Best practices in library services - a case study of nirmala college for women, coimbatore, tamilnadu

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ABSTRACT

Libraries and information centers play a vital role in enhancing the learning experience, providing students with all the resources and services they need to expand the horizon of their intelligence. At present there are many best practices followed in academic libraries to improve the quality of services and specialization offered. This paper is mainly focused on various best practices, like optimization of resource utilization, value added services, training offered to use E-resources, Best Library User Award, competitions, counseling center providing guidance for students to prepare for competitive examinations, book exhibition, orientation for the freshers etc, followed in the Nirmala Central Library. The findings are based on a random survey conducted during the year 2019-2020 to find out the students' satisfaction level with the library resources and services in utilizing library resources. This article will promote awareness about the resources, services and facilities available and maximize the end users for academic purposes.

Key words: *Best practices, Academic libraries, Library resources and services, Information literacy, Nirmala College.*

Introduction

The library and information centre of an institution facilitates enhancement of the quality of academic and research environment. To gratify the end-users' requisites effectively, the academic libraries need to recognize and adopt best practices and benchmarks. Best Practice should be innovative and it should create new opportunities and emphasize impact on organizations.

With a holistic vision of empowering Women through education, Msgr.Oubagarasamy,D.D.,the visionary Bishop of Coimbatore founded Nirmala College for Women in Coimbatore. The College is a Catholic Institution of Higher Education for Women, started in the year 1948, as second Grade College under the direction of the religious society of the Franciscan Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. Nirmala College, under Coimbatore diocese began under the University of Madras and has been affiliated to Bharathiar University since 1982. The College became autonomous in the year 2007.

The library offers a feast to the intellectual appetite to satiate young minds. It houses 63116 Books, 200 Journals and Magazines both National and International. It caters not only to the needs of Undergraduate, but also satisfies the needs of Postgraduate and Research students. Library is a three storied building, and is fully automated with a wide collection of the latest Books, Periodicals and CDs, which are updated every year. Books are available with a bar coding facility and are classified by Dewey decimal classification The library functions in a networked environment, and maintains two servers and over 58 PCs to support its various operations and services. Electronic resources such as INFLIBNET- N List and NPTEL are made available to all members of the library via the internet and the College intranet. The library also hosts DELNET, a digital repository for research.

This paper is mainly focused on various best practices followed in the Nirmala Central Library and the

satisfactory level of its students, research scholars and the teaching faculty of Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, TamilNadu. The findings are based on a random survey conducted during the year 2019-2020on the best practices like automated library activities, purpose of utilization, value added services, training offered to use E-resources, Best Library User Award, competitions, career guidance for students to prepare for competitive examinations, book exhibition, orientation for the freshers etc.

Objectives of the study

To give awareness about the library best practices

To investigate the most satisfactory features of the library services

To analyze the library usage of the students and faculty

To examine the attitude of the library professionals and users towards the best practices

Methodology

To collect the primary data of present study, a survey method was conducted using a well-structured questionnaire. Total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate, post graduate, scholars and the teaching faculty of Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India and all the filled questionnaires were received to draw the result of study. The collected data were classified, evaluated and tabulated by using statistical methods.

Data analysis and interpretation

Best practices adopted in Nirmala College Library

Institutional excellence is the aggregate of the best practices followed in different areas of institutional activities." Nirmala College Central Library has been following the best practices to motivate the students to utilize and access library resources catering to their ever-renewing needs for global competency.

The data on best practices have been collected based on the format developed by NAAC and presented them under the four broad sections viz. They are as follows

- Management and Administration of Library

- Collection and Services

- Extent of the Use of Services

- Use of Information Technology

Table - 1 Category -wise distribution of the questionnaire

Users	Questionnaire Distributed	Percentage
UG Students	100	50%
PG Students	50	25%
Research Scholars	25	12.5%
Faculty	25	12.5%
	200	100

Table-1 shows the category wise distribution of respondents.Out of 200 respondents 100 (50%) are UG students, 50 (25%) students are from PG departments, 25 (12.5%) are research scholars and the remaining 25 (12.5%) from the teaching faculty.

Table – 2 Awareness about the Library management software and its benefit

S.No	LMS- Activities	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	User Entry	142	11
2	Circulation	186	14.5
3	Serial Control	85	6.6
4	Reservation	55	4.3
5	Bar-coding of books	165	13
6	Use of OPAC	179	14
7	Due List	42	3.3
8	ID Card Production	175	14
9	Stock Verification	75	5.8
10	User statistics	172	13.5
		1276	100

Table – 2 explicitly shows the awareness about the benefits of the library management software from 200 respondents. A total of 1276 answers were received in which 186 (14.5%) users are aware of the online circulation, and 179 (14%) use of OPAC, From the above responses, it is inferred that the majority of the respondent have an awareness on the benefits of library management software.

Table – 3 User satisfaction level with collection

Type of collection	Highly satisfied		Satisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Dissatisfied	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Text Books	87	43.5	65	32.5	39	19.5	9	4.5
Reference Books	112	56	47	23.5	23	11.5	18	9
Career Guidance	106	53	72	36	16	8	6	3
Journals	65	32.5	81	40.5	37	18.5	17	8.5
Newspaper/Magazines	72	36	63	31.5	39	19.5	26	13
Thesis/Dissertations	61	30.5	49	24.5	59	29.5	31	15.5
N-List Resources	109	54.5	76	38	7	14	8	4
NDLI Resources	65	32.5	69	39.5	36	18	30	15

Table-3 indicates the number and percentages of responses received from the samples regarding the satisfaction of library collections. It is found that 112 (56%) users are highly satisfied with reference collections, 109 (54.5%) are highly satisfied with N-List resources and 106 (53%) are highly satisfied with career Guidance collections. So, it is inferred that all users of different categories are highly satisfied with the reference books in the library.

Table – 4 Students' feedback about the performance level of library staff

Attitude of library staff	Highly Satisfied		Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Dissatisfied	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Efficiency of staff at circulation counter	125	62.5	55	27.5	13	6.5	7	3.5
Any time availability of staff	119	59.5	48	24	21	1.5	12	6
Helpfulness in locating information	135	67.5	50	25	9	4.5	6	3
Knowledge regarding the resources	99	49.5	78	39	13	6.5	10	5

Table-4 shows the number and percentages of responses received from the samples regarding the satisfaction towards the performance of the library staff. It is evident that,135 (67.5%) users are highly satisfied with the helping attitude of the library staff and 125 (62.5%) are highly satisfied with efficiency of the library staff at circulation counter, So, it is inferred that all users of different categories are highly satisfied with the service offered to the library users.

Table –5 User Satisfaction level in library services

Library Services	Excellent		Good		Poor		V. poor	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Circulation service	149	74.5	35	17.5	12	6	4	2
Reference books	125	62.5	45	22.5	26	13	4	2
SDI	72	36	89	44.5	25	12.5	14	7
Book Exhibition	81	40.5	73	36.5	31	15.5	15	7.5
Career Notification	93	46.5	60	30	38	19	9	4.5
Reprography	90	45	63	31.5	40	20	7	3.5
User Survey	75	37.5	61	30.5	52	26.5	12	6
Current Awareness Service	101	50.5	56	28	29	19	14	7
Suggestion Box	69	34.5	62	31	48	24	21	10.5
Orientation for the new comers	75	37.5	105	52.5	12	6	8	4

The above table -5 represents the satisfaction level of the users in the library services. The data indicates that 149 (74.5%) of the respondents have stated circulation service as excellent, 125(62.5%) reference Service as excellent and 101(50.5%) Current Awareness Service as excellent, So, it is inferred that all users of different categories have stated circulation service as excellent service provided in the library.

Table – 6 Opinion on Best user Award & Competitions organized

BUA/Competitions	Very Helpful		Helpful		Somewhat Helpful		Not Helpful	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Best User Award	152	76	40	20	8	4	-	-
competitions	104	52	72	36	20	10	4	2

Table-6 indicates that 152 (76%) respondents' opinions that Best user Award is very helpful to improve library usage, 104 respondents (52%) opined that conducting competitions are very helpful. So, it is inferred that the majority of the respondents have stated that Best user Award and conducting competitions are very helpful to attract the students towards effective use of the library.

Table – 7 Use of Technology Based Library Resources

Digital Resources	Highly Satisfied		Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Dissatisfied	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Internet Browsing	130	65	51	25.5	10	5	9	4.5
OPAC	91	45.5	46	23	37	18.5	26	13
E-Mail	73	36.5	64	32	34	17	29	14.5
INFLIBNET-N List	120	60	67	33.5	13	6.5	-	-
DELNET	68	34	55	27.5	41	20.5	36	18
CD ROM Access	72	36	55	27.5	48	24	25	12.5

Table – 7 depicts the user satisfaction on the digital resources.130 (65%) users are highly satisfied with internet browsing and 120 (60 %) users are highly satisfied with INFLIBNET N-List resources, From this table it is evident that the majority of the respondents are highly satisfied with accessing digital resources through internet browsing and accessing INFLIBNET resources.

Table – 8 Need for Training Programme

Training Programmes	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Orientation/Workshop	155	77.5	30	15	12	6	3	1.5
INFLIBNET N-List	160	80	37	18.5	3	1.5	-	-
NDLI	153	76.5	42	21	3	1.5	2	1

Table - 8 exhibits the respondents view on training programmes in accessing the resources. It is found that 160 (80%) users strongly agree with need of training for accessing INFLIBNET resources, 155 (77.5%) strongly agree with orientation and workshop for familiarity in accessing e-resources and 153 (76.5%) users are strongly agreeing for NDLI training workshops. So it is inferred that the majority of the respondents strongly agree with the conduct of training programmes.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that continuous reformation and up gradation of library services brings more number of users towards the library. Use of technology in effective dissemination of information products and services in a library has always generated good results. Application of library management software and automation of all in-house activities in academic libraries with scanning, user entry and identity and web OPAC facilitates the standardization of information centres, Regular orientation classes, training and awareness programmes with the new techniques will also be a best practice in the extent of use of library services. The above study found that the majority of the students were inspired by the best practices following in our library. Creating awareness on best practices will help improve the quality of library services. The relationship between the library staff and the users will definitely create a supreme atmosphere among the user community.

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