Library User Orientation at Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of the article is to disseminate the library resources, library services and facilities to the library users. Library professionals should instruct the library users to utilize the resources effectively and efficiently. Only accumulation of information will not fulfill the aim of the library, it should be achieved by using resources. Librarian's role is very important in user orientation and also minimize the time to search the needed information.

1. Introduction

Libraries are the heart and brain of any institutions (Academic, Special and Research and Development centers) and it is the knowledge pivot for students, research scholars and faculties. The main aim of the library is right information to the right user at the right time. Rapid improvements in the field of ICT and its applications in library have changed the way of looking the libraries by it's on and off line users. The available information confused the library users to select relevant information so that library professionals should educate there users to retrieve relevant information. It is include we have to guide our users to access both manual and digital library.

The primary responsibility of the library staff is to provide best service to their users and also ensure that the resources are used by maximum users of that institute. The library user orientation is the need of the hour. Mews(1992) has Defined user education "as instruction given to readers to help them make the best use of a Library". Library is the systematic way of knowledge assimilation and reference to learning and knowledge sharing. Fleming (1990) has defined user education, "as various programmes of instruction education and exploration provided by libraries to users to enable them to make more effective, efficient and independent use of information sources and services to which these libraries provide access".

According to Krishnakumar(1991) "Library orientation is to train the users in how to use the library". Suleiman, Shammasi Ali.(2012), Library Philosophy and Practice, User Education Programs in Academic Libraries: The Experience of the International Islamic University Malaysia Students. There is a significant relationship between the usefulness of the programs and user education programs, modules of user education programs and skills, this is also shown in the finding of Oyesola, M.(1984) worked on the problems facing the library in increasing students' ability to locate materials they need, extend their knowledge of useful library tools, encourage learners to make extensive use of the library and to give them rudimentary knowledge of correct study methods. One of the objectives of user education program is to enable students to patronize libraries for their academic activities independently. There is a strong relationship between the user education programs, modules of user education programs and skills; the finding is similar to Muogilim, E. (1986) who investigated the inability of the students to utilize library facilities after taking a course in the use of library.

The outcome of his findings shows that students were allowed few interactions with the library and its staff during the orientation programs. Also, they were overloaded with so much information within such a short a time that the chances of retention and internationalization of the avalanche of new information is quite slim.

T. Saravanan, M.M. Kalaivani and Dr. V. Senthilkumar.(2012), Library Philosophy and Practice, Does the Digital Environment Improve Modern Users' Internet Awareness? Though some of the strong/weak and positive/negative relationships were identified between the variables thorough out the study the possible significance was not captured in between the levels of the variables except a few levels. It would be interesting to observe the above results that the frequent visits to the library enable one to be aware of the Internet, when compared to the Bi-Month and Month wise visits. Hence, it could be concluded that there would be linear relationship exist between the users' library visits and their awareness of Internet, Of course, the electronic environment setups inside the library upgrade the modern users' Internet awareness.

2. Objectives

- To introduce the library resources, services and facilities to its users
- To create awareness of library rules and regulations
- Increase library usage

3. Need and purpose

Libraries spend lacs of rupees on acquiring books, journals (both print and online) databases and other reading materials, but because of inadequate of library skills usage of these materials is very less. So that users need to be taught about the different skills and this is needed to navigating in the library and using of resources.

4. Discussion

The major objective of library or information system is to satisfy the information needs of users. Information needs refer to individual needs of users regarding information, which should be satisfied, by the specific information needed by him. One relates to the kind of massage, in terms of subjects, currency, etc and the others related to means of supplying them. Information needs of a user depend on a number of factors such as work activity, discipline and availability of facilities. Information can be primarily divided into type's viz. current awareness and adhoc need. In the current awareness mode the users require current information in their fields of specialization or interest. While adhoc type, is the need to satisfy a specific purpose. There are information about organization and information about external environment in which an organization needs to function. There are numbers of factors that affect information needs of users. The following aspects explain the relevance of Library Orientation.

i.   **Recent trends in education**- Other than the regular academic education another two education concepts are there: Self-learning and Lifelong learning. These users are not capable to locate and retrieve the information they need. In this concepts of learning users need to be trained and educated as to use of information resources to meet their goals.

ii. **Information deluge -** Now a days research and development is taking place at an rapid speed in all the fields in human life, because of this R & D a lot of information is been generated. So that, the users are facing information deluge. The available large amount of information may create Chaos for users. The library professionals through user education they train how to locate and retrieve the best source of information for both print and online.

iii. **Online resources-** In addition to acquiring books and journals in manual form, libraries subscribes many online databases (Cengage Learning, J-Gate, Scince direct, IEEEetc..) e-books and e-journals. Library users should be made aware of these online resources subscribed by particular library. Our professional should be explain the users how to access the desired information from available online resources and also educated how to access the online resources from in and out the library/campus (depends on Password or IP Based access)

iv. **Service offered by the library-** Library user education or orientation main intention is to explain new user which are all the service offered by institution library.

Most of the libraries offer the following services
- Book lending
- OPAC/WEBOPAC
- Reference
- ILL and DDS
- Browsing

Institutional Membership of special libraries (IIMs, IISc, British Council, American Consulate library etc...)

V.   **Rules and Regulations -** Last but not least this is about one of the main purpose of library orientation. Through the library user education programme. The library professional create the awareness of library rules and regulation. In general we can point out few rules and regulations of library usage : Timings of library and Book lending rules etc.

5. Methods of library orientation:

The library orientation methods are depends on the collection in the library, arrangements of material, service offered in the library, number of library users and user requirements etc…Based on above information we can shortlist following methods for library user orientation.

1. Virtual tour of library
2. Guided tour
3. presentation method
4. Lecture method
5. A/V Documentary on library

6. Levels of orientation:

Levels of library user orientation is depends on the need of the user, there course and also service offered by library. Mainly there are three levels of library user orientations, they are as fallows

i.   **Undergraduate level** –at this level students are new for library, because just they passed plus two and the environment of PU library is different to higher education library and maximum time its closed access, so that the students must be made aware of the location of different sections of the library, providing useful information about the catalogue, reference sources, etc.

ii.   **Postgraduate level –**at this level the students are bit aware of library system. Should be told about the classification systems, bibliography, and other services of the library, including online access, usage of Boolean search strategies etc…

iii.   **Researchers and teachers-** They should be told about literature search, compiling of bibliographies, technical writing, footnotes, information retrieval, institutional membership and interlibrary loan, etc.

7. Benefits of Library User Orientation in Higher Education

1. It passes on the knowledge and skills necessary for utilizing library resources
2. It improves the attitudes of the students towards the librarian and library ethics
3. It familiarizes the users with every aspect of the library
4. It develops the students' academic talent
5. It introduces the students to the library system & services
6. It increases the library usage
7. It creates library culture and promotes reading habit
8. Bridge the gap between the user and the collection of the library.

8. Evaluation of user orientation:

Evaluation is an activity carried out to find out if a particular course or programme has produced the desired results. It is primarily concerned with the collection of information about the effects of an educational course or programme on the student. It involves the comparison of observed effects with the expectations. It is necessary for enhancing the impact of user education programmes. The data is collected and analyzed for further decision making and improvement. It can help in deciding whether to continue, modify change or discontinue the programme. Evaluation can be done through personal observation or through discussion with the users of the library. After every user orientation programme, evaluation of the same should be done.

9. Conclusion:

Libraries in higher education institutions have very good collections of books, print journals and online journals for the benefit of students, research scholars and faculty. It should be utilized in better way. For better utilization of resources library professionals should train or instruct the library users how to retrieve the information easily by using simple retrieving techniques. Learning is a lifelong process, once we train the users, they will continue these practices throughout their career.

The orientation programme increases the library usage and enables the users to understand and follow the rules and regulations of the library.Immense benefits have been derived through the orientation programme. The users expect extension of the time of issue and return for the greater benefit of the users.

The study also shows that the orientation programmes is not waste of the precious time of the students and but has helped change their negative perceptions of the library and the library staff.

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