the students elaborated in figure 6.
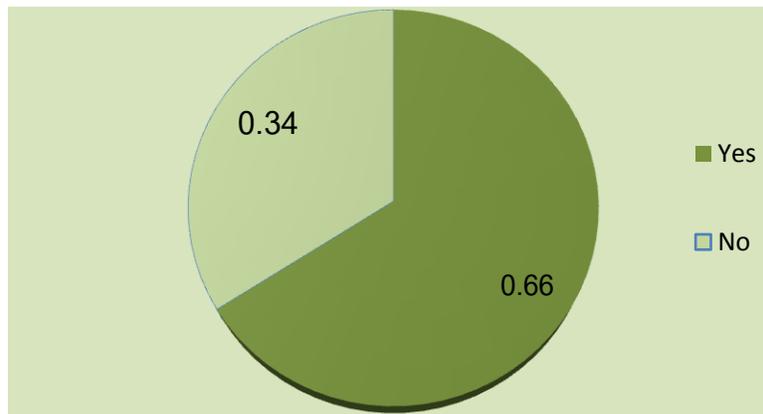
11

Figure 6: Needs for Supportive System/ Sources

In response, 35(66%) special students noted that they need supportive system/sources for the use of college library. The supportive system may be in form of personal service or customized sources for these students according to their physical issues. Students specify that library staff should support them or attend them for getting resources. Many special students are physically handicapped they cannot browse freely or standing for long time to search book, or to borrow from queue. Majority of blind students specify that they should get resources in form of Audio CD's, Cassettes and for this sources they should be provided with computer system, Tape and separate seating arrangement where these students can seat comfortably, listen CD's or audio books without disturbance. All students expressed that there should be provision of lift for library. 18(34%) special students expressed that they do not want any supportive system/source.

Library Staff:

There is question about who helps to get information and services. This question was asked with preference order. Responses are noted in figure 7.
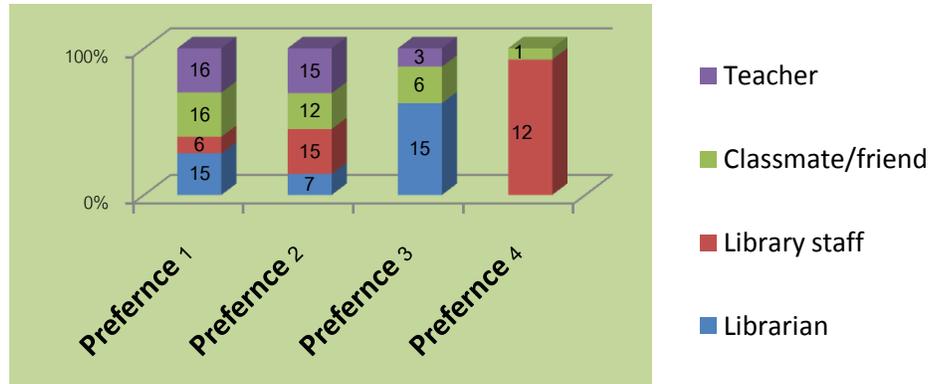
12

Figure 7: Help provided for Information & Services

According to the option one 'Librarian' 15(28.30%) special students noted first preference, seven (13.20%) special students noted second preference and 15(28.30%) special students noted third preference. For the option 'Library staff' first preference given by six(11.32%) special students,15(28.30%) special students given second preference and 12(23%) special students given fourth preference, For the option 'Classmate/friends' 16(30.18%) special students choose first preference, 12(23%) students choose second preference, six(11.32%) students choose third preference and one(1.88%) special student choose fourth preference. Last option was 'Teacher'.16(30.18%) special students have given first preference, 15(28.30%)special students given second preference, and three(5.66%) special students have given third preference to this option. One (1.88%) special student has not responded to this question.

Suggestions:

For the suggestions in relation to infrastructure, collection, facilities and services 44(83%) special students gave their suggestions. Nine (17%) special students not responded to this question. Major suggestions are as follows:

Infrastructure:
   − Students noted that the requirement of separate room for the special students with all furniture which is suitable for the handicap and blind is essential.
   − They also added that library and reading room should be at basement or there should be arrangement of lift for library and reading room.
   − Book racks should be at low level in height and convenient to browse for handicap.
   − Internet facility with suitable software for blind, audio system with high technology in separate special students room should be made available.
   − Suitable seating arrangement with convenient furniture, Wheel chair, light and drinking water facility should be made available in library.

Collection:

13

−Sufficient library collection of text books and reference books should be made available.

−There should be more additions of Marathi medium, competitive examination and other reading books.

−All blind students demanded for audio books and CD's, Braille books of curriculum.

−To prepare audio books Librarian should be make initiative efforts with the help of other staff, students and teachers.

Facility and Services:

−Students also demanded for borrowing more books than regular students.

−Book bank facility, Advance learner facility for issuing more books, made available.

−CD's of curriculum and other should be issue to the special students.

−Librarian and library staff should more helpful for the special students and be more attentive to them.

−Current awareness service should be more effective.

−Library orientation programme should be twice in year.

Discussions

- Majority i.e.49% special students preferred Arts faculty and 94.33% students' preferred Marathi medium.

- 32% special students are not using their college library. May be these students are disable to use library.

14

- All i.e. 68% special students who visit college library they are using library for to study in reading room and less than 66% special students use library for issue/return book.

- Majority i.e. 92.5% special students read for examination purpose and less than i.e. 47% students read for the preparation of competitive examination.

- Majority i.e. 95% special students preferred open access for the library and 89% special students noted that existing college library time is convenient for them.

- 61% special students are satisfied with their college library collection and remaining 39% special students are either not satisfied or may be have not responded. Reason for this may be they have never come in library or may be disabling to use this library due to the arrangement of racks which is not suitable for them.

- 75.5% special students use books to get the information. Over all use of journals, news papers and Internet is too less.

- Above 56% special students have given first preference to college library to get information sources and 21% special students borrow the sources from their friends.

- 45.5% special students expressed that the existing seating arrangement and light is suitable for them and 41.5% special students noted that the existing arrangement and light is not suitable for them. 13% special students have not responded this question.

- 85% special students get information about reading material from recommendation given by their teachers. Above 60% special students get information about reading material from library display.
- 66% special students noted that they require supportive system/sources for to use library.
- Above 28% special students have given first preference to 'Librarian' for getting help for information and services, 11.32% for 'Library staff' and above 30% special students choose first preference for each 'Classmate/friend' and 'Teacher'.
- Above 86% special students remarked that their college library is not providing any special/additional facility or service to them.
- 83% special students have given their suggestions in respect of college library infrastructure, collection, facility and services.

Recommendations

- College Librarians or authorities should try to remove the obstacles encountered by those patrons in their pursuit of information.
- The arrangements in stack rooms should be such, shelf height of the racks should be such that they promote browsing and free movements.
- Librarians should assist such patrons with sympathetic attitude; keep good interpersonal relations with effective communication skill.
- Library materials such as with large-print format for those with poor eyesight, Braille and audio-cassettes for visually handicapped people and the Bliss system for persons with motor impairments have to be acquired, organized and developed.
- Social linkages with NGO's or voluntary and government organizations.
- College should run Higher Education for Persons (disabled) with Special Needs (HEPSN) Scheme on to create awareness among functionaries of Higher Education about specific educational needs of persons with disabilities. College library should be a part of this scheme.
- Some of the most popular books and long runs of epics can be recorded in tapes or audio CD's and made available to blind students.
- Though it may not be possible to provide Braille books on large scale, as they are very costly. The department can acquire some books and others can be procured on inter-library loan from the specialized libraries for the blind.
- Some of the most popular books and long runs of epics, textbook or subject books can be recorded in tapes through the other cooperative students or N.S.S. (National Social Services) volunteers of the college and made available to the blind students as well as other special students.
- A comprehensive survey is to be conducted to know the adequacy of library facilities for the special students.

15

- Recently one reputed college is awarded 'College with Potential for Excellence' (CPE) and received 1.5 million special grants for to develop infrastructure. College should make available some fund for their special students to build up Braille books, audio books and separate well equipped 'Blind Room' for blind students.
- The equipment like Kurzhwell ReadingMachine, Print-to-Braille translator should be acquired by the National Library for the Blind Enabling them to read any print book in a library should be acquired by the National Library for the Blind Enabling them to read any print book in a library .
- These students are not familiar with effective methods and strategies for successful learning, which leads to the feelings of frustration and helplessness in case of failure. Libraries should give ample opportunities to develop themselves and foster them in many respects and open their dreams of life.

Conclusion

The relevance of Second and third law of Library Science that is 'Every reader his/her document and Every document its reader' implicitly indicates the need of availability of sources to every user irrespective of the fact. In this direction this study traced out the situation in College libraries about the special student users. Researcher focused the "A" grade college libraries status about the disabled students, deliberates over the problems encountered and suggested concrete direction. There is great need to change outlook, give acceptance to this user group. It is a responsibility of higher educational institutions to provide handicapped friendly library and library services to their special students

16

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17