Assessing customer satisfaction at the Harish-Chandra Research Institute Library

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ABSTRACT
This paper is basically concentrated on the user information seeking and their satisfaction rate from the library. It caters to all categories of users, which includes Faculty, Students/ Research Scholars, Post Doctoral Fellows, Visitors and Resource Persons too. The main objective of this study was to assess the utility of the library and scope for future development.

Keywords: Users' Survey; Library Services; Library Staff

INTRODUCTION

The basis objective of this survey was to scale the satisfaction level of the users of this Research Library and users' expectation to some extent. This survey may be conducted further in other fields such as collection development, facilities extension, etc.

Academic libraries have been described as the *heart* of the Learning Centre, providing a place for students and faculty to conduct their research and enrich their knowledge. In the research education system, the academic library and information centre is the centre of academic life. Any library provided to an institution of higher education exists to support the goals of its parent organization. Since research libraries are an integral part of the research work and education system, they should provide support services for the formal educational programs, as well as for facilities for research and generation of new knowledge. It is important for any information professional working in an academic or any other library, to know the real needs of the user community.

Since all the use and existence is only for the users and their needs, it becomes necessary to know about their suggestions or comments on its quality of service and collection status. Although it has been a regular exercise for any library to assess the needs and comments of the users, but still some times it becomes so important to have their views in a nut shell about its use aspects: collection, web site, staffs awareness and eagerness to help them. In these circumstances users have been allowed to give their opinion about these aspects at specific points. These surveys provide an assessment of the services provided and informs how to improve on the same. We find some indicators for future course of action in terms of library services.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of employing the user studies are described by Cullen (2001) in the following terms:
- Provide detailed information about user's opinion of the service
- Help to clarify the librarians concept of the services as well as their assumptions about the user needs
- Indicate problems
- Suggest solutions

In the same direction Lancaster(1977) in his book on the measurement and evaluation of library services stated that *"library surveys are shifting their emphasis toward the library user, patterns of library use, and the degree to which user needs are being met."*

Busha and Harter (1980), in their text on research methods, mentioned that *"user studies are needed to justify and expand library services and usage and to learn more about how people communicate. More specifically, they stated that user studies are needed to: predict library usage; determine why people do or do not use libraries; identify what group borrow which kinds of materials; identify what groups use which services; suggest how user can be encouraged; explore how use patterns differ; measure the effects of mass media on library use; and identify actual needs".*

The Institute's library is one of the best-equipped libraries in the region. It caters to the users of specific fields of research needs: Theoretical Physics and Pure Mathematics. Our basic emphasis is on journals only as journals provide the latest happenings in the fields of interest; we subscribe 178 titles in our area and spend approximately Rp.2.25 crores in Journals' subscription per annum. We procure books too in our core areas for which we spend approximately Rp.20 lakh per annum for books.

Being the library of a research institute, it provides the required support to the academic and research activities of the institute. It remains open on all working days from 8 am to 2 am, including Saturdays. It also remains open during the Sundays and the gazzetted holidays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. It has added 402 books, including 72 gifted books, during the current financial year. It has a total number of 20,850 books which includes 999 gifted books. The institute's library has a total collection of 56,059 books and bound volumes.

The whole collection is bar coded and equipped with Tattle Tapes for security purposes. Recently we have provided the latest systems to our users for browsing the library OPAC through LibSys 7 and related search.   We enriched our Building of the Digital Depository of the HRI with the help of GreenStone, an open source software, which   includes submitted articles, thesis, lecture notes etc.   The library web page has been updated which provides more detailed information about the library, such as subscribed databases, archives, library rules, library staff, list of online journals, online link to the Video lectures and other useful links.

The library can be termed as a completely automated library system, which provides acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, search modules through LibSys-7. The on-line

catalogue has increased the opportunities of the use of our library resources by the neighboring organizations such as INSDOC, TIFR etc. through the Document Delivery Services (DDS). Normally we provide the DDS on request through post, at very nominal cost, but requests have also been honoured through e-mails.

We had encouraged the use of the library by providing the library consultation facilities to research scholars from neighboring institutes.

We had strengthened our library security with the implementation of Electro-magnetic Tattle Tapes to reduce losses. This has been made completely functional.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was conducted among users who use the library quite frequently. We used the survey methodology. The questionnaire was prepared and users were asked to provide their opinion using the scale from 1-10 on different points. Since the library users are using the library from many places in campus, the questionnaire was provided through mail and in print. We have excluded the Administrative staff from this survey as they are not frequent users of our collection as their use is limited to our General Collection, which is quite insignificant in numbers too. The following Table 1 provides the complete information of our total users.

Table 1: The library users

1	Faculty	Physics, Mathematics	36
2	Post-Doc. Fellows/Visitors	Physics, Mathematics	25
3	Student Research Scholars	Physics, Mathematics	101
4	Administrative Staff		30
5	Visitors/Project Students	Physics, Mathematics	30
	Total Users		**222**

Objectives

The main objectives of the survey were as following:
• To explore the use of library and it's utility in the present era of internet.
• To investigate the users' and library staff's interaction and opinion of users.
• To explore about our library collection and its depth and weaknesses as described by users.
• To identify the physical facilities provided in the library.
• To investigate users' critical and constructive suggestions

RESULTS

Table 1 has been devised to give the complete picture of the users in the institute, however the separate category status has already been shown in Tables 2 to 4. It reflects the total user strength of the HRI library:

Table 2: Complete Number of Users

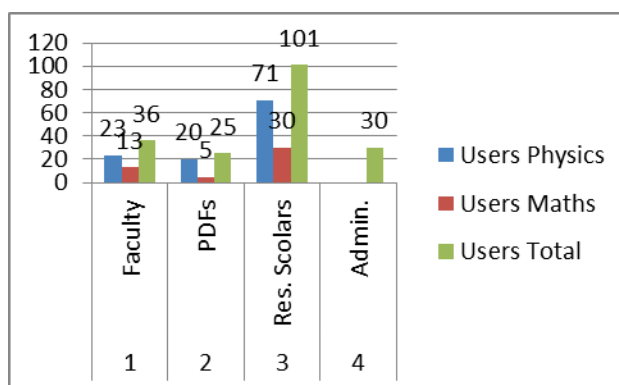| No.	Category	Physics	Maths	Total
1	Faculty	23	13	36
2	PDFs	20	5	25
3	Research Scholars	71	30	101
4	Admin.			30
	Total			**192**
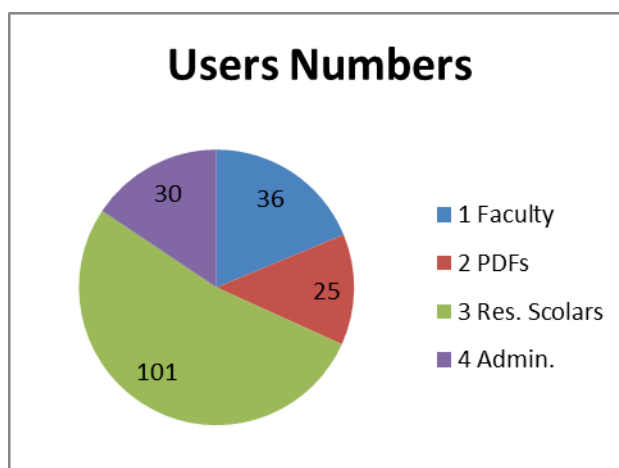
Figure 1: Users by category

Figure 2: Users by category and field

The above mentioned Table 2 show the total number of permanent users of our institute in different categories. It is termed as permanent users as we a have number of

conferences and schools being held throughout the year, hence we a have number of research scholars and resource persons attending these activities. These visitors constitute a good number of users in our institute but they leave after the schools/ conferences are over. Since these visitors are from different parts of world and they belong to different institutes inside India and outside, we have included their responses too.

Since the survey was conducted during the summer, some of the permanent faculty and research scholars were not on campus mainly because they had gone on leave or sabbatical leave. We had a number of visitors attending Summer Schools who have provided valuable feedback to the survey. Table 3 shows the response rate is almost 66%. Since the opinions received from user in all points does not differ very much in numbers the 'Average Method' was opted for reflecting their results.

Table 3: Responses of Users

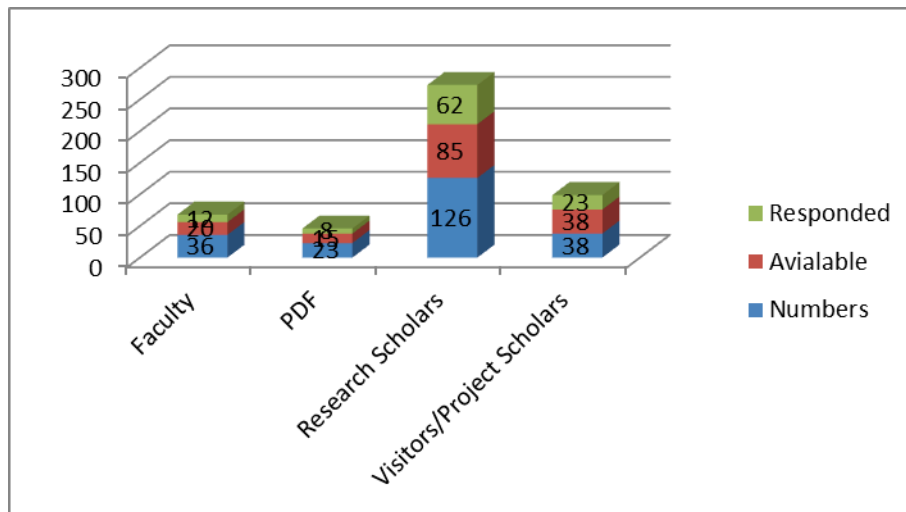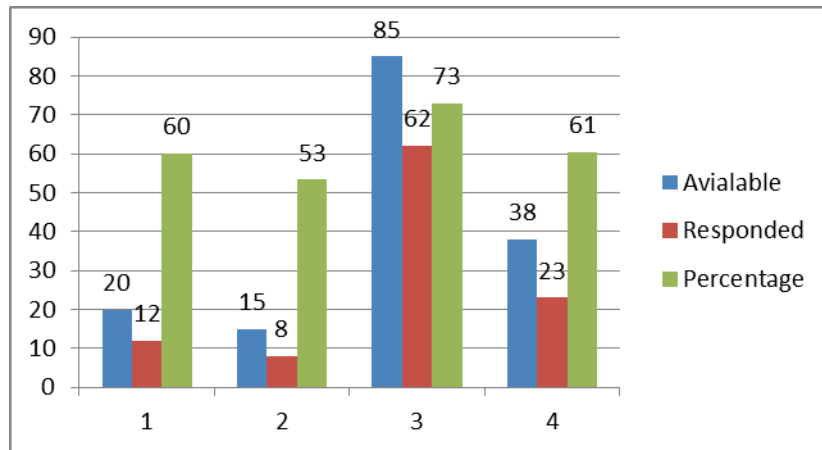| No	Category	Numbers	Available	Responded	Percentage
1	Faculty	36	20	12	60
2	PDF	23	15	8	53
3	Research Scholars	126	85	62	73
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	38	38	23	61
	Total	**223**	**158**	**105**	**66**

Figure 3: Response rate by category

Figure 4:

Now we come to the finding of this survey. We have tried to get the opinion from the users on the specific questions/ points and shown their results in average response on a particular point through tables and graphs to have more specific indicating terms. The following Table 4 and the graph shows the users view on "Library as Comfortable Location".

Table 4: Library Location Comfort Level

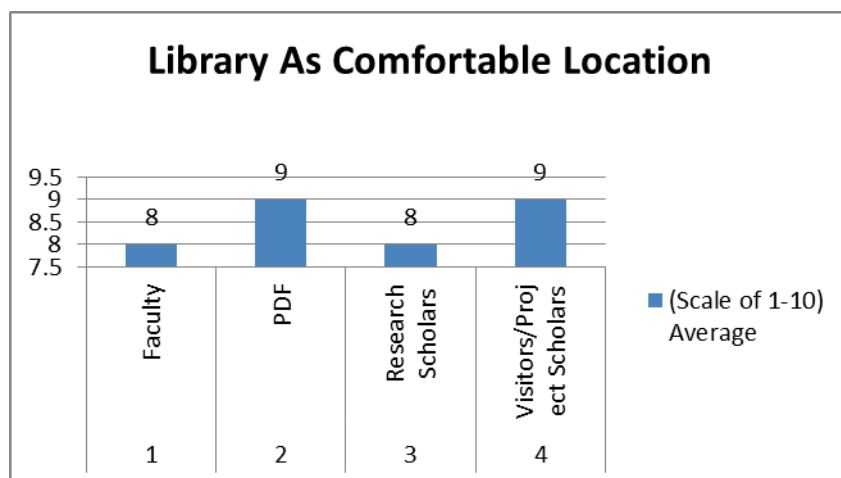| Library As Comfortable Location		(Scale of 1-10)
No	Category	Average
1	Faculty	8
2	PDF	9
3	Research Scholars	8
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	9

Figure 5: Library Location Comfort Level

Table No. 5 (Library Staff Behaviour)

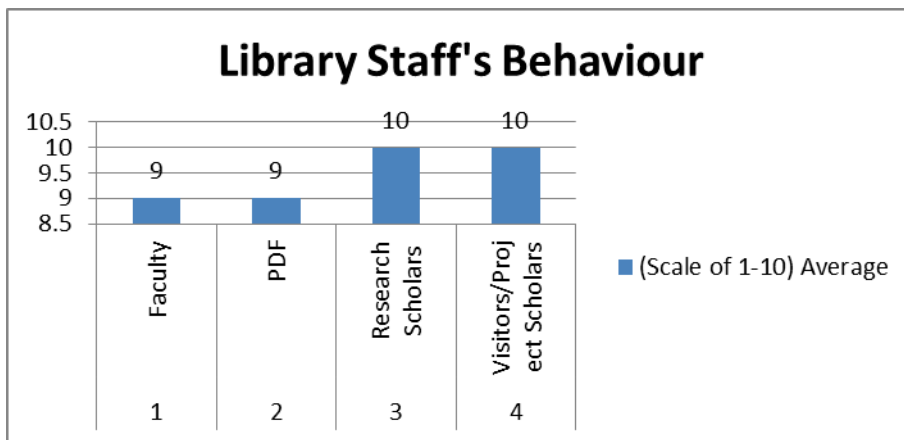| Library Staff Behaviour		(Scale of 1-10)
No	Category	Average
1	Faculty	9
2	PDF	9
3	Research Scholars	10
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	10

Figure 6: Staff behavior

Above mentioned table no. 4 shows the opinion of the users of different categories in average mode about the Library staff's behaviour towards the user, as it is more concerned section of the survey the response was quite overwhelming and encouraging too. It gave us real encouragement to work even more friendly with user to attain a cent per cent satisfaction.

Table 6: Library Modernisation Level

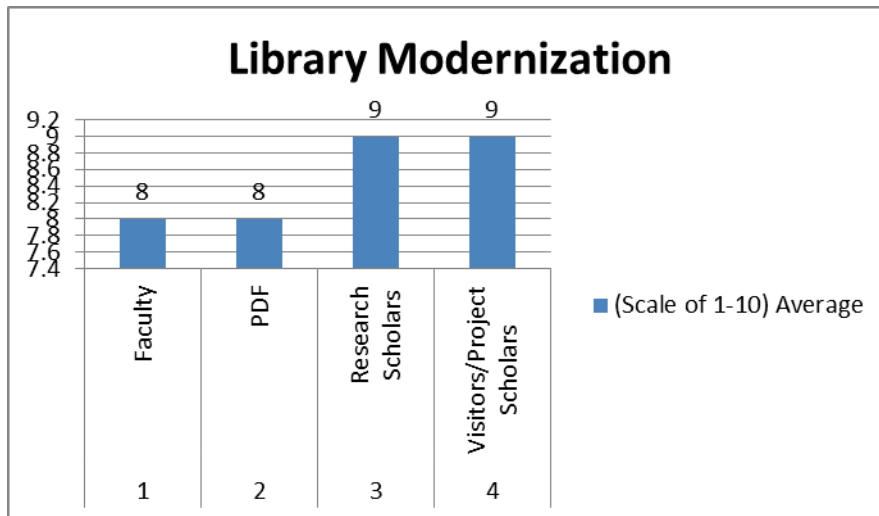| Library Modernisation		(Scale of 1-10)
No	Category	Average
1	Faculty	8
2	PDF	8
3	Research Scholars	9
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	9

Figure 7: Library Modernization

Table 6 shows the opinion of the users of different categories in average mode about the Library Modernisation aspects which effects the users, the response was quite satisfactory. It gave us real encouragement to work even more aggressively to attain a better satisfaction rate.

Table 7: Library Collection Development

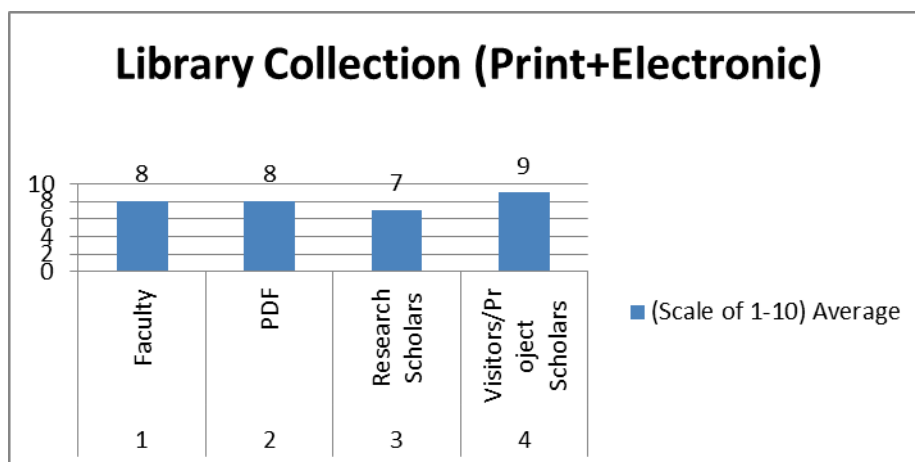| Library Collection Print + Electronic		(Scale of 1-10)
No	Category	Average
1	Faculty	8
2	PDF	8
3	Research Scholars	7
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	9

Figure 8: Library Collection

Above mentioned table no. 7 shows the opinion of the users of different categories in average mode about the Library collection in print and electronic both aspects which effects the users, as it is more concerned section of the survey the response was quite satisfactory but still it is an area we need more emphasis is needed. It gave us real ticker to work even more aggressively to attain a better satisfaction rate

Table 8: Library As a Group Learning Space

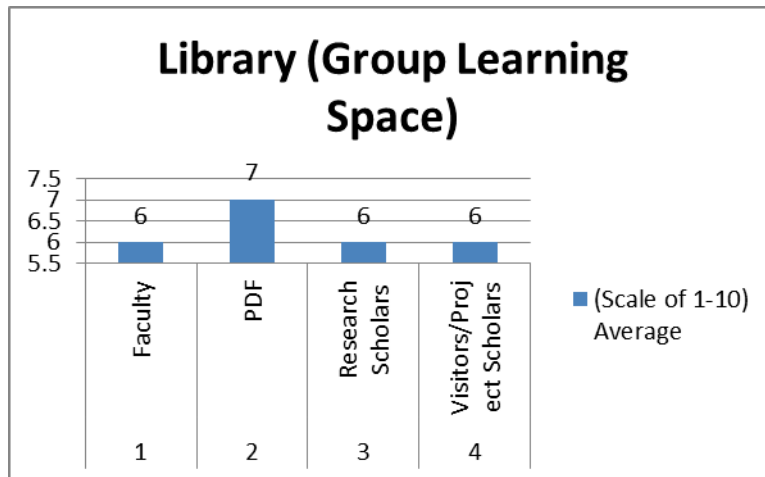| Library (Group learning)		(Scale of 1-10)
No	Category	Average
1	Faculty	6
2	PDF	7
3	Research Scholars	6
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	6

Figure 9: Library As a Group Learning Space

Table 8 shows the opinion of the users of different categories in average mode about the Library (Group Learning Space) aspects which effects the users, the response was satisfactory. Infact the authority has planned in advance to provide more than 1.5 times extra space for library building and extension work is in full swing. We expect to get the additional space within a span of a year and half.

Table 9: Library Access

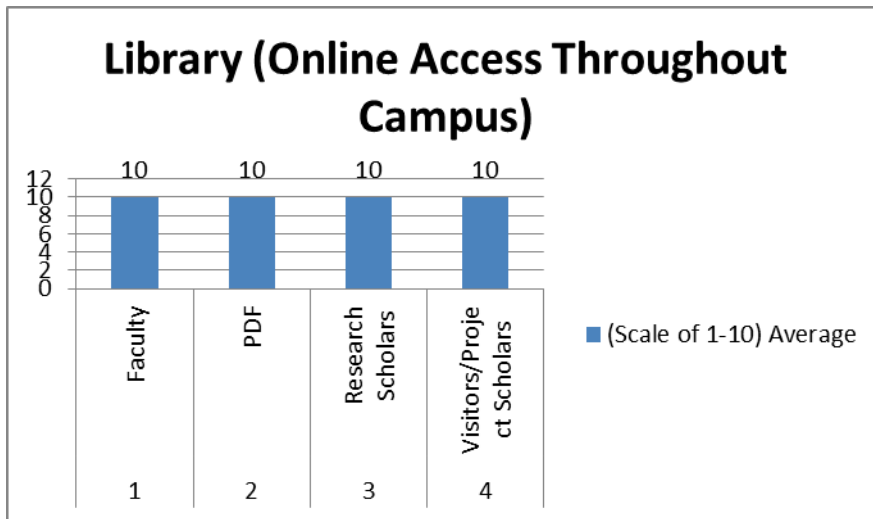| Library (Online Access throughout Campus)		(Scale of 1-10)
No	Category	Average
1	Faculty	10
2	PDF	10
3	Research Scholars	10
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	10

Library (Online Access Throughout Campus)

Figure 10: Library Access

Table 9 shows the opinion of the users of different categories in average mode about the Library Material Online access aspects which effects the users, the response was quite satisfactory. It gave us real encouragement to work even more aggressively to maintain the better satisfaction rate regularly.

Table 10: Library Website Usefulness

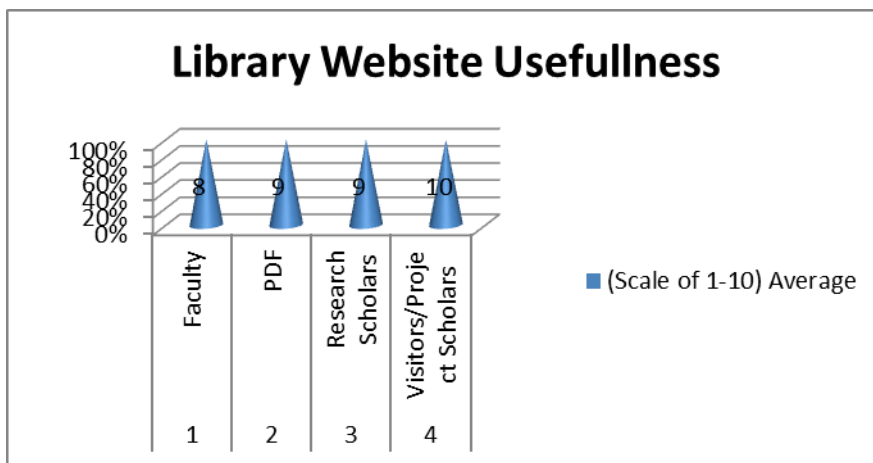| Library Website Usefulness		(Scale of 1-10)
No	Category	Average
1	Faculty	8
2	PDF	9
3	Research Scholars	9
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	10

Library Website Usefullness

Figure 11: Website usefullness

Table 9 shows the opinion of the users of different categories in average mode about the Library Website Access and usefulness aspects which effects the users the most, the response was quite satisfactory. The lot of work is done from the library staff to get it updated and functional for the benefit of the users but it should be reflected from the users about its functionality.

Table 11: Library Staffs' Ability

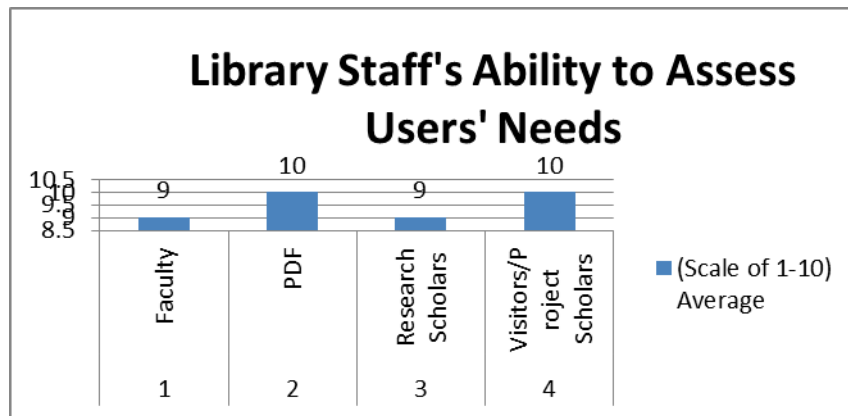| Library Staff Ability to Access User Needs		(Scale of 1-10)
No	Category	Average
1	Faculty	9
2	PDF	10
3	Research Scholars	9
4	Visitors/Project Scholars	10

Figure 12: Staff ability

Above mentioned table no. 11 shows the opinion of the users of different categories in average mode about the Library staffs' ability aspects which concerns the users, as it is more concerned section of the survey the response was quite satisfactory. It gave us real encouragement to work even more aggressively to maintain the better satisfaction rate regularly.

FINDINGS

The focal points of this study were to get views on the following areas were the comfort level in the library; Space environment and inspiration to read; Quality of the library staff services rendered; Access to information and ease of the same; Availability of E-resources of their need; Library staff's willingness to help; Collection development and its use among users; Accessibility of E resources throughout the campus; Anticipation users' need by Library Staff ; Individual attention level to the users by library staff.

The separate column was provided for suggestions and it was well used by the users who provided some very constructive suggestions too. Since most of the users stay in the campus only, the response was quite satisfactory. The users did come with some useful suggestions too. While analysing the results of the findings one factor was more visible as being summer season, more of the visitor/summer project students were available but the regular faculty and research scholars have not been physically available in campus. The response rate has gone down, but few of the responses have been received through mails too. The main findings may be expressed as:

- Some the students have provided some quite valuable suggestions regarding collection development issues:
- Some represented the issue of having more number of copies for their required books whereas we try not to duplicate the titles in our library, the point has been well taken and will be placed in the Library Committee.
- Few suggested for more private cubicles for intensive study in Library premises that will be taken care by the library extension which is already in the process. Hopefully the students will be getting more personal space/ cabins for intensive study in the library.
- Few suggested about more power points for Laptop charging, the action has already been initiated in this regard.
- Few suggested for inclusion of E-books in our collection development pattern.
- Most of the users have shown satisfaction towards the library staffs' approach to their queries. They had shown their satisfaction towards their personal approach to the users.
- Responses towards the Library Staff: The responses towards the library staff were quite satisfactory as it recorded almost a perfect 10. It encourages us to work even harder to satisfy our user to the best of our possibilities.
- Kind of Services provided to the users: The kind of services that we provide to locate the material needed. If any visitor doesn't know to use our library we assist them to use the maximum. We provide photocopy of the printed material and allow electronic information to be downloaded in the interest of the users.
- Availability of the Required Material: The reading material is strictly procured on the basis of the users recommendations only. These recommendations are processed through the library Committee and then approved by the Director. After this screening process the library procures the material. Since the number of students is increasing to demand for more than one copy is increasing.

CONCLUSION

Some suggestions were quite expected, such as, space for group learning, which is very restricted. The library management has already planned for physical space extension of 1.5 times additional space, which is currently under construction.

Collection development sometimes due to the paucity of the funds the demands is not met. However recommendations are frequently taken from students and approval rate for recommendation has been almost 95%. It gave us some indicators for our future planning for the library development which was the main reason for conducting this

survey. There are few developments which are already in the pipe line as these will occur at certain point of time according to the funds availability, as the Institute receives the funds from two levels, one is Recurring Funds and another is Non Recurring (Plan) Funds. There will be a need for a few more surveys to cover some other areas: procurement of E-Books and other E-Content available for the users. There is a scope of the shifting the content/collection developments from print to electronic too as the young researchers are more accustomed to electronic version compared to the senior ones.

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