CONVENTIONAL REFERENCE SERVICES: A SURVEY OF COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA
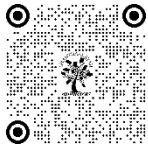
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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this survey was to comprehend the conventional information services offered in college libraries of Chandrapur district, Maharashtra, particularly reference services, availability of initial facilities, modes of providing reference services, barriers and solutions. A mini survey was conducted, and a virtual method was adopted. It was found that overall, 61% of aided and 42% of non-aided college libraries were engaged in providing conventional information services to their users. Unaided libraries provide fewer informational services than aided college libraries. All these libraries were found to provide (100%) conventional reference services. 68% of the basic facilities for the provision of reference services were provided in aided college libraries and 43% in unaided libraries. There were different modes to provide reference services in the library. 61% mode to provide reference services in an aided library and 43% unaided. Efforts should be made to offer information services to tribal communities to enhance traditional handicrafts, woodworking practices, and skills as a social commitment. Infrastructure, collection development, inadequate human resources and financial assistance, policy of government for filling of vacant posts, library space, and the impact of changing technology, maintenance and differentiations were the main barriers. There is a dire need to remove this barrier for the development of library information services in the interest of users and nations.

Keywords: College Library, Conventional, Reference Services, Service Modes, Initial Facilities

1. INTRODUCTION

Information services play a vital role in the growth of education, research, and extension education in India. College, institute, and university libraries generally provide traditional and non-traditional information services to users for their better development. In the ever-changing landscape, the role of libraries has been redefined; libraries are now regarded as 'knowledge resource" and 'information canters" The primary objective of the college is to provide high-quality education and research opportunities for its students, academic staff, and other related individuals.. The students, teaching staff, researchers, and their libraries are making significant contributions toward achieving the college's aims. The importance of college libraries is significant, as they greatly support the development of students, faculty, researchers, and the wider community

Libraries, conventionally, provide a variety of services to users by organizing their collection conventionally for ease of access and availability, build up tools to inform what document resources they have, and also to assist users in getting any information needed

Library services are commonly referred to as the reference and the information services. These information services are the most important of all the functions of a college library. To plan and manage these services effectively and efficiently to the users' satisfaction, identifying the availability of initial facilities, means of offering reference services, and hindrances through a survey was required.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

In light of the various challenges currently faced, it was essential to assess the present status of conventional information services and conduct a comprehensive examination, notably titled "Conventional Reference Services in College Libraries of Chandrapur District: A Survey.

3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The Gondwana University, Gadchiroli, was established on 2nd October 2011 at Gadchiroli by the State Government of Maharashtra to impart and develop higher education in the backward and tribal region and of eastern Maharashtra. The University has established affiliations with 191 colleges located in the districts of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli covering various faculties such as Arts, Science, Commerce, Engineering, Education, Physical Education, Management, and Law. There are 107 college libraries in Chandrapur district, including both 48 aided and 59 unaided institutions. A study examined the conventional information and reference services provided by 30% of these aided and unaided libraries, equally (15+15) located in different parts of the Chandrapur district. Due to the importance of the facts, the list of college libraries has been omitted from the article.

Gondwana University, Gadchiroli Chandrapur-Gadchiroli Jurisdiction
Source Map: https://www.google.com/search

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the conventional information services offered by the college libraries.
- Especially to identify traditional reference services
- Learn about the various modes of providing reference services
- To review the availability of initial facilities in college libraries
- Examining barriers to the development of reference services

- To propose an idea of developing handicraft skills in tribal communities through library information services with the assistance of students.

5. CONVENTIONAL INFORMATION SERVICES IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES OF CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT AFFILIATED TO GONDWANA UNIVERSITY, GADCHIROLI

Colleges in the Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts are affiliated with Gondwana University, Gadchiroli. A survey was conducted on the traditional information services provided to users in selected aided and unaided college libraries in the Chandrapur district. The collected facts in this regard have been analyzed and presented in a table.

Table 5.1 Conventional information services-Aided and Un-Aided College Libraries

Information Services	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Avail.	%	Total 15	Avail.	%
Reference service	15	15	100	15	15	100
Circulation service	15	15	100	15	15	100
Referral service	15	15	100	15	15	100
Current Awareness Service CAS	15	7	47	15	2	13
SDI Service	15	6	40	15	3	20
Newspaper clippings service	15	11	73	15	4	27
Document Delivery Service	15	10	67	15	5	33
Catalogue service	15	12	80	15	6	40
Inter Library Loan Service	15	15	100	15	13	87
Abstracting Service	15	6	40	15	2	13
Indexing Service	15	5	33	15	2	13
Bibliographic Service	15	6	40	15	3	20
Translation Service	15	0	0	15	0	0
Reprography Service	15	5	33	15	3	20
Libraries providing services	**210**	**128**	**61%**	**210**	**88**	**42%**

Source: Online questionnaire

Table 5.1 shows that a total number of 30 libraries were studied and divided into 15 granted and non-granted college libraries. Various college libraries, both granted and non-granted, provide conventional information services to their users. It was observed that 100% of granted and non-granted libraries rendered Reference, Circulation and Referral services under conventional information services.

Granted college libraries were rendering 47% Current Awareness Service, 40% Selective Dissemination of Information Service SDI, 73% Newspaper clippings service, 67% Document Delivery Service, 80% Catalogue service, 100% Inter Library Loan Service, 40% Abstracting Service, 33% Indexing Service, 40%   Bibliographic Service, 00% Translation Service, 33 % Reprography Service to their users.

Non-Granted college libraries were rendering 27% Newspaper clippings service, 33 % Document Delivery Service, 40% Catalogue service, 87% Inter Library Loan Service, and the libraries were providing 13%Abstracting, and Indexing, 20% Bibliographic, 00% Translation Service, and 20% Reprography Service to their users.

Overall, 61% of the granted college libraries provided conventional information services to their users, and 42 % of the non-granted college libraries provided information services. The number of unaided college libraries providing information services is comparatively less. All libraries were found to provide traditional reference services.

6. MODES OF PROVIDING REFERENCE SERVICES

Table 6.1 Reference Desk or Information Desk, (Ask us Desk)-User service counter –Availability

Modes of providing Services	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
	Reference Desk-Availability					
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Avail.	%	Total 15	Avail.	%
Reference Desk	15	11	73	15	5	33
Availability-Average	**15**	**11**	**73%**	**15**	**5**	**33%**

Services provided by the staff						
Reference officer	15	0	0	15	0	0
Librarian	15	15	100	15	2	13
Other	15	4	27	15	13	86
Service provided-Average	**45**	**19**	**42%**	**45**	**15**	**33%**
Reasons for unavailability						
Inadequate human resources	15	13	87	15	15	100
Inadequate space	15	11	73	15	12	80
Meager funds	15	12	80	15	14	93
Unavailability of reference desk	**45**	**36**	**80%**	**45**	**49**	**91%**

Source: Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Table 6.1 shows that Reference desks were available in 73% of aided college libraries and 33% of unaided ones. There is no reference officer available in any library to provide reference services. Most of the services were provided by these (100%) librarians and their available colleagues. This figure included 43% of aided library staff and 33% of unaided library staff. Insufficient human resources, library space, and funding were the primary reasons for the lack of reference desks in aided and unaided libraries.

Table 6.2: Services offered

Modes of providing Services	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Statistics	%	Total 15	Statistics	%
Personally	15	15	100	15	15	100
Message	15	10	67	15	15	100
Representative	15	8	53	15	15	100
Over telephone	15	7	47	15	2	13
Oral	15	6	40	15	3	20
Correspondence	15	3	20	15	4	27
Services offered- Average	**90**	**49**	**54%**	**210**	**88**	**42%**

Source Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Table 6.2 shows that Users request information from the library through various channels. These mainly include personal and message. The statistics are 54% subsidized and 42% unsubsidized.

Table 6.3: Maintenance of record of reference service, orientation and Suggestion box

Maintenance of record	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Stats	%	Total 15	Stats	%
Reference service request forms available	15	4	27	15	2	13
Record Register of reference services is being maintained	15	5	33	15	0	0
orientation to new readers on "How to use library"	15	14	93	15	3	20
Suggestion box for improvement of reference service	15	12	80	15	5	33
Maintenance of record-Average	**60**	**35**	**58%**	**60**	**10**	**17%**

Source: Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Recording data on the provision of reference services, users' experience of library services and recommendations for improvements, and orientation on how users should use the library are all important for the growth of reference services. Thus, Table 6.3 shows that in 27% of the subsidized libraries, users fill out the required reference service information forms. 33% of libraries had a record register of reference services, 93% instructed new readers on "how to use the library", and 80% put suggestion boxes to improve reference services.

13% of the unaided libraries, users fill out the required reference service information forms. 00% of libraries had a record register of reference services, 20% instructed new readers on "how to use the library", and 33% put suggestion boxes to improve reference services. In total 58% supported college libraries and 17% unaided keeping record.

7. AVAILABILITY OF INITIAL FACILITIES IN THE LIBRARY TO PROVIDE REFERENCE SERVICES

Table 7.1 Library Catalogue-Manually

Library Catalogue	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Response	%	Total 15	Response	%
Library Catalogue	15	13	87	15	6	100
AACR II-Catalogue system	15	8	53	15	2	100
Other	15	5	33	15	4	100
Library Catalogue-Average	**45**	**26**	**58%**	**45**	**12**	**27%**

Source: Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Table 7.1 shows that the library catalogue is a mirror of the library. According to the table, on average, 58% of grant-aided and 27% of unaided libraries have manual cataloging facilities. The libraries are using the AACR-II cataloging system. The catalog is a positive tool for finding sources available in the library for necessary reference information which save the time, money and energy of the users.

Table 7. Open Access- book stack

Open Access- book stack	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Numbers	%	Total 15	Numbers	%
Open Access- book stack	15	15	100	15	15	100
Student **UG/PG**	15	13	87	15	5	33
Academic Staff	15	15	100	15	15	100
Services-Average	**45**	**43**	**87%**	**45**	**35**	**77%**

Source: Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Table 7.2 indicates that all the grant-aided libraries have opened the Open Access-Book Stacks facility to users. 87% of the libraries are for undergraduate/graduate students, and 100% are for academic staff among the above.

Table 7.3: Arrangement of books on shelves

Arrangement-books on shelves	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Figure	%	Total 15	Figure	%
Arrangement of books on shelves	15	15	100	15	15	100
Subject Wise	15	9	60	15	12	80
Class Wise	15	12	80	15	4	27
Arrangement of books-Average	**45**	**36**	**80%**	**45**	**31**	**69%**

Source: Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Table 7.3 shows that the aided college libraries had 100% shelf arrangement, 60% subject-wise and 80% class-wise arrangement of books. The unaided libraries also had 100% shelf arrangement, and it was divided into 80% subject-wise and 27% class-wise. On average, 80% of grant-aided and 69% of unaided college libraries organize books by subject and category.

Table 7.3: Maintenance Shelf –List, Shelf register card

Information Services	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Status	%	Total 15	Status	%
Shelf –List, Shelf register card	15	5	33	15	2	13
parallel to the arrangement of books in shelves	15	5	33	15	2	13

Libraries providing services	30	10	33	30	4	13

Source: Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Table 7.3 reveals that 33% of shelf-lists, shelf register cards and books are accommodated in parallel shelves in aided college libraries and 13% in the unaided ones, respectively.

Table 7.4: Classification System

Classification System	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Avail.	%	Total 15	Avail.	%
Classification System	15	15	100	15	9	40
DDC	15	15	100	15	6	40
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Classification-Average	30	30	100%	30	15	40%

Source: Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Table 7.4: indicates that the Dewey decimal classification system (DDC) was used by all funded college libraries and 40% of unfunded libraries. This shows that the Dewey Decimal Classification System is the most extensively used.

Table 7.5: User Instruction-Library Brochure

| User Instruction	Granted College Libraries			Non-Granted College Libraries		
Services offered 30 Libraries	Total 15	Yes	%	Total 15	Yes	%
Library Brochure	15	6	40	15	0	0
Symbols/Guide	15	15	47	15	15	40
Leaflets	15	2	13	15	0	0
User Instruction-Average	45	23	51%	45	15	33%

Source: Online questionnaire, virtually collection of data

Table 7.5 shows that instructions were given to users through various mediums to make the most of the library. In this, 40% of the media used were library brochures, 47% symbols/guides, and 13% leaflets, mainly in aided college libraries. At the same time, it was found that 100% of signs/guides are used in unaided college libraries and library brochures and leaflets are not used. Aided and unaided college libraries were using an average of 51% and 33% of various media, respectively, to facilitate library users.

Table 8: Average availability of initial facilities, mode to provide reference services in the library

Initial facilities	Libraries		Mode of reference services	Libraries2	
Aspects	G	N	Aspects	G	N
Library Catalogue	58	27	Information services	61	42
Open Access- book stack	87	77	Reference Desk-Availability	73	33
Arrangement of books on shelves	80	69	Services provided by staff	42	33
Maintenance Shelf –List	33	13	Reasons for unavailability	80	91
Classification System-Manually	100	40	Services offered	54	42
User Instruction	51	33	Maintenance of record	58	17
Average proportion	68%	43%	Average proportion	61%	43%

Available facilities and modes of reference services

■ Initial facilities   ■ Mode of reference services

Graph: 8.1

61%
68%
43%
43%

Granted   **Non-Granted**
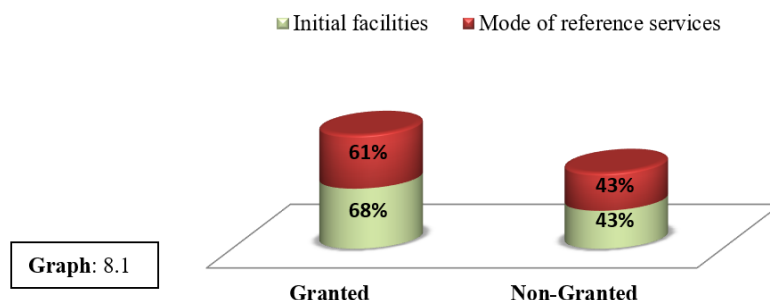
It is evident from Table 8.1 that 68% of the basic facilities for the provision of reference services were provided in aided college libraries and 43% in unaided libraries. There were different modes to provide reference services in the library. 61% mode to provide reference services in aided library and 43% unaided. The average rate of providing various types of information services was 61% aided college libraries and 42% by the unaided ones. 100% reference services were provided in various formats in aided and unaided college libraries.

8. DEVELOPING HANDICRAFT SKILLS IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH LIBRARY INFORMATION SERVICES WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF STUDENTS.

The traditional occupation of the tribal in this area is crafting handicrafts, and they create beautiful items from wood and bamboo. In such a changing situation, they require additional information. Education and research play crucial roles in societal development, and students are no exception. Students can effectively utilize library information services to enhance their own skills along with those of craftsmen. Maharashtra government has established a Bamboo Research and Training Centre in Chichpalli, located in the Chandrapur district. College libraries are expected to sign agreements with them to offer information services. This will enhance the library's information services for the general public and will benefit the tribal areas.

9. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Granted and non-granted college libraries are working to provide information services to their users to a more or less extent, and 100% of libraries appear to be providing reference services. It was found that unaided libraries provide fewer informational services than supported college libraries. It was also observed that basic facilities and methods to provide all types of information and reference services were lacking. The main cause of this issue was insufficient infrastructure, which requires urgent attention. There is an urgent need to eliminate this barrier to the development of library information services for the benefit of users and nations. The new education policy 2020 is in place. Therefore, it is essential for the government, management, and college system to prioritize library development; otherwise, the library's lifeline will be distressed.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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