Towards Quality Assurance in Reader Services in a Digital Era: A Case Study of Himachal Pradesh University Library Readers Survey

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Abstracts

This study presented was undertaken, to determine the quality of availability and usage of library services by users at Himachal Pradesh University, at the behest of Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the University. The main goal of this study was to pave way for assuring the quality of library services and to initiate improvement of services through administrative action where scope of improvement is indicated by the analysis of the data. Data were collected using well-framed questionnaire, based on Delphi method, from 192 users of library including teachers, research scholars, post graduate students and under graduate students. Findings indicate that the majority of the users are satisfied with the reader services provided by library. It was found that users lack awareness about availability of e-resources in the library However, training and guidance in the use of library resources particularly e-resources and services is necessary to help users to meet their requirements and aspirations to march ahead in the digital world.

Keywords: Digital Era, Himachal Pradesh University, Quality Assurance, Reader Services

Introduction

The face of library services has changed a lot in the last one decade across the world and libraries have become hot spots of information access beyond the confines of library precincts. It is very essential that in this digital era efficient reader services on 24x7 basis are provided to stake holders. This paper presents a case study of Himachal Pradesh University Library Readers Survey 2014. Paper discusses the methodology of development and validation of readers survey questionnaire, its objectives, mode of administration and analysis of the results. The findings are supposed to provide library administrators indicators for interventions to improve the quality of library services. Paper begins by providing an over view of Himachal Pradesh University Library, followed by objectives of the survey, methodology

adopted to create a validated questionnaire, mode of administration and analysis. Paper concludes with conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of the responses.

Himachal Pradesh University

Himachal Pradesh University, a leading teaching and research institution of India in the state of Himachal Pradesh, was founded on 22 July 1970 by an Act of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly. It is a NAAC accredited University and has been ranked 22nd among top 50 Universities of the country as per India-Today Nilsen University ranking survey 2014. Being a single multi-faculty and affiliating University in the state, it is trying to put all its best efforts to cater to the higher education demands of the state. Presently, the university has 12 faculties; 29 Teaching departments; 15 specialized teaching, research and training centres. there are 276 teachers in position to-date. Out of these 52 are professors; 76 are readers and 148 are lecturers. About 4112 students

are receiving education in different Teaching Departments. The teacher-student ratio on the campus is about 1:15. The University has both conventional and professional colleges affiliated to it. Around 133 under-graduate, post-graduate, engineering, medical, education and Sanskrit colleges are affiliated to this university. Apart from these affiliated institutions, an International Centre for Distance Education and Open Learning, a University Evening college, a University college of Business Studies, a Regional Centre at Dharmshala and various other centres are the part of this university. Over all around 1.35 lakh students are enrolled in various discipline of higher education through the regular and distance modes of learning.

Himachal Pradesh University Library

The University has a beautiful pagoda shaped central library specially designed to house various functions of a modern university library. The library building has adequate space to accommodate 600 readers in reading halls and about 100 research scholars in cubicles on different floors. The Library maintains comprehensive collection of books and periodicals to support University's formal programme and research in various disciplines. The Library had a total collection of 2,19874 and 180 periodicals including 142 national and 38 international periodicals. It is part of the UGC INFONET Digital Library Consortium for e-journals and e-resources and have an access to about 8000 e-journals. It is trying to put in place a plan to computerize all activities and services of the University under Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksh Abhiyan and UGC developmental grant. Library is connected to rest of the campus through a dedicated optical fiber network and has access to National Knowledge Network on 24x7 basis.

There are different reader services such as main lending section, text books section, general reference section and a periodical publications section in the field of humanities, social sciences & border line disciplines and three sectional libraries in the subject fields of physical and biological sciences, law and education. Library has a large base of membership numbering 11403, including students, research scholars, teachers, non-teaching staff and teachers in affiliated colleges. Fulfilling the needs and aspirations of such a huge number with human resource crunch is a challenging task. University has installed SOUL library system software and is in the process of computerizing reader services through a dedicated network of the library.

Readers Services Survey and Quality Assurance

As part of the quality assurance of the University services, Internal Quality Assurance cell of the University has a Library Advisory Committee, which is trying to improve the ambience and service in the University library through meaningful and scientific interventions. As part of this intervention it advised the library to conduct a Himachal Pradesh University Library readers survey (HPULRS) in 2014 to assess the aspirations and needs of various stakeholders in the University with following objectives:

- To find out the awareness of library services by users

- To find out information sources consulted by the users

- To find out the use of library services by users

- To know the main purpose of information seeking behavior

- To know about the readers satisfaction level

Methodology

After consulting several studies on the same topic and examining their instruments, the questionnaire based survey design was chosen for data collection in a structured fashion. To frame well-designed questionnaire, Delphi method was chosen because it suites the requirement of research. Following Delphi procedure was followed to design the questionnaire.

◆ Selection of Experts

In keeping with the intent of Delphi studies purposive sampling was used to choose a panel of experts, who have deep understanding of the problems of a modern library, who have the power to implement the findings of the study, possess a high level of knowledge with expertise in library and were available to serve in the panel of experts. Local librarian, library and information science educators, faculty of university, and student representatives were selected as panel.

◆ Design Questionnaire

One of the basic principles of the Delphi technique is to have as many rounds as are required to receive feedback to revise survey items. In this study, two round approach was used. In first round, meeting of experts was held to understand the research problem and to derive appropriate questions which fit to the research objectives. In round two further discussions were held to evolve loose and unstructured questions to more precise and structured questions. After discussions and deliberations 42 questions, including 9 open ended questions, were finalized. All the questions were further framed into five sections i.e. Use and satisfaction with library services (14 questions), ICT Facilities (9 questions), Suggestions for improvement (4 questions), support the library (5 questions) and Usage of library (6 questions).

◆ Conduct of survey

After design of the survey, readers were given information through notices displayed on the notice boards of different departments and institutes of the university. It was made available in digital format on the internet in Google Drive and as printed sheets on the main library counter and counters of various sections of the library. Teachers were contacted through chairpersons of various department to participate in the survey. The survey was kept on for a period of two months to have a good sample size.

Data Analysis

The data received from the responses were analyzed to understand user's perspective about the university library system their needs and its services.

Demographics

There are total 192 respondents which include 96 post graduate students, 67 research scholars, 18 under graduate students, 10 teachers and 1 visitor. Out of 192 respondents, 75 are fairly experienced users of Library, 52 are beginners in using Library, 43 are intermediate users of Library and 22 are very experienced users of Library.

Analytics of the Survey

In the following we provide analytics of the survey across different categories of the questionnaire. See annexure I for detailed analytics.

1. Use and satisfaction with library services

1.1 Reasons for Using Library Services

Survey respondents were asked the reason for using library facilities. The majority of 128 users are using library facilities to support course of the study followed by 89 users who are using library facilities for Independent learning, 77 users using library facilities for research purpose, 19 users are using library facilities for jobs and 7 users are using library facilities for general enjoyment.

1.2 Daily Time Spent by Users in H P University Library for Reading

Out of 192 respondents, 160 respondents chose to answer this question. 42% of the respondents prefer to spend two hours in library while 39% respondents prefer to spend average 5 hours in library. 15% respondents prefer to spend one hour in library. 4% of respondents prefer to spend 6 to 8 hours in library for reading.

1.3 Use of Library Services

Table 1 given below indicates that borrowing of books, research topics, read magazine and news papers are being utilized by majority of users while journals, Xeroxing & reference services and reading room facilities are used marginally. The findings show that there is a necessity to create awareness of use of journals and reference services among users.

Table 1: Use of Library Services

Borrow books	133
Read magazines or newspaper	84
24 hours reading Room	57
Research topics	85
Xeroxing and reference Services	52
Journals	58

1.4 Reasons Behind not Using Library Services

In response to problems faced during library visit, 53% users feel they do not have time to use library services, 10% of users have lack of interest, 20% of users finds everything online or from other sources while 17 % users buy their own books.

1.5 Satisfaction with Library Circulation System

A majority of (84%) responding users are satisfied with circulation services. While asking the use of the service of library circulation system for reserving their books, 8% respondents reported often, 10% respondents reported very often, 37% respondents reported some times and 45% reported rarely.

1.6 Satisfaction with the Services

76% respondents, (54% PG students, 33% research scholar, 6% teachers and 7% UG students) are satisfied with library services while 24% of respondents are not satisfied with library services.

1.7 Help from Library Staff

According to 61% of the respondents library staff are very useful. 26% of the respondents found library staff helpful. Rests of the respondents are neutral.

1.8 Satisfaction with Physical Facilities

Figure 1 given below shows the satisfaction of users with physical facilities of library. More than half percent of respondents are satisfied with Heating and Seating arrangements. They have rated them as either "good" or "average". Majority of respondents have rated services such as Water and Toilet as either "average" or "poor". The finding shows that there is necessity to improve water and toilet facilities in library.
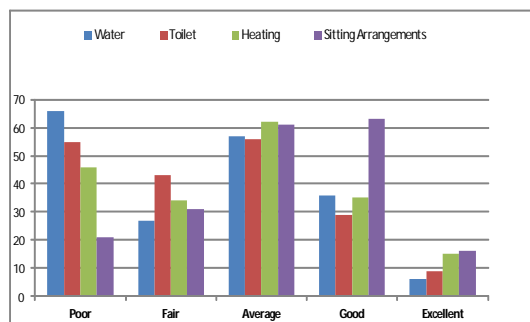
Figure 1: Satisfaction with Physical Facilities

2. ICT Facilities

About 33% of the responding users reported having computer facilities at home, and about the same percentage reported using computers at cyber café. Rest of the respondents reported using computer facility either at School/college/university/Department/Centre or at work place.

2.1 Training

79% of users wish to seek training on how to use the computer facilities available in library while 21% of users do not require any training for using computer facilities.

2.2 Importance for the University Library to Provide Computer Facilities

In reacting to the question on importance for university library to provide computer facilities, 82% of respondents believe it is very important while 11% respondents indicate it is quite important.

2.3 Preferences for Print versus Electronic Materials

About 54% of respondents expressed a dedicated preference for print materials. Only 46% of users agreed to the cancelling of print journals for reason of economy and offering electronic journals.

2.4 Awareness of e-journal Service Available to HP University through UGC Inflibnet Digital Library Consortium

68% of users do not know about the e-journal service available to HP University through UGC Inflibnet Digital Library Consortium. It was also observed that out of 67 research scholars, only 24 research scholar are aware about the e-journal services. The findings show that there is a necessity to create awareness of use of e-journals available through UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium. About 6% of respondents use this service quite regularly.

2.5 Availability of Catalogues of Himachal Pradesh University Library on the Web

95% of users would like to access catalogues of Himachal Pradesh University Library on the web.

2.6 User Account

94% users shows their need for password operated e-reader account as member of the University Library.

3. Suggestions for Improvement

3.1 New Services

Responding to proposed, new and fee-based services, respondents show a greatest interest in Wi-fi facilities. About 48% of users are ready to pay reasonable user charges for using Wi-fi facilities, while 42% of users have also shown their interest to pay reasonable charges for computer and internet facilities.

3.2 Future Library Scenario

In responding to future library scenario, respondents show their interest in e-books and digital ser-

vices. Table 2 given below depicts the responses received from users.

Table 2: Future Library Scenario

| Few big and better libraries	23%
Library services mostly digital	28%
Downloadable e-books	29%
Online services	20%

4. Support University Library

An overwhelming 90% of the respondents are willing to help the university library for following services.

- ▶ General volunteering
- ▶ To develop the libraries for the use of society
- ▶ Helping people to learn e.g. basic IT skills for library usage
- ▶ Promotion and fund raising activities

5. Usage of Library

As shown in figure 2, more than half (59%) of the respondents use library daily which includes 55% of PG students, 34% of research scholars and 11% of UG students. While 25% respondents use the library once in a week, 7% use the library once in every two week while 6% use library monthly and 4% use less than once in a month. It indicates that library is being used by the majority of the users.
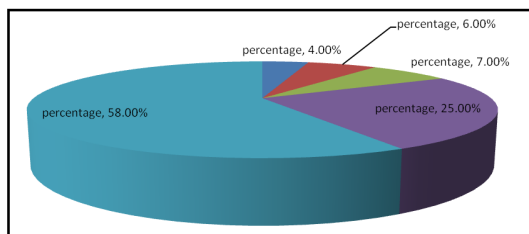
Figure 2: Usage of Library

5.1 Usage of Library Facilities

Table 3 given below depicts the usage of facilities provided by library such as book lending, reference service, computer facilities, catalogue, etc. The table indicates that book landing, reference books, catalogues facilities are being utilized majorly while theses, newspaper and other reading facilities are less utilized by the researchers.

Table 3: Use of Library Facilities

Books lending from Library	148
Reference books/information	107
Computer facilities	30
Catalogue facilities	45
theses	1
News Paper	1
Reading	1

5.2 Usage of Library Sections

Table 4 given below depicts the usage of various library sections. It was observed that reading room section, reference section and general stack section are being utilized more than periodical section and private reading room. The study also reveals that the periodical section is being used only by research scholars and teachers. PG and UG students have not used periodical section at all. There is a necessity to create awareness of use of periodicals among UG and PG students.

Table 4: Usage of Library Sections

Reference section	88
General Stacks section	61
Periodical Section	26
Reading room/hall	89
Private Reading Room	21

The survey included several open ended question that invited respondents to provide their thoughts for prioritizing either the quantity or quality of library services. A number of themes emerged in their responses to these questions. Relatively 54% users out of 192 respondents chose to answer this question. Following points were mentioned by the respondents:

1. The university library should be fully automated to provide better service

2. Library should provide training with an aim to address issues like how to use, download and explore the e-resources for needed information.

3. Majority of the users feel library can improve access to the IT services by providing more num ber of computers and Wi-Fi facilities in library.

4. The ambience of the library for readers reading in the library needs to be improved.

5. Staff should be trained with new e-services ac tivities to give a seamless connectivity of the reader to the knowledge world

6. The library should purchase latest edition vol umes and titles of documents and increase the subscription to research journals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The goal of this survey was to collect qualitative data documenting the use of library services by users and improve the quality of services by meaningful indicators where scope of improvement exists. The results of the survey have made notable strides toward this end. As revealed from the results a majority of the users are satisfied with the library services. Majority of the users are also satisfied with the help received from library staff.   It was also observed that users are less satisfied with physical services of library specially water and toilet facilities. This calls for administrators to provide more services to the users to satisfy their needs and requirements. It was also observed that majority of the users are not well acquainted with use of computers and unable to access online resources. It is important for the library authorities to orient or re-orient the users on the use of e-resources and the library facilities available to them. Library can depute some trained professionals to conduct orientation programs in the beginning of every academic session. There is a need to provide more number of computers and Wi Fi connectivity in library. The H P University library should engage campus faculty and administrators to set future directions for effective or better utilization of library sources and services and to determine areas of future emphasis. A positive aspect of the survey for human resource crunched library is that users came out overwhelming to voluntarily support the services in the library. The survey has provided a lot of food for thought to bring qualitative improvement in the library.

The questionnaire has been developed and validated scientifically by following all the protocols of the methodology to develop such questionnaires and touches upon various aspects of the need of a modern digital library. The questionnaire is ready for adoption by various universities and institutes to conduct such surveys to gauge the reader satisfaction levels and to improve the quality of library services in the higher educational institutions. It can be further used to compare responses across multiple populations (gender, social and cultural).

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Annexure I

Analytics of the Survey

Use of Library Services		UG	%	PG	%	RS	%	TE	%	Total	%
Reason for using library Services	To support course of study	14	11.02%	69	54.33%	35	27.56%	9	7.09%	127	39.94%
	Leisure/general enjoyment	2	28.57%	3	42.86%	1	14.29%	1	14.29%	7	2.20%
	Independent learning	7	7.95%	52	59.09%	23	26.14%	6	6.82%	88	27.67%
	Research	3	3.90%	21	27.27%	44	57.14%	9	11.69%	77	24.21%
	Looking for jobs	1	5.26%	8	42.11%	10	52.63%	0	0.00%	19	5.97%
Daily Time Spend	One	2	8.70%	12	52.17%	5	21.74%	4	17.39%	23	15.44%
	Two	8	12.90%	40	64.52%	12	19.35%	2	3.23%	62	41.61%
	Five	4	6.90%	24	41.38%	30	51.72%	0	0.00%	58	38.93%
	Six to eight	2	33.33%	3	50.00%	1	16.67%	0	0.00%	6	4.03%
Use of Library Service	Borrow books	15	11.28%	66	49.62%	42	31.58%	10	7.52%	133	28.36%
	Read magazines or newspaper	11	13.10%	37	44.05%	32	38.10%	4	4.76%	84	17.91%
	24 hours reading Room	5	8.77%	36	63.16%	16	28.07%	0	0.00%	57	12.15%
	Research topics	4	4.71%	30	35.29%	43	50.59%	8	9.41%	85	18.12%
	Xeroxing and reference Services	4	7.69%	26	50.00%	19	36.54%	3	5.77%	52	11.09%
	Journals	4	6.90%	27	46.55%	21	36.21%	6	10.34%	58	12.37%
Reason Behind Not Using Library Services	Lack of time	9	8.11%	63	56.76%	34	30.63%	5	4.50%	111	53.37%
	Lack of interest	3	15.00%	10	50.00%	6	30.00%	1	5.00%	20	9.62%
	I find everything I need online or from other sources	4	9.52%	17	40.48%	15	35.71%	6	14.29%	42	20.19%
	I buy my own books	2	5.71%	18	51.43%	13	37.14%	2	5.71%	35	16.83%
User Satisfaction with the circulation system	Satisfied	8	5.00%	88	55.00%	54	33.75%	10	6.25%	160	83.77%
	Not Satisfied	10	32.26%	14	45.16%	7	22.58%	0	0.00%	31	16.23%
Use of Library Circulation to reserve books	often	1	6.25%	8	50.00%	5	31.25%	2	12.50%	16	8.38%
	Very often	2	10.53%	6	31.58%	11	57.89%	0	0.00%	19	9.95%
	Some-times	7	10.00%	40	57.14%	20	28.57%	3	4.29%	70	36.65%
	Rarely	8	9.30%	48	55.81%	25	29.07%	5	5.81%	86	45.03%
User satisfaction with other services	Satisfied	10	6.85%	79	54.11%	48	32.88%	9	6.16%	146	76.44%
	Not Satisfied	8	17.78%	23	51.11%	13	28.89%	1	2.22%	45	23.56%
Help from Library Staff	Very helpful	8	6.90%	58	50.00%	44	37.93%	6	5.17%	116	60.73%
	Helpful	4	8.16%	26	53.06%	15	30.61%	4	8.16%	49	25.65%
	Neutral	6	23.08%	18	69.23%	2	7.69%	0	0.00%	26	13.61%

ICT Facilities											
		UG	%	PG	%	RS	%	TE	%	Total	%
Use of Computer Facilities	Home	13	15.66%	38	45.78%	24	28.92%	8	9.64%	83	32.81%
	School/college/university/Deptt.Computer Centre	1	1.69%	34	57.63%	15	25.42%	9	15.25%	59	23.32%
	Cyber cafe	5	5.75%	44	50.57%	33	37.93%	5	5.75%	87	34.39%
	Work place	1	4.17%	4	16.67%	11	45.83%	8	33.33%	24	9.49%
ICT Training	Require	12	7.95%	78	51.66%	52	34.44%	9	5.96%	151	79.06%
	Not require	6	15.00%	24	60.00%	9	22.50%	1	2.50%	40	20.94%
Importance of University Library to Provide Computer Facilities	Very important	16	10.19%	84	53.50%	48	30.57%	9	5.73%	157	82.20%
	Quite important	1	4.76%	11	52.38%	8	38.10%	1	4.76%	21	10.99%
	Not very important	0	0.00%	3	75.00%	1	25.00%	0	0.00%	4	2.09%
	necessity of the hour	1	11.11%	4	44.44%	4	44.44%	0	0.00%	9	4.71%
Preference for Print Vs Electronic Journals	Preferred	10	11.36%	52	59.09%	21	23.86%	5	5.68%	88	46.07%
	Not preferred	8	7.77%	50	48.54%	40	38.83%	5	4.85%	103	53.93%
Awareness of E-journals Services available through UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium	Aware	5	8.20%	27	44.26%	22	36.07%	7	11.48%	61	31.94%
	Not aware	13	10.00%	75	57.69%	39	30.00%	3	2.31%	130	68.06%
Availability of Catalogue on Web	Preferred	17	9.39%	96	53.04%	58	32.04%	10	5.52%	181	94.76%
	Not preferred	1	10.00%	6	60.00%	3	30.00%	0	0.00%	10	5.24%
User Account	Require	17	9.44%	96	53.33%	57	31.67%	10	5.56%	180	94.24%
	Not require	1	9.09%	6	54.55%	4	36.36%	0	0.00%	11	5.76%
Suggestions for Improvement											
		UG	%	PG	%	RS	%	TE	%	Total	%
New Chargeable Services	Use of computers and the internet	9	9.00%	48	48.00%	36	36.00%	7	7.00%	100	42.02%
	Use of Wi-fi	14	12.28%	65	57.02%	31	27.19%	4	3.51%	114	47.90%
	Posting multimedia items to your home terminal	1	4.17%	16	66.67%	4	16.67%	3	12.50%	24	10.08%
Future Library Scenario	Few big and better libraries	3	6.82%	28	63.64%	13	29.55%	0	0.00%	44	23.04%
	Library services mostly digital.	5	9.26%	27	50.00%	19	35.19%	3	5.56%	54	28.27%
	Downloadable e-books	7	12.73%	29	52.73%	17	30.91%	2	3.64%	55	28.80%
	Online services	3	7.89%	18	47.37%	12	31.58%	5	13.16%	38	19.90%
Support University Library											
		UG	%	PG	%	RS	%	TE	%	Total	%
General volunteering	Willing	14	8.24%	93	54.71%	54	31.76%	9	5.29%	170	89.01%

	Not willing	4	19.05%	9	42.86%	7	33.33%	1	4.76%	21	10.99%
To develop the libraries for the use of society	Willing	15	8.43%	97	54.49%	58	32.58%	9	5.06%	178	93.19%
	Not willing	3	23.08%	6	46.15%	3	23.08%	1	7.69%	13	6.81%
Helping people to learn e.g. basic IT skills for library usage	Willing	16	8.89%	97	53.89%	58	32.22%	9	5.00%	180	94.24%
	Not willing	2	18.18%	5	45.45%	3	27.27%	1	9.09%	11	5.76%
Promotion and fund raising activities	Willing	14	8.28%	91	53.85%	56	33.14%	8	4.73%	169	88.48%
	Not willing	4	18.18%	11	50.00%	5	22.73%	2	9.09%	22	11.52%
Usage of Library											
		UG	%	PG	%	RS	%	TE	%	Total	%
Average usage of Library	Less than once a month	1	12.50%	5	62.50%	2	25.00%	0	0.00%	8	4.19%
	Once a month	0	0.00%	5	45.45%	4	36.36%	2	18.18%	11	5.76%
	Once every two weeks	1	7.69%	9	69.23%	2	15.38%	1	7.69%	13	6.81%
	Once a week	4	8.51%	22	46.81%	15	31.91%	6	12.77%	47	24.61%
	Daily	12	10.71%	61	54.46%	38	33.93%	1	0.89%	112	58.64%
Usage of Library Facilities	Books lending from Library	14	9.46%	84	56.76%	41	27.70%	9	6.08%	148	44.85%
	Reference books/information	10	9.35%	47	43.93%	41	38.32%	9	8.41%	107	32.42%
	Computer facilities	2	6.67%	11	36.67%	14	46.67%	3	10.00%	30	9.09%
	Catalogue facilities	2	4.44%	18	40.00%	20	44.44%	5	11.11%	45	13.64%
Section wise Usage of Library	Reference section	5	5.68%	48	54.55%	27	30.68%	8	9.09%	88	31.10%
	General Stack Section	6	10.00%	32	53.33%	17	28.33%	5	8.33%	60	21.20%
	Periodical Section	1	3.85%	6	23.08%	13	50.00%	6	23.08%	26	9.19%
	Reading room/hall	10	11.36%	42	47.73%	35	39.77%	1	1.14%	88	31.10%
	Private Reading Room	3	14.29%	9	42.86%	8	38.10%	1	4.76%	21	7.42%

(PG= PG Students; UG = UG Students; RS = Research Scholars; TE = Teacher)

PS: Response received from 1 visitor is not reflected in annexure