

Awareness and Use of Research Support Services by the Research Scholars of Kerala University Library

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Abstract - The study analyses the awareness and use of research support services by the research scholars of Kerala University Library. Kerala University library typically identify research support as a central pillar in its mission. The paper shows its mission statements relate to the requirements of researchers themselves, especially in view of reported changes in researchers' information seeking and sharing in the online environment. A questionnaire survey was conducted among the full time research scholars in Kerala University Library. The study finds that 100% of the research scholars are aware about the research support service 'assistance from the librarian in research section'; only 46% were aware about the guidance in technical report writing and research data management services. 95.2% of the research scholars opined that assistance from the librarian in Research Section' is the most available research support service; Personal content management tools (11.9%) is the least available support service. 94% are using the E-resource services.

Keywords: Kerala University Library, Research scholars, Research Support Services

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to provide value added services to research community during their research period, University library and its library staff have to attend their reference queries and also give support to research/project related activities. The designated library staff will have to help the researcher on searching e-resources, user education, user orientation, and other related tools. Research Support Services (RSS) is responsible for providing researchers with a range of support for their research – in particular in relation to external research funding. The major research support services include proposal writing, study design, qualitative data collection, quantitative data collection, data collection systems, data preparation/reduction, data cleaning and processing.

University library's research support service must act as a center of world-class knowledge resource hub that caters to all domain of engineering, science, management, humanities and social science areas with emphasis on research, development and innovation and serve the needs of industry in our country and the globe as a whole. They have to build extensive and diversified collections and networking with leading libraries for providing relevant information and facilitate seamless access to the stakeholders. University Library have to implement the RSS as the state-of-the-art

tools and techniques in providing value added services to support research, teaching, and learning. To ensure the preservation and long-lasting availability of scholarly output and cultural heritage for future generation and to give support for learning and research engagement the University library have to create excellent leaders for Research Support Services.

II. KERALA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The Kerala University Library (KUL), established in 1942, is the oldest and biggest university library in Kerala and is situated adjacent to the University Senate Hall campus in the Thiruvananthapuram city. The study is limited to the full time research scholars in KUL only. There are around 300 research scholars doing Research in this Library as part time and Full time. The Library provides more than 15 services for users. The services include Bibliographic services, CD-ROM search, Current awareness service, Current Content services, E- Journal services, Extension services, Indexing services, Inter-library loan services, Internet services, Lending of Books, OPAC search, Reference service etc. The Library stocks over 3, 50,000 books (growing at 5000 titles annually) and subscribes to nearly 500 journals/periodicals/ magazines. Among its special collections, the Kerala Studies is a unique one. The special collections also include Women's Studies, Government Publications, General Biographies, UN and World Bank Publications, bound volumes of newspapers and journals and rare books. It is the only library in Kerala which serves as a depository of UN and World Bank Collections.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kaur and Singh (2017) discussed some aspects of library resources and services' usage by the users of DAV University, Punjab and focused that the users are aware about the library hour and IT infrastructure, but they wanted to extend the library hours and enhance IT infrastructure. Kumar and Dora swami (2016) conducted a study to find out the use of library resources and services by the students of autonomous degree college libraries in Vijayawada. Most of the users were not aware about the library services other than the circulation, periodical, newspaper, textbook etc. The user community who has the awareness about them is facing the lack of information resources. Mohindra and

Kumar (2015) evaluated the quality of library services and user satisfaction with A.C. Joshi Library, Punjab University. The study revealed that the library environment and library services had impact on the levels of user satisfaction and the status of clients had no association with library attributes except the significant difference in their satisfaction level.

Kumar (2012) examined the overall service quality of university libraries in Kerala from users' perspectives as well as identified the dimensions that determine the customers' evaluation of service quality. The service quality offered by University Libraries good at an extent and the customers are partially satisfied with library services. Hart and Veldt (2011) made an attempt to investigate the role of academic library in research which was conducted by means of a questionnaire survey of academics at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in Cape Town and found that the library is revealed as playing a significant role in research. As per their opinion it will be important for the libraries to make necessary updating in researcher information seeking and sharing behavior.

IV. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are

1. To find out the research scholar's awareness about the research support services of the Kerala University Library.
2. To find out the availability of research support services of the Kerala University Library.
3. Use of research support services in Kerala University Library for their research purpose.

V. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire method is used to collect the data. The questionnaire is formulated in keeping in view, of the objectives and various facets of the study and it is personally distributed and collected. 100 questionnaires were distributed among the randomly selected respondents from the research scholars of Kerala University Library and 84 of them were returned.

A. Analysis and Interpretation

The data obtained were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using relevant statistical methods. The data was analyzed using SPSS software package. Analysis of data collected was carried out using frequency and simple percentage presented in tables.

B. Awareness of Research Support Service

RSS plays a key role in training researchers of universities through several seminars and courses. The research scholars' awareness about these services is important. RSS' services range from design through execution of research studies. Their task can be made easy

by giving support to the development of new ideas and research proposals.

TABLE I AWARENESS OF RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICE

Research Support Services	Frequency	Percentage
Assistance from the library staff at a library service desk	79	94.0
Assistance from the library staff through Ask a Librarian Service(Web form, Chat)	80	95.2
Assistance from the librarian in your Research Section	84	100.0
Assistance with copy right questions(faire use,permissions, author contracts)	81	96.4
Any guidance in writing Technical reports viz. style manual, Impact Factor, H-index etc.	46	54.8
Personal content management tools (to help to collect and manage articles etc.) e.g. Mendely, End not etc.	54	64.3
Plagiarism Checking facility	80	95.2
Research Data Management services (Data Management plans or other managing of data etc.)	46	54.8
Services to archive and provide access to your Publications	51	60.7

From the study it is evident that all the research scholars (100%) are aware about the research support service- 'assistance from the librarian in your research section', 'assistance with copyright questions' (96.4%). 95.2% are aware about 'the assistance from the library staff through Ask a Librarian Service and Plagiarism Checking facility'. The 'assistance from the library staff at a library service desk' is at 94%. 60.7% are aware about services to archive and provide access to your publications and about 54.8% are aware about guidance in writing technical reports and Research data management services. It can be concluded that most of the research scholars are aware about the research support services.

C. Awareness of Research Support Service Based on Gender

Research support service includes all types of research data management services, and research contracts that support research directly and for which individuals and/or projects. Research scholars' awareness about these services based on gender is analyzed here. From the total 84 samples, males are 28 and females are 56 in number. The awareness about the library services by male respondents is greater than the females. About 100% of both categories are aware about the service 'assistance from the librarian in your research section', 100% of male respondents are aware about the services 'assistance with copy right questions and plagiarism checking facility'. Then 'ask a librarian service' (96.4%), 'technical report writing and content management tools' (71.4%). In the case of females, they are least aware about the 'technical report writing' (53.6%), 'Research Data Management services' (44.6%), 'personal content management tools' (39.3%) and 'Services to archive'

(32.1%). The χ^2 test in a 4.71 significant difference at a 'p' value of 0.030 resulted.

TABLE II AWARENESS OF RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICE BASED ON GENDER

Awareness of Research support Services		Male(28)		Female(56)		χ^2	p
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Assistance from the library staff at a library service desk	Not Aware	3	10.7	2	3.6	1.7	0.19
	Aware	25	89.3	54	96.4		
Assistance from the library staff through Ask a Librarian Service(Web form, Chat)	Not Aware	1	3.6	3	5.4	0.13	0.717
	Aware	27	96.4	53	94.6		
Assistance from the librarian in your Research Section	Not Aware	0	0.0	0	0.0	-	-
	Aware	28	100.0	56	100.0		
Assistance with copy right questions(faire use, permissions, author contracts)	Not Aware	0	0.0	3	5.4	1.56	0.212
	Aware	28	100.0	53	94.6		
Any guidance in writing Technical reports viz. style manual, Impact Factor, H-index etc.	Not Aware	8	28.6	30	53.6	4.71*	0.030
	Aware	20	71.4	26	46.4		
Personal content management tools (to help to collect and manage articles etc.) e.g.Mendely, End not etc.	Not Aware	8	28.6	22	39.3	0.93	0.334
	Aware	20	71.4	34	60.7		
Plagiarism Checking facility	Not Aware	0	0.0	4	7.1	2.1	0.147
	Aware	28	100.0	52	92.9		
Research Data Management services (Data management plans or other managing of data etc.)	Not Aware	13	46.4	25	44.6	0.02	0.877
	Aware	15	53.6	31	55.4		
Services to archive and provide access to your Publications	Not Aware	15	53.6	18	32.1	3.59	0.058
	Aware	13	46.4	38	67.9		

* Significant at 0.01 level

TABLE III AWARENESS OF RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICE (BASED ON ARTICLE PUBLICATION)

Awareness of Research Support Services		Article publication				χ^2	p
		No(27)		Yes(57)			
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Assistance from the library staff at a library service desk	Not Aware	0	0.0	5	8.8	2.52	0.113
	Aware	27	100.0	52	91.2		
Assistance from the library staff through Ask a Librarian Service(Web form, Chat)	Not Aware	0	0.0	4	7.0	1.99	0.158
	Aware	27	100.0	53	93.0		
Assistance from the librarian in your Research Section	Not Aware	0	0.0	0	0.0	-	-
	Aware	27	100.0	57	100.0		
Assistance with copy right questions(faire use, permissions, author contracts)	Not Aware	1	3.7	2	3.5	0	0.964
	Aware	26	96.3	55	96.5		
Any guidance in writing Technical reports viz. style manual, Impact Factor, H-index etc.	Not Aware	15	55.6	23	40.4	1.71	0.191
	Aware	12	44.4	34	59.6		
Personal content management tools (to help to collect and manage articles etc.) e.g.Mendely, End not etc	Not Aware	10	37.0	20	35.1	0.03	0.862
	Aware	17	63.0	37	64.9		
Plagiarism Checking facility	Not Aware	1	3.7	3	5.3	0.1	0.754
	Aware	26	96.3	54	94.7		
Research Data Management services (Data management plans or other managing of data etc.)	Not Aware	12	44.4	26	45.6	0.01	0.920
	Aware	15	55.6	31	54.4		
Services to archive and provide access to your Publications	Not Aware	12	44.4	21	36.8	0.44	0.505
	Aware	15	55.6	36	63.2		

D. Awareness of Research Support Services Based on Article Publication

Research scholars' awareness about these services based on the publication of articles analyzed here. From the total 84 samples, 57 researchers are published articles and 27 were not.

From the study it is evident that from the group of article published category 100% are aware about the 'librarian's assistance in research section'. Then 'assistance with copyright questions' at 96.5%, 'plagiarism checking facility' (94.7%) and 'the assistance from the library staff through ask a librarian service' (93%). In the case of non-published category 100% are aware about 'the assistance from the library staff at the library service desk', 'assistance from the library staff through Ask a Librarian Service',

and 'assistance from the librarian in research section'. 96.3% are aware about the 'assistance with copy right questions' and 'plagiarism checking facility'. 55.6% are aware about 'research data management services', 'Services to archive and provide access to Publications' and 'guidance in writing technical reports'.

E. Availability of Research Support Services

The most available research support services in KUL are assistance from the librarian in research section, assistance from the library staff at a library service desk, assistance from the library staff through Ask a Librarian service etc. The important research support services that a University library should provide and its availability in this library is analyzed here.

TABLE IV AVAILABILITY OF RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES

Availability of Research Support Services	Frequency	Percentage
Assistance from the library staff at a library service desk	74	88.1
Assistance from the library staff through Ask a Librarian Service (Web form, Chat)	73	86.9
Assistance from the librarian in your Research Section	80	95.2
Assistance with copy right questions (fair use, permissions, author contracts)	11	13.1
Any guidance in writing Technical reports viz. style manual, Impact Factor, H-index etc.	10	11.9
Personal content management tools (to help to collect and manage articles etc.) e.g. Mendely, End not etc.	10	11.9
Plagiarism Checking facility	69	82.1
Research Data Management services (Data management plans or other managing of data etc.)	23	27.4
Services to archive and provide access to your Publications	23	27.4

From the study it is evident that 'assistance from the librarian in research section' is the most available support service opined by 95.2% of the researches, 'assistance from the library staff at a library service desk' at 88.1%, 'availability of assistance from the library staff through Ask a Librarian Service' 86.9%, 'Plagiarism Checking facility' 82.1%, 'availability of research data management services' and 'Services to archive and provide access to publications' at 27.4%, 'assistance with copy right questions' (13.1%), 'Personal content management tools' (11.9%) and 'guidance in writing technical reports' available at 11.9%.

F. Use of Research Support Services

TABLE V USE OF RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES

Research Support Services	Frequency	Percentage
Library e-resource service	79	94.0
Borrowing of Library Print Resource service	73	86.9
Inter Library Loan service	12	14.3
Faculty Librarian's Reference/ Information Service	69	82.1
Attend training / workshop on Database	53	63.1

The research support services provide a right leading path for the research scholars in order to complete their work. The main research support services provided by the KUL are e-resource services, borrowing of library print resource service, Inter Library Loan service etc. The use of these support services for research purpose is analyzed in the Table V. From the study it is evident that among the research support services 'e-resources' (94.6%) are mostly used by research scholars followed by 'borrowing of library print resources' (86.9%), then 'faculty librarian's reference/information service' (82.1%), and 'attending training / workshop on database' is of 63.1%. The least used is 'interlibrary loan services' (14.3%).

G. Use of Research Support Services Based on the Article Publication

The research support services play an important role in the field of research. The need of research community varies from subject to subject. For the purpose of article publication, the need and use pattern of these services were evaluated. From the total 84 researchers 57 were published articles and the remaining 27 were not. The use of research support services based on the number of articles published is analyzed in the table VI.

TABLE VI USE OF RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES(ON THE BASIS OF ARTICLE PUBLICATION)

Use of Research Support Services		Article publication				χ^2	p
		No(27)		Yes(57)			
		Frequency	Percentage	frequency	Percentage		
Library e-resources	No	1	3.7	4	7.0	0.36	0.549
	Yes	26	96.3	53	93.0		
Borrowing of Library Print Resources	No	2	7.4	9	15.8	1.13	0.288
	Yes	25	92.6	48	84.2		
Inter Library Loan	No	26	96.3	46	80.7	3.64	0.056
	Yes	1	3.7	11	19.3		
Faculty Librarian's Reference/ Information Service	No	4	14.8	11	19.3	0.25	0.616
	Yes	23	85.2	46	80.7		
Attend a training / workshop on Database	No	12	44.4	19	33.3	0.97	0.324
	Yes	15	55.6	38	66.7		
Others	No	27	100.0	57	100.0	-	-
	Yes	0	0.0	0	0.0		

The study reveals that from the article published category 93% were using ‘e-resources’, then ‘borrowing of library print resources’ (84%), ‘faculty librarian’s reference’ (80.7%) and 66.7% attending ‘training/workshop’. From the non-published category 96.3% are using ‘e-resources’, ‘borrowing of library print resources’ (92.6%), ‘faculty librarian’s reference’ (85.2%) then ‘attending training’ is at 55.6%.

VI. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. All the research scholars have awareness about the research support services. On the basis of gender wise comparison, male respondents have more awareness than females.
2. On the basis of gender wise analysis 100% of males and females are aware about ‘assistance from the librarian in research section’. ‘Services to archive and provide access to your publications’ is the least aware service by males (46.4%). The least aware one for the females is ‘guidance in writing technical reports’ (46.4%).
3. The most available research support service is the ‘assistance from the librarian in research section’ (95.2%). The least available support services are ‘guidance in writing technical reports’ and ‘personal content management tools (to help to collect and manage articles etc.)’ at 11.9%.
4. E-resources are widely used by the research scholars (94%) for their research purpose. The least used one is ‘inter library loan’ service at 14.3%.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

1. It is essential to provide enough guidance about the data analysis, data management, thesis writing, and technical report writing at the beginning of research work.

2. Include more up-to-date journals. It is important to reduce the span of time taken for issuing bound volumes from stack.
3. Provide plagiarism checking facility for those who do research in KUL as the Research Centre, especially for the subjects having no university departments.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The premises of the study at the Kerala University Library shows that they have to increase their responsibility to give help and support for improving the quality of research. The study provides positive news is that the library is revealed as playing a vital role in research. The library should be the main authority to disseminate the knowledge which is generated and transmitted through all of the disciplines it contains. Research support services are, in many cases, not adequately developed in most universities and public research organizations. Regarding this aspect, however, there has been a significant improvement, with an increasing number of institutions increasing their investment both in human resources devoted to research support services. The library is the only mediator or scholarly actor in between the researchers and their sources of information. So the University Libraries should be expertise in the tools of scholarly dissemination (the blogs that are most useful in particular fields, etc.), in copyright and licensing (and thus in open access), in publishing etc. However, it will be important for KUL, to anticipate shifts in researcher information seeking and sharing behavior.

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