USER'S SURVEY OF CARD CATALOGUE CONSULTATION AT KAKATIYA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, WARANGAL, A.P.

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A week long sample observation of card catalogue consultation by users at the Kakatiya University Library, Warangal has been made and results recorded. Users have been subsequently questioned about the purposes for which the catalogue was consulted. The study revealed that the classified catalogue is not used at all and the author and title catalogue are consulted to the maximum. It is also found that 80% of the consultations of card catalogue are to locate documents, 10% is to make comprehensive search for references on a topic and rest for miscellaneous purposes.

INTRODUCTION

A catalogue is a key to the resources of a library. Hence, the utilisation of the resources of a library, is to a large extent dependent on the efficiency of the catalogue. It is generally believed that a classified catalogue is more advantageous than a dictionary catalogue. That is why, many libraries follow classified catalogue. The classified catalogue, as is well-known, has two parts; classified and alphabetical. A study was undertaken to find out the extent of use of the catalogue including its parts. The present paper reports the results of the study.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the present study is to examine the habits and approaches of users towards the card catalogue of the university library by analysing (i) how far the various parts of the card catalogue of the university library is used by the professors, readers, lecturers, research scholars (M.Phil and Ph.D.), post-graduate students and other non-teaching academic staff; (ii) which part of the catalogue is consulted more; and (iii) the purposes for which the card catalogue is used.

CARD CATALOGUE OF THE LIBRARY

Kakatiya University Library has 66,000 books and 10,000 bound volumes of periodicals at its stack. Nearly 250 journals (Indian and foreign) are currently subscribed. Books have been classified according to Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme, 18th edition; catalogued according to Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules-II with slight modification; and book numbers have been given using Cutter's table. Out of 66,000 books, about 40,000 books have already been catalogued and the rest are being processed. The cataloguing for periodicals is yet to be started.

METHODOLOGY

Observation and recording of user interactions with the catalogue (kept near the circulation counter of the library) has been done during the third week of February, 1987. The aforesaid period is considered to be the best period for the study as the college runs in full swing just before the examinations which are held in March. It is to be noted that during this period, most of the teaching staff and the students are found to be present in the campus, and the use of the catalogue is maximum. The library is kept open from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. and the stack room i.e. Loan Section from 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Thus, the consultation of card catalogue by the users has been observed and recorded in this survey between 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. i.e. one hour after opening the library and one hour after the closure of the counter.

Every user who consulted the card catalogue during the sample period has been questioned immediately after his search to ascertain the purpose for which catalogue was consulted. During the period of one week investigation, the library was used by 550 readers.

LIMITATIONS

It is to be noted here that catalogue of text-books, reference books, government reports and bound volumes of periodicals are not covered in this study. It covers only, the books available in the stack room, which can be borrowed by the readers or users.

Searching strategies of users, difficulties faced by them, multiple approach search, repeated search, consulting library staff, abandoning a search, and results of search such as success or failure rate in retrieving a desired reference, description of the catalogue entry, the length of time spent at catalogue etc., are not examined in this study. Nor any comparison of use of catalogue with user characteristics is planned. As such, to that extent this should not be thought of as a comprehensive catalogue use study. It is a sample exploratory catalogue use survey based on observation and interview methods to find out habits and attitudes of users as to the use of the library's card catalogue. This study, is the first sample survey at Kakatiya Univeristy Library after the birth of the University in 1976. Hence, this report may be useful to improve the situation.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

During one week survey at Kakatiya University Library the following things have been observed:

There are 1250 members registered in this library, out of which 940 are students, 200 are scholars and 110 are the academic staff.

It is found from the Daily Attendance Register of the visitors to the library that out of 1250 members, only 550 users have visited the library during the period under survey. Sunday, being holiday for the library, the number of visitors are found to be more on Saturday and Monday (Table 1).

91 users have visited the library on an average per day. The hourly visits are not taken into account, only the total visits per day have been covered.

Only a small number of users (12.5%) have consulted the catalogue on an average per day. This is due to the fact that many of the old users know the broad class numbers of the area of their interest. Hence, they go straight to shelves. In addition, some users might have come to consult periodicals, reference books, etc. Hence, they did not consult the catalogue.

The hourly consultations are not taken into account, only the total consultations per day have been covered (Table 2).

Table 3 shows the clear cut approach of the users. Out of 75 users, 51 (68%) have consulted the author catalogues, the rest 24 (32%) have consulted the title catalogue, and nobody has touched the classified catalogue. This is the main point which this paper discusses.

By interviewing the users, the different purposes for which they have consulted the card catalogue have been found out (Table 4). The interviews revealed that most of the users have

Table 1 : Total number of visitors used the library

Day	No. of users	Percentage	
		out of 1250	out of 550
Monday	102	8.16	18.54
Tuesday	84	6.72	15.27
Wednesday	82	6.56	14.91
Thursday	94	7.52	17.10
Friday	88	7.04	16.00
Saturday	100	8.00	18.18
Total :	550		

Table 2 : Catalogue consultation on different days of a week

Day	No. of consultations	Percentage	
		out of 550	out of 75
Monday	18	3.27	24.00
Tuesday	12	2.18	16.00
Wednesday	10	1.81	13.33
Thursday	14	2.54	18.67
Friday	13	2.36	17.33
Saturday	8	1.45	10.67
Total :	75		

consulted the catalogues for locating documents through call numbers.

Table 3 : Consultation of different types of catalogue

Type of catalogue	No. of consultations	Percentage
Author	51	68.00
Title	24	32.00
Classified	–	--
Total	75	

Table 4 : Purposes of the card catalogue consultations

Sl. No.	Purpose	No. of consultations	Percentage
1.	To locate document through the call nos.	63	84.00
2.	Books by a particular author	6	8.00
3.	More details of a document	2	2.67
4.	General purpose to know what it is	4	5.33
	Total :	75	

The classified part of the catalogue has remained completely untouched by the users. In fact this part of the catalogue is the most important one for the users to find out the strength and weaknesses of the collection on the subjects of their study. This is prepared with great care and all details have been provided in full in the classified part of the catalogue. Nearly one third of the total expenditure incurred for the preparation of the card catalogue is spent for the preparation of the classified part.

The order to determine the causes and reasons for the non-use of the classified part of the catalogue, an interview was held with the users. The causes and reasons stated by them are :

1. Most of the readers have stated that they never before used the classified catalogue. Most of them have come from rural areas where they never had an opportunity to consult a catalogue. Even in the colleges where they had studied earlier, there also they consulted only author catalogue and some of the college libraries never had any catalogue.

2. Even in the public libraries, which some of them have happened to use, they have used only dictionary catalogue, and not the classified catalogue.

3. They are also not aware of the differences existing among the author, title and the classified parts of the catalogue.

4. Some of the users stated that according to their syllabi, they are aware of the authors and titles of the books which they have to study. Therefore, they have consulted the author part of the catalogue to find out the location of the book in the stack area. Hence, they don't have any use of the classified part of the catalogue.

5. Some of the users have also stated that they are not provided with any informative brochure by the library on the use of the library catalogue, collection and services at the time of their admission into various courses in the university.

6. Because of the open access system, some of the students informed that they know where their books are stacked. They don't have any utility of the catalogue and its different parts.

DEFECTS OF THE CATALOGUE

Following are the important defects found in Kakatiya University Library catalogue :

1. The Library has not provided the alphabetical subject index to use the classified part.

2. No guide cards are provided in the classified part of the catalogue of the Kakatiya University Library. They have kept only wooden plank indicators showing the form of the catalogue as AUTHOR INDEX, TITLE INDEX and CLASSIFIED INDEX. This is not sufficient for the users to know and understand the catalogue description.

3. The library has not issued even a brochure to the users regarding the uses of the catalogue, the method of consultation, collection, service etc.

4. The library has not conducted any orientation programme to the users from the date of inception of the library.

5. The library staff has never delivered any type of lectures in the class room on library activities.

In view of the above defects from the library side, the classified part is unused.

To bridge the lacunae, the following measures should be taken up immediately.

1. An alphabetical subject index should be placed near the catalogue.

2. A brochure describing the collection, arrangement of documents, services, method of consultation of catalogue, etc. should be released.

3. Library staff should go to the first year classes immediately after their start and explain about library catalogue and services to the students.

4. Orientation programme should be conducted for the fresh students at the beginning of each session.

CONCLUSION

This study clearly establishes the non-use of the classified catalogue of the Kakatiya University Library. It might be the case in other university libraries also.

Therefore, there is a need, not only for Kakatiya University Library but also for other Indian university libraries to undertake the orientation programme so that the resources of a library are utilised to the best advantage of the students and the faculty.

Further, in the case of Kakatiya University, the library is being maintained by one Asst. Librarian only. He is already burdened with the matters of acquisition, circulation and maintenance. So, the library needs a full time Librarian and Deputy Librarian and a few Asst. Librarians to organise and disseminate the information as needed by the university which conducts various courses for achieving academic excellence.

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