The Information Communication Technology Usage in the Medical College Libraries of Karnataka: A Study

by

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Abstract

India is developing country; Karnataka being one of its State's has around 50 Medical Colleges recognized by the Medical Council of India. But, the libraries of the Medical Colleges are facing numerous problems in rendering medical services to its users. In this regard, the Government of India has taken the initiative to render the medical education/services to the needy peoples across the county either directly or through Governments of the respective state. In this direction, more number of government and private Medical institutions has cropped up from past two decades in Karnataka state. An analytical study has been conducted to evaluate the library services, based on the usage or adoption of ICT / emerging technologies in the medical college libraries of Karnataka. The outcome of the study is satisfactory but there is a need for improvement in several functional areas of the library, such as adaptation of emerging technologies & service platforms, training for the library professional, status of manpower, access to resources, marketing and user orientation services of the library.

Keywords: Medical Libraries, Techniques, Library tools, Services, ICT

Introduction

The objective of a health science library is to assist medical professionals in enhancing and updating their knowledge and skills, and to provide them information regarding new innovations, views, theories and latest treatment for better patient-care, medical education, and research. The primary role of a medical library is to collect and organize recorded information in medicine and allied subjects to meet the clientele's needs (P.Srinivasulu, & Reddy, V. P., 2010). Dhanavandan et.al., (2012) in their study Access and Awareness of ICT resources and services in medical

college libraries in Pondicherry found that most of the faculties have visited the library for usage of internet to get access to the electronic resources through Google. It was of the opinion of the respondents that too much information retrieved while searching the information, is the main barrier for them to access desired information on electronic resources and they preferred to have text books, for which they need orientation on search strategies for the desired outcomes. Rehman et. al.(1997) emphasized that both health professionals & health science librarians have to have communication skills to become a successful librarian. Srinivasulu and PullaReddy (2010) in A survey of medical college libraries in Andhra Pradesh reveal that most of the medical college libraries (81.82 %) are not automated. The survey also indicates that a considerable percentage of librarians (36.36 %) do not have training in computer applications. The minimum staff members as per the norms of Medical Council of India in the library should be 12 members including professionals and nonprofessionals. The average number of staff working in medical college libraries at present is 10 members. The average number of professional staff members working in medical college libraries at present is 5.1 members. As per the norms of Medical Council of India, it should be 8 members. In the state of Karnataka, currently there are 50 medical colleges existing as per the Medical Council of India, out of which 22 (19 + 3 newly started, one during 2012 another two in 2013) An analytical study has been conducted to know the status of the libraries, tools and techniques and methods adopted for medical college libraries located in Karnataka In this study, 15 medical college libraries have been chosen for the study. Data collection was done during 2012. The outcome of the survey is being presented briefly.

Objectives

1. To know the real position of the medical colleges established in Karnataka.
2. To find out the position of actual infrastructure of the established medical colleges.
3. To identify the difficulties of library services.
4. To know the position of using modern techniques applied by the library.
5. To locate the actual position of fund expenditure made by the libraries on e-materials and Print materials
6. Availability of internet and related facilities as per MCI norms
7. To know whether the libraries are automated?

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8. To know various kinds of documentation services provided by the libraries

9. Steps taken for maintenance of minimum standards MCI/ RGUHS.

Methodology

This study uses primary and secondary data. The data obtained from librarians through questionnaires. Suitable statistical tools and techniques are being used for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Among 15 medical colleges taken for the study, 5(33.3%) are government and 10(66.6%) are private institutions and most of the institutions offering both UG & PG(MD, MS as well as PG Diploma) courses.   Some of the colleges offering super specialty courses also.

Library Personnel

 Librarians with qualification of Ph.D./M.Phil., Degree; 4 (26.66%)

Librarians with qualification of M.LISc Degree; 9 (60%)

Librarians with qualification of B.LISc Degree; 2(13.33%)

All most all libraries-15 (99.9%) have less than 10 professional staffs and not meeting the MCI / RGUHS norms. Few libraries have IT staff of 22%.   Most of the libraries (87-88%) doesn't have any IT staff. Around 6 Librarians are getting Government pay-scale Most of the librarians- 12 (63.15%)are getting consolidated pay/State Government scale of pay.

Physical Facilities

As per the MCI regulations, the library area for 100 UG admissions is 1600 square meters and for 150 UG admissions, it is 2400 square meters. As far as library building is concerned, some libraries (4) 26.6% have independent library buildings and the rest (11) are attached to their parental institutions 73.3%. Most of the 15 medical college libraries are allocated with good or minimum requirements of furniture.

Information Access

Most of the Medical college libraries-13 (86.6%) are serving with open access system; Few libraries-2 (13.33%) have closed access system with wooden/ steel racks.

Library Usage

More than 10 faculty members visit the library per day in 12 (80%) libraries, and in remaining 3 (5.26%) college libraries only 4 to 5 faculties.   The strength of students visiting to UG reference sections are more (around 76%) compare to PG students.

Library Collection

As per MCI norms, there should be less than 7000 text or reference books for 100 UG admissions. Most of the libraries are procuring text books & reference books throughout the year according to users need / MCI standards; 10 to 11 (73.33%) libraries meet the norms of MCI by having 14000 to 17000 text/ reference books. Whereas the remaining 25 to 27% of libraries was possess below average of 5000 to 6500 books.

As per MCI norms, the libraries should have 100 core print journals out of which, $1/3^{rd}$ should be foreign journals to be subscribed on a continuous basis. Half (50%) of the medical college libraries do not subscribe the journals on a continuous basis.

The collection of the thesis of the passed out PG's are not collected regularly in most of the 11(73.3%) colleges. The back volumes are not bounded regularly in almost all the 13 (86.65%) college libraries.

Technical Processing ; All the libraries are using AACR-2 scheme for cataloguing the documents; All most all libraries-12 (80%) are using Dewey decimal classification and remaining 3 libraries (20.22%) using NLM classification which is a specialized classification in the field of biomedical sciences.

Library Services; All most all libraries-14 (93.33%) are providing reference and information services; Some libraries are providing referral service; All libraries-15 (100%) are providing circulation service; All most all libraries-15 (99.98%) have photocopy facility for the library users; Few libraries like Dr. B. R. AMC and BMC at Bangalore have 3 (20%) have Microfilm facility as it is one of the norms of MCI.

Web Based Information Services; Majority of libraries-11 (73.33%) have OPAC facility to locate the reading materials; Majority of libraries--14 (93.68%) are providing access to MEDLARS/MEDLINE service to their users as to fulfill the MCI norms. All most all libraries are conducting orientation programmes to the fresher's in addition to spot guidance being given regularly.

Library Budget; All the government medical college libraries are receiving the funds from Government of Karnataka; the private medical colleges have been met out by their managements.

ICT Infrastructure; All the 15 libraries (100%) are providing Internet service as per MCI / RGUHS norms and are connected to RGUHS to share the digital information, mainly to access e-journals by paying annual fees.

Important Findings with Remarks

The survey indicates that all most all medical colleges are getting 100 or 150 admissions annually. Physical facilities: The physical area is the main component of any library. The study reveals that most of the Central libraries are attached to its parental Institution buildings. As per the Medical Council of India, the minimum standards for 150 admissions are, "there shall be an air-conditioned central library (2400 sq.m.) with seating arrangements for at least 300 (both inside & outside) students for reading and good lighting and ventilation and space for stacking and display of books and journals. There shall be provision for reading room for 30 persons, rooms for librarian and other staff, journal room, room for copying facilities, computer room for minimum 40 nodes with good ICT's, e-library etc., Hence, the authorities concerned should take necessary steps to provide all the necessary requirement to fulfill the deficiencies in each medical college Library. The management and the Government should see to it the librarians adopt the emerging technologies by providing them the training, the professionals should be deputed to learning centres, seminars, conferences to adopt themselves to be innovative in providing improved services to the doctors and the students.

Conclusion

The infrastructure and the advancement of technologies should be enhanced keeping in view of deploying the value added services to the users in all medical colleges where ever we found deficiencies and of course an affiliated University of RGUHS and Medical Council of India should be monitoring them from time to time honestly in upbringing the foresight of the librarians, the respective managements shall concentrate on these issues seriously with the varying technologies and provide the classic budgets to the libraries to meet the advancement through library committees to meet the globalization but not to keep their Institutional libraries with localization. Arrangements should be made for the training programs, workshops and

depute their librarians for conferences, to get innovative ideas to disseminate innovate services to the Medical faculties, researchers and students

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