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ABSTRACT

Information technology is a boon of present century. It is a combination of several technologies and systems, such as computer technology, telecommunication technology, micro-graphic technology and information retrieval technology. Application of IT is imperative for sustainable development in all spheres of human activities. IT, as a tool for harnessing information, should be introduced specially in libraries of higher learning institutes with long term vision and prospective planning at a time when the country has entered the new millennium. The challenges of 21st century such as globalization, privatization and liberalization should not be neglected by higher education system. Hence the application of IT in higher education should consider these aspects.

This paper discusses the librarian's computer awareness and application of IT in college libraries of Yavatmal district (Maharashtra). The author conducted a questionnaire survey of college libraries to find out the proportion of librarian's computer awareness and use of IT application in college libraries of Yavatmal district. The finding of this study was that out of 34 respondents 18 librarians were computer literate and aware of Information Technology. Only 8 colleges have computers in the libraries and 6 college libraries are automated. The results of this study suggest that UGC should provide financial help for the automation of college libraries of higher education and the librarians must get ready by keeping abreast of latest Information Technology in order to face the new challenge in information field.

KEYWORDS: Automation of college libraries, Information Technology Application, Computer awareness and use, College Libraries in Yavatmal District

0. INTRODUCTION

Dramatic changes in information technology and society are having a considerable impact on educational institutions and their

libraries. Information is a vital and indispensable product of the modern society. Availability of right information accurately, precisely and timely is of critical importance. IT is the synthesis of computers and communication. Rapid advances in computer and communication technology enable storing, processing and transmission of huge amount of information easily, quickly and inexpensively. Developments in science and technology have brought about reduction in size and cost of IT and tremendous increase in its capabilities. The use of IT enables provision of specialized, user oriented library and information products and services effectively and efficiently.

1. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology (IT) can be defined as those processes and technologies which are used in acquisition and dissemination of information based on some electronic technology. Somerville has stated "Information technology has resulted from a convergence of computing technology and communications technology". This means it is essentially the result of advances in the three important areas of computing, telecommunication and microelectronics.

Information Technology is the application of a wide variety of electronic technologies to the information-handling activities. In the domain of library information service, information technologies such as computer, telecommunications, word processing, micro-graphics, reprographics, video recordings and other electronic devices for the storage, retrieval, reproduction and dissemination of information are used.

2. APPLICATION OF IT IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES

The main functions of a library are acquisition, technical processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination. The traditional methods of doing these result in slow, laborious and repetitive manual routines. With the advent of modern technologies and their applications, manual routines have transformed into machine oriented ones. The application of modern technology has allowed access to and storage of information quickly. The availability of computers has gradually changed the library scene. The convergence of computers with new developments in telecommunication techniques and equipment is considered as new information technology. The new information technology has a wide range of services which libraries can avail themselves of and offer to supplement the existing ones to users.

Some of the areas to which the modern technology could be applied in day to day activities of the libraries are acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, indexing and abstracting of articles etc.

3. NEED FOR IT

Twentieth century has been the century of explosions. It has witnessed the population explosion, socio-cultural explosion, and nuclear explosion. The information explosion is due to the fact that information generation is a continuous process. The interdisciplinary research and multidisciplinary research has led to the creation of new ideas, new knowledge and unprecedented growth in information particularly in science and technology. In this era of information explosion, in which large amount of information needs to be processed, application and use of new technology i.e. information technology is essential.

4. COMPUTER AWARENESS

Nowhere has the impact of the computer been felt greater than in the field of library and information services. Already most of the libraries are flooded with documents and records that they simply can not handle efficiently without computers. Computers are changing the way in which libraries collect, store, retrieve and disseminate information. The libraries that can not adjust to these trends will not survive. So computers will come and stay forever in all the library and information centres that wish to function

efficiently here after.

5. ROLE OF COLLEGE LIBRARIAN IN IT ERA

The problem we face today is not of dearth of information, but of excessive information. The developing countries are making an earnest effort to concentrate more on developing and using new electronic gadgets to provide better access to information. With the use of new information technology, the libraries can provide nascent information quickly in great volume. Today, the librarian plays a significant role in information handling and information transfer. He is rightly known as the information officer and is supposed to provide an active service for maximum use of information with minimum cost and time. Information technology demands trained personnel to handle information storage and retrieval in libraries. A modern librarian has to play a very important role in the process of communication in the contemporary time, for which he must be well educated, highly qualified and professionally competent.

6. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to find out the proportion of librarian's computer awareness and use of IT application in college libraries of Yavatmal district (Maharashtra).

7. METHOD OF THE STUDY

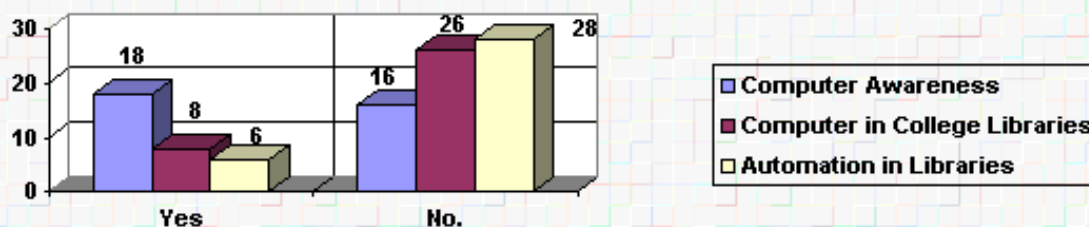
The author adopted the survey method. 48 questionnaires were circulated among the librarians of senior colleges of Yavatmal district out of which 34 (70.83%) responded.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ø Statistical analysis

Bar diagrams: Computer awareness & use of IT application in college libraries, Libraries using automation software, Service provided in libraries.

Cylinder chart: Library activity covered under the library automation.



Cone chart: Coverage of CD-ROM databases of different subjects.

Fig. 1. Computer Awareness & Use of IT application in College Libraries

Out of 34 respondents it is found that 18 (52.94%) librarians are computer literate and aware of IT, 8 (23.53%) college libraries are having computers and only 6 (17.65%) libraries are automated.

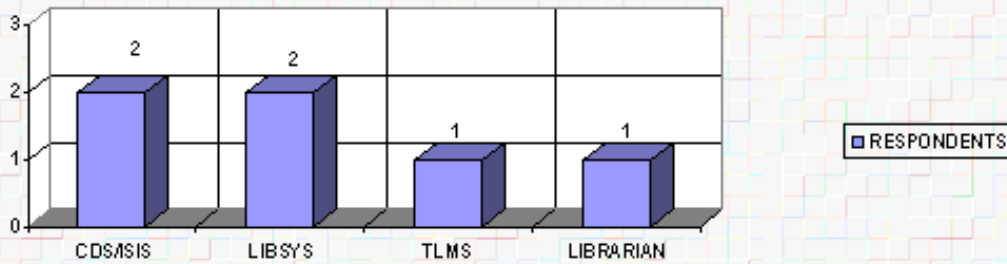


Fig.2. Libraries using Automation Software

The data indicates that out of 34 colleges, 2 (5.88%) college libraries use CDS/ISIS library software, 2 (5.88%) college library use LIBSYS software, 1 (2.94%) TLMS and 1 (2.94%) LIBRARIAN library software respectively.

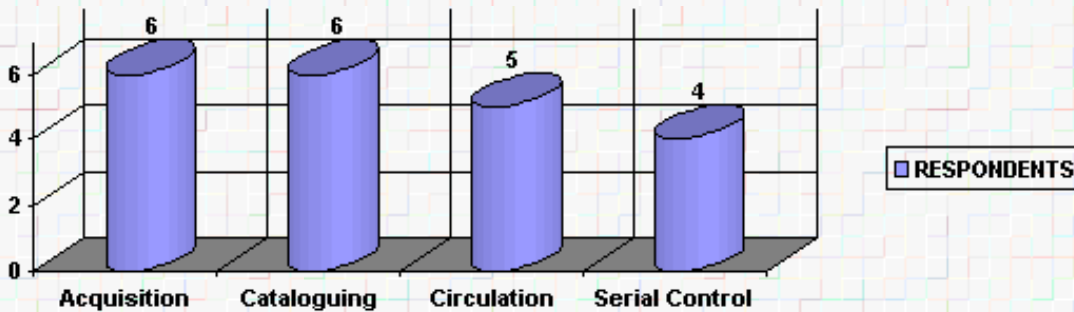


Fig. 3. Library activities covered under library automation

The data indicates that out of 34 college libraries, only 6 (17.65%) libraries use the library software for performing house keeping operation i.e. 6 (17.65%) libraries perform acquisition activity, 6 (17.65%) libraries use it for cataloguing, 5 (14.71%) perform circulation and 4 (11.76%) libraries perform serial control activity.

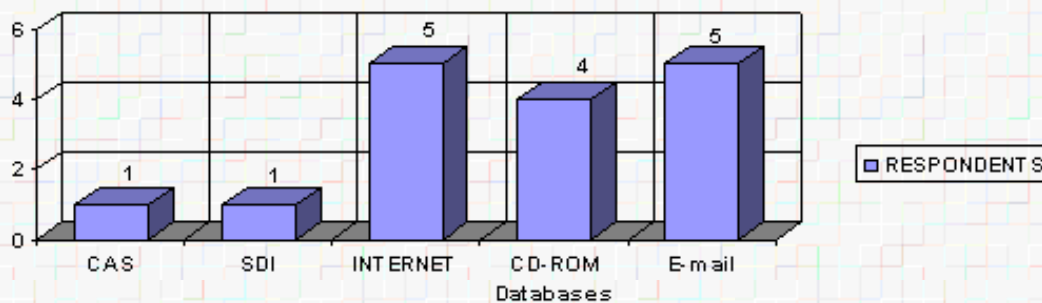


Fig.4. Service provided in libraries.

The data shows that out of 34 college libraries, 1 (2.94%) provides CAS (Current Awareness Service), 1(2.94%) provides SDI (Selective Dissemination Service), 5 (14.71%) provide Internet service, 4 (11.76%) provide CD-ROM database service and 5

(14.71%) provide E-mail service to the users of the college library.

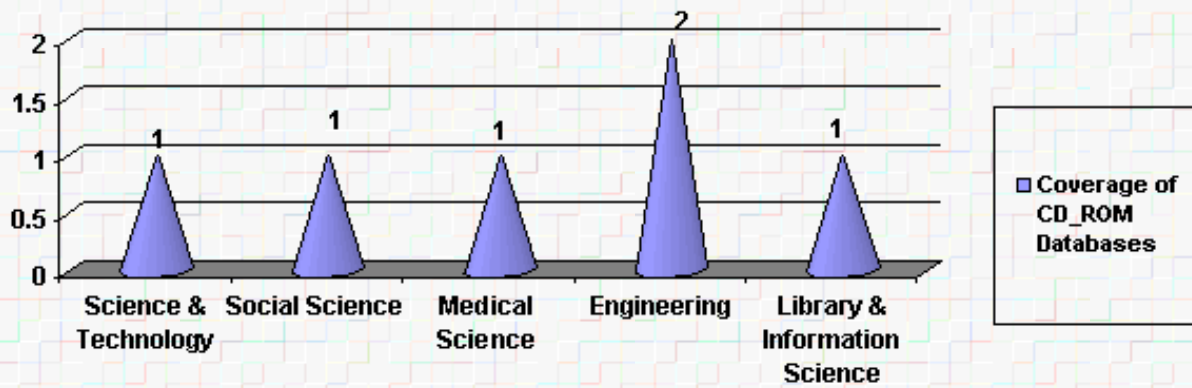


Fig 5. Coverage of CD-ROM databases of different subjects

The data shows that out of 34 college libraries, only 1(2.94%) library has Science & Technology, Social science, Medical science and Library & information science CD-ROM databases respectively and there are 2 (5.88%) Engineering CD-ROM databases in the college libraries.

9. DISCUSSION

From the above data it is observed that 52.94% librarians are computer literate and aware of the information technology. Only 23.53% colleges have computers in the library. 17.64% libraries are automated and providing automated services to the users of the libraries. Automated libraries use different library software to perform housekeeping functions and CD-ROM databases of subjects are available in very few libraries. This is indeed a very low percentage of computer awareness and use of IT application in college libraries of Yavatmal district.

10. CONCLUSION

Majority of the librarians in college libraries, except few are not aware and not yet started utilizing application of Information Technology even in the house keeping functions of the library due to inadequate finance and man power.

But now UGC is planning for extending the financial help for the automation of all the academic libraries in India in the 10th five-year plan. There are different types of software available for library house keeping functions. So all the librarians must get ready by keeping abreast of latest Information Technology in order to face the new challenge in information field.

While concluding, it is strongly felt that our academic libraries have to adopt the tools of Information Technology in order to provide improved access to library & information services. The audio-visuals have to be provided, use of computers for resource sharing and networking has to be accelerated to face the challenges posed by the developments in information technologies taking place in India and abroad.

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