

A Study on the Growth and Development Agricultural Library of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in India

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Abstract

In the present study, the author has investigated the status of the library under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW) to know its resources, services, budget, level of automation for the period 2010-19 with the help of a structured questionnaire designed for the purpose. The author has also interviewed the library's Head and practically observed the status of the library. The findings show that the library is on a steady path for its development, as observed through increased collection, services, and library management areas. This study shall be helpful for the library in designing its roadmap for future developmental processes. Simultaneously, it will help the researchers understand these unique libraries due to their type of collection.

Keywords: Agricultural Library, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare India, Special Library

Introduction

The policies/schemes of the Government of India relating to agriculture and the welfare of farmers are executed, implemented, and reviewed through the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. The allocation of work relating to the agricultural sector has been assigned/merged/demerged with other sectors such as food processing, fisheries, rural development, irrigation. In 2015, this vital sector of the Indian economy was allocated and assigned under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare while giving its present name.

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Every Ministry has set up a library that acts as a record house of all important gazettes, policy papers, notes, other documents relating to the functioning of that particular Ministry. Thus, the library associated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MA&FW) plays a vital role in housing all such documents which have shaped the agricultural sector and the farmers engaged with it in the country. The library of MA&FW is situated in Room No. 12, Ground Floor, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.

Review of Literature

Gulnaz and Nishat (2019) explored the collection development practices in IIT libraries of Eastern India. Researchers found out that in the newly established IIT Patna library, the library committee is responsible for collection development policy and is the recommender of resource selection.

Whereas, in IIT Guwahati library, the advisory committee is responsible for collection development policy and resource selection on the recommendation of the faculty members. IIT Guwahati library faces problems like lack of funds, information explosion, literature scattered. IIT Patna library is RFID equipped and does not face problems like IIT Guwahati library. Okwu and Mercy (2019) examined the influence of collection development policy and user satisfaction in university libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study revealed a significant influence of collection development policies on users' satisfaction based on knowledge of collection development policy, availability of current resources, and evaluation of collection development policy. While focusing on library and information science services of NIT in the North East region of India, Pachua (2019), in his studies has suggested improving the collection, infrastructure, networking, automation, institutional repository, and promoting the scholars for better output. Adekoya (2018) investigated sustainable library development, research skills, and ICT application. The study's findings show that sustainable development of libraries is critical to librarians, and librarians should have research skills to perform varying library activities better and raise their research performance as well. The research also highlights that ICT application plays an influential role in achieving

sustainable development. The investigator in his study has recommended that a higher level of research skill and ICT application is necessary for sustainable development. Olorunfemi and Deborah (2018) examined academic libraries' marketing and information services. The findings show staff friendliness with users, display of new arrivals, creating a library webpage, employing techniques for marketing library and information services, provision for electronic resources access, organizing user education, and face-to-face user discussion. Library staff should have communication skills, information technology skills, the ability to answer users' queries, sell library services, question and evaluate library services, and interpersonal skills. There are various challenges against this like insufficient funds, lack of market policy, lack of facilities to market library services, lack of media access to academic library services, poor access to information technology, lack of training in marketing, and lack of effective communication between librarian and users.

Research Methodology

For the present research work, the investigator first designed a questionnaire broadly considering the library-specific data such as its collection, services offered to the users, budget provisions, automation stage for utilization of modern-day ICT tools, and others after thoroughly reviewing the available data literature related to the study. After that, to collect relevant data on the structured questionnaire, the investigator interviewed the head of the library. Finally, the collected data was evaluated, analyzed and the same has been depicted and discussed in forthcoming headings.

Scope, Objectives, and Purpose of the Study

The research paper aims to study the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare Library, which houses the specific collection related to the agricultural policies and internal publication of different ministry departments to improve efficiency in agriculture and farmers' welfare. The study has been performed to examine the developmental status from 2010 to 2019. The purpose of this research is to

- Know about the library's collection and its growth during 2010- 2019
- Observe the developmental pattern of services of the library during 2010-19
- Know whether the library undertakes the staff developmental activities.
- Bring light on library automation and ICT tools.
- Know the library's budget and its allocation techniques.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Collection development of Libraries

The library's collection can directly correlate with its development and overall status. It is observed that the library houses a significant collection of books, journals, annual reports, publications relating to agriculture and farmer's welfare. A year-by-year growth was seen in a total collection of libraries from 2010 to 2019. It is shown in Table 1 below:-

Table-1 Collection of Libraries

Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Collection	18,000	18,700	20,000	21,000	21,900	22,500	23,700	24,000	25,000	26,200
Yearly growth rate (%)	-	3.89	6.95	5.00	4.29	2.74	5.33	1.27	4.17	4.80

It is also observed that library purchases new books every year. The library has followed the Accession Number List method for stock verification purposes since 2010. The library has been implementing the DDC scheme for stock classification and the AACR-II method for cataloging since 2010.

Library Services

A look at services offered by the library shows that it has been consistently offering an issue return facility, reference service, inter-library loans, new

arrival list service, newspaper display to its users since 2010. The library has the facilities of photocopy, scanning, printing, helper for searching and locating documents. There is a proper seating arrangement for the users and drinking and sanitation facilities. Additionally, the library also has an alert and notification facility.

The Library Staff

The total strength of the staff of the library is observed to be four (04) which consisted of three (03) library professionals and one (01) non-professional staff. The staff position has been consistent throughout the period undertaken for the study. It is also observed that the library adopts no staff development policies.

Library Users

It is stated that the library users have been solely the employees of the Ministry since the library has been set up for Ministry-specific purposes. It has also been informed that various research scholars are also utilizing the library for their research purposes/knowledge up-gradation. The library utilizes a passbook system for issuing and returning information resources.

Library Automation and Digitization

The library has been observed to be fully automated since 2010. The core library activities such as library circulation, acquisition, and cataloging are functional through e-Granthalaya software. The library is also installed with modern-day ICT equipment such as computers, photocopiers, scanners. It is pertinent to mention that the library is yet to have its website.

Budget

The budget of a library is a crucial factor for its developmental activities. It has been observed that the library do not have a fixed budget allocation. It varies as per needs and requirements. Furthermore, there is no specific allocation of budget for the library; instead, the expenditure incurred for the library is merged with the other office expenses of the Ministry itself.

Results

It is observed that the library's total collection has been increasing since the year 2010 to best suit the requirements of its users. The library's total collection at present stands at 26000 approx, which is identified to be adequate for its users. The library's services are also user-oriented and hence are sufficient for them. The strength of staff is to meet the requirement of the library, and it may be increased to bring more efficiency. Although the library has adopted ICT equipment since 2010, the library has to introduce advanced automation tools such as RFID, Bar code scanner systems, and OPAC for quick information flow. The library's budget is not a constraint for its developmental activities as it is adequate to meet the present-day requirements.

Conclusion and Suggestion

It may be concluded that although the library is on a steady developmental track with the passing time, there are still some aspects that the library can target to bring more efficiency and user satisfaction. The library should focus on updating the library website, bringing awareness to users, and mentioning the brief of its collection and services. Most importantly, frequently conduct programs/seminars/workshops/induction programs to staff, and make efforts for specific budget provisions so that any needy information seekers could utilize its resources.

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