

## **Newspapers : Place and Treatment in University Libraries - A Study at Tirupati**

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### **Abstract**

Newspapers are still on the top serving their users as primary sources of information. By interviewing five university librarians of Tirupati with a structured questionnaire, the author has reported the findings of the survey regarding newspaper selection, language-wise subscription, acquisition of foreign newspapers, preservation, space and furniture, discarding, microfilming, indexing of newspapers in the libraries along with few suggestions. Specific areas of research for future are identified.

### **Introduction**

The newspaper collection forms a basic part of the university library's research materials. They are particularly important in conducting reference work. Not only historians, but sociologists, political scientists, philologists, journalists, advertisers, economists, educators, and others use newspapers for research purposes.

Number of studies conducted on newspaper readership made it clear that the newspapers are still on the top serving their users as primary sources of information.

In this study 5 University librarians of Tirupati were interviewed with the help of a short structured questionnaire.

The libraries included are :

- Sri Venkateswara University Library (S.V.U.L.)
- Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (Deemed University) library (K.S.V.L)
- A.P. Agricultural University Regional Library (A.P.A.U.R.L)
- Sri Padmavathi Mahila Viswavidyalayam Library (S.P.M.V.L)
- Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Science (Deemed University) Library (S.V.I.M.S.L)

## Selection

Newspapers vary greatly in their coverage, accuracy, and objectivity. Differences among newspapers affect the acquisition policies of libraries. They must select and preserve from among the vast number of newspapers published throughout the world only those which are likely to be valuable as research materials. The language-wise distribution of newspapers subscribed by the universities is provided in Table 1.

*Table 1*  
*Language-wise distribution of the newspapers*  
*subscribed by the Universities*

Name of the University	Newspaper subscription (Language wise)				Total
	Telugu	English	Hindi	Tamil	
S.V.U	6	7	-	1	14
K.S.V	5	2	1	1	9
S.P.M.V	5	4	-	-	9
A.P.A.U	5	2	0	0	7
S.V.I.M.S	5	2	-	-	7

It can be noted from the Table 1 that Telugu newspapers are being subscribed more in number by all the universities than other language newspapers as Telugu being the local language. This emphasises that in the selection of newspapers geographical considerations are normally given priority.

It is also observed from the data that all the libraries are subscribing to English newspapers in which latest developments in science and technology are focused than in vernacular newspapers. Hence, it can be said that selection of newspapers is an important element and unless it is purposefully and intelligently planned, the newspaper collection can not be of maximum use to scholars.

## Acquisition of Foreign Newspapers

Although domestic newspapers give university librarians enough trouble, foreign newspapers provide additional problems. Irregular deliveries, non-availability of duplicates for damaged or lost copies, and

difficulties in obtaining information concerning titles increase the amount of time that is spent on collecting foreign newspapers. These may be the reasons for the negative reply of the librarians for a question on acquisition of foreign newspapers. No library is acquiring even a single foreign newspaper.

### **Preservation**

The methods employed for preservation of newspapers are : Binding the complete paper, Newspaper clippings, and Micro filming. This activity of preservation of newspaper has to be taken up by the university libraries as this preserved information is valuable than the information available from other documents. A question is asked to know whether the university libraries are preserving back issues of newspapers. Except S.V.U.L, no library is preserving the newspapers. Only 3 English papers are being preserved by S.V.U.L.

### **Space and Furniture**

In a university library, an exclusive room is required for newspaper reading, for shelves of bound newspaper files, for extensive trays or volumes of a newspaper index, and a microfilm reader where appropriate. Continuous pre-occupation with newspapers reading is a strain on the eyes and the need for good lighting is rather greater than in an office.

A useful item of furniture common is the newspaper slope - a stand at head or waist height with a projecting shelf on the bottom to take a number of newspapers loosely bound.

All the universities included in the present study do not have separate newspaper rooms in their respective libraries. Only S.V.U.L is having both plain and sloped stands, where as K.S.V.L, A.P.A.U.R.L, and S.V.I.M.S.L are having only plain stands for the display of newspapers. S.P.M.V.L is having sloped stands. Kardex is being used by all the university libraries to record the information with regard to the receipt of newspapers.

### **Discarding**

Successful discarding is certainly the dullest and also one of the most difficult tasks in a library having preservation activity. Yet it must be done : frequently, with regularity, and according to some principles. Regularly the unpreserved papers are also to be disposed. For this, all the 5 university librarians call for tenders to sell the out dated newspapers

and the amount got through this procedure will be remitted to the university account.

### **Microfilming**

New possibilities in acquiring and preserving newspapers have been opened up through the improvement of microfilming techniques. Not only do microfilm copies eliminate the problem of deteriorating newspapers, but scattered files are brought together, accessibility is increased, and pressure on storage space remarkably decreased.

As such no university library is utilising this microfilming facility but they undoubtedly will further exploit the microfilm technique for newspaper preservation in the future.

### **Newspaper Indexing**

This type of Indexes facilitate easy access to information provided in newspapers. Of course this may be a difficult task to a university library, but with the initiation of the newspaper offices the preparation of newspaper index will be an easy task.

### **Suggestions**

- Cooperative acquisition, preservation of back volumes, and microfilming projects enable the libraries of a particular area to overcome some of the problems like space, manpower, finance, preservation, and acquisition of foreign newspapers.
- Opinion surveys of users must be conducted, by respective libraries.
- Individual newspaper indexes enrich the value of newspapers as reference tools.
- Sympathetic consideration and cooperation of the authorities is badly required to libraries.
- Newspaper clipping service, binding of back issues, and newspaper indexing are to be taken up effectively by university libraries.
- A separate committee for subscribing newspapers, with proper representation from all categories of users, will lead to effective utilisation of newspapers.

## Conclusion

The present study has been taken up as a state-of-the-art of newspapers which are the vital sources of information, in university libraries. Due to many constraints in-depth study could not be possible in this regard. However, research work related to the factors affecting newspaper management in various types of libraries, problems faced by users in acquiring information from newspapers, methods for effective use of newspapers as research tools, etc should be taken up. Opinion survey of users will contribute a lot to better management of newspapers in libraries.

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