DEPENDENCY ON REGIONAL LIBRARIES FOR GREY LITERATURE: PERCEPTIONS OF RESEARCHERS IN ENGINEERING SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

By

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ABSTRACT

[While highlighting the strength of Grey Literature collection in the engineering institutions recognized for research in the state of Karnataka, the study focuses on the extent of dependency of researchers and librarians on the regional libraries for grey resources.   In the present study, response have been sought as to the frequency of access, discipline-wise use of grey collection, gender-wise awareness of Grey Literature available in the holdings of the regional libraries.

Further, the research study focuses on the perceptions of the faculty and research scholars as to the cooperation and assistance rendered by the library staff in getting Grey Literature. The study also covers the feed back of the researchers on notifying new arrivals of Grey Literature on the institution website, and the need for conducting orientation programmes for better access and use of Grey Literature available in the holdings of the regional libraries. The summary of findings depicts that an overwhelming majority of the researches opine that the libraries either individually or jointly have to notify new arrivals on the website and further there is felt-need for the conduct of orientation progammes.]

KEY WORDS: Grey Literature, Inter-Library Cooperation; Grey Literature, Resource Sharing; Grey Literature, User Studies.

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The dependency on regional libraries is a necessity, especially in the era of information explosion. Libraries cannot be self sufficient in terms of its collection. In order to meet specific demands or needs of users, libraries need to depend on other libraries. Further, it is high time that libraries need to work in a network environment and share their information resources for mutual benefits. The present study aims at undertaking the need of regional library collection for the researchers working in the area of engineering sciences and technology. The objectives of the study are;

- To know the use pattern of GL available in the holdings of the regional libraries (RL)

- To identify the constraints in using regional libraries for GL collection

- To find out the need for digitization of grey resources and resource sharing venture.

- To analyse the training needs of researchers in order to effectively make use of facilities and services of the regional libraries.

Questionnaires were distributed among 65 librarians and 1270 researchers to obtain relevant data for the study. The total number of respondents is 1270, which account for 84.6%. Relevant opinions have been sought from the chief librarians working in the 65 research centres in engineering sciences and technology.

Table 1

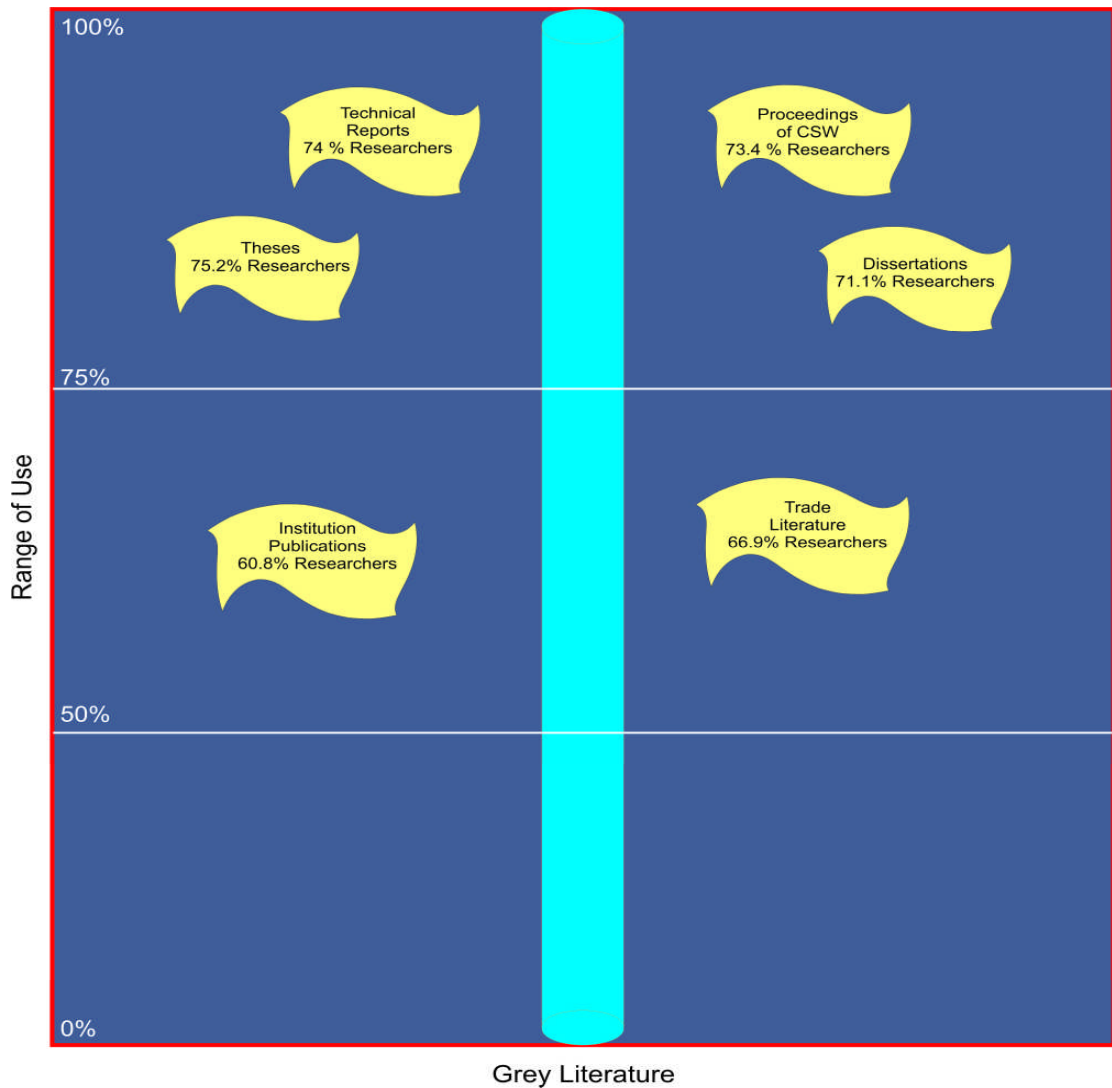**Extent of Use of GL by Researchers**

Table 1 shows the extent of access and use of various categories of GL in engineering research institutions. Technical reports and proceedings of conferences, seminars, and workshop (CSW) are being used to the highest extent of 75% to 100%. Even the sources, theses, and dissertations are also being accessed in the highest range of 75% to 100%. However, on the other hand, institution publications and trade literature are being accessed to a moderate extent of 50% to 75%. From this it is clear that GL is being used by researchers in the disciplines of engineering sciences and technology.

Table 2

Active Users of Regional Libraries

S. No.	Disciplines of Research	Percentage
01	Civil Engineering	32.5%
02	Mechanical Engineering	30.2%
03	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	39.2%
04	Electronics & Communication Engineering	35.4%
05	Computer Science and Engineering	29.4%
06	Chemical Engineering	54.2%
07	Textile and Silk Technology	21.1%
08	General Science	38.6%
09	Business Administration	55.6%
	AVERAGE NUMBER OF USERS	37.35%

Table 2 depicts dependency of active users of GL on the regional libraries. The users are shown discipline-wise and number of researchers are depicted in percentages. Among the active user of RL, chemical engineering and business administration are comparatively more in number and the percentage of users are 54.2% and 55.6% respectively. Researchers from the discipline of textile and silk technology represent just 21.1% being the lowest among the active users of regional libraries. Above all, the average number of active users of RL covering all the disciplines stands at 37.35%. Therefore, it can be concluded that a large majority of the researchers does not depend on the RL frequently.

Table 3

Dependency of Librarians on RL for GL

S. No.	Types of GL	Extent of Dependency					Total
		100%	75%	50%	25%	Nil	
1	Theses	5 7.7%	13 20.0%	16 24.6%	21 32.3%	10 15.4%	65 100%

2	Dissertations	3 4.6%	15 23.1%	18 27.7%	22 33.8%	7 10.8%	65 100%
3	Institutional publications	3 4.6%	13 20.0%	15 23.1%	23 35.4%	11 16.9%	65 1005
4.	Trade literature	3 4.6%	11 16.9%	17 26.2%	19 29.2%	15 23.0%	65 100%
5.	Technical reports	5 7.7%	7 10.8%	24 36.9%	22 33.8%	7 10.8%	65 100%
6.	Proceedings of CSW	3 4.6%	12 18.5%	19 29.2%	23 35.4%	8 12.3%	65 100%

Table 3 shows the extent of dependency of librarians on GL of regional libraries. A large majority of librarians depend on RL for technical reports, proceedings of the CSW and theses volumes. The extent of dependency is low for trade literature and institutional publications. Librarians while extending information service and to meet the needs of their library users depend on RL for GL. The dependency is comparatively more for technical report literature and the proceedings of CSW.

Table 4

Researchers on Constraints in Using GL of Regional Libraries

S. No.	Category of Constraints	Research Supervisors	Research Scholars
01	Non up-to-date collection	21.5%	23.5%
02	Distance barrier & Library timings	52.2%	41.0%
03	Difficult to locate GL	19.1%	18.7%
04	Lack of assistance by staff	4.2%	4.6%

Table 4 projects various constraints in using regional libraries. Among the four major constraints, unsuitable library hours and distance barrier hinders the researchers in using the RL effectively. 52.2% of the research supervisors and 41.0% of the research scholars have indicated that distance and library timings are the constraints.

For some of the researchers, the main constraint is that the GL collections in the RL is not up-to-date. This segment of researchers account for 22.5%, a small percentage of researchers representing 18.9% opine that the GL in the regional libraries is scattered and difficult to trace or locate. Finally, very few research supervisors and research scholars have expressed that the library staff in the regional libraries is not cooperative. This group of researchers account for just 4.4%. From this it is clear that there is immediate felt need to extend the library hours, including the working hours on holidays. Secondly, the GL collections need to be updated in time.

Table 5

Response on the Extent of Up-to-date Collection

| Category of GL | Extent of up-to-date collection | | | | | Total |
	100%	75%	50%	25%	Nil	
Theses	168 13.2%	351 27.6%	452 35.6%	176 13.9%	123 9.7%	1270 100%
Dissertations	201 15.8%	346 27.2%	470 37.0%	188 14.8%	65 5.1%	1270 100%
Institutional Publications	246 19.4%	309 24.3%	334 26.3%	323 25.4%	58 4.6%	1270 100%
Trade Literature	123 9.7%	352 27.7%	379 29.8%	347 27.3%	69 5.4%	1270 100%
Technical Reports	222 17.5%	383 30.2%	421 33.1%	212 16.7%	32 2.5%	1270 100%
Proceedings of CSW.	242 19.1%	364 28.7%	450 35.4%	181 14.3%	33 2.6%	1270 100%

As regards extent of up-to-date collection of GL in regional libraries, researchers have expressed their opinion. Accordingly, institutional publications and trade literature are slightly out-dated in RL and on the other hand, theses, dissertations, technical report literature and proceedings of CSW are comparatively up-to-date in collection. Though the institutional publications are in house documents, many a time they are maintained in

various departments rather than in libraries.   Therefore, the need of up-dating the collection of GL is emphasized.

Table 6

Library Hours

Weekdays		Weekends	
Library Hours	No. of Libraries	Library Hours	No. of Libraries
8 hrs/ day	24	Doesn't work	36
12 hrs / day	22	4 hrs / day	14
15 hrs / day	19	8 hrs / day	10
Total	65	12 hrs / day	05

Table 6 furnishes working hours of the engineering institute libraries. 24 libraries representing 36.9% work for 8 hors during week days. On the other hand, 19 libraries representing 29.2% work for 15 hours during week days. Remaining 22 libraries work for 12 hours a day during week days.

As regard working hours during week days as well as weekends, the library hours are unsuitable for the researchers of other institutions to come and make use of the facilities. Therefore, there is felt need to keep open the libraries for longer hours both on weekdays and week ends.

Table 7

Extent of Cooperation Extended by Librarians

S. No.	Extent of Cooperation	Percentage
1	Highly cooperative	56.0%
2	Cooperative	39.5%
3	Slightly cooperative	4.0
4	Not at all cooperative	0.5%
	Total	100%

Table 7 shows the extent of cooperation and assistance rendered by the library staff for the researchers. According to the large majority of the researchers representing 56% feel that the library staff is highly cooperative. Another segment of researchers representing 39.5% opine that the library staff is cooperative and the performance of the librarians is satisfactory. Only a negligible percentage of 0.5% of the researchers have expressed that the staff not at all cooperative. From this it is clear that an over whelming majority of the researchers are happy about the performance of the library staff and they need to be congratulated on their performance.

Table 8

Researchers on the Need of Orientation (OP) / Training

Sl. No.	Need for OP/Training	Research Supervisors		Research Scholars		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Strongly agree	159	46.8	345	37.1	504	42.0
2	Agree	158	46.5	499	53.7	657	50.1
3	Agree to a little extent	18	5.2	79	8.5	97	6.8
4	Disagree	5	1.5	7	0.8	12	1.1

Table 8 depicts the training / orientation needs of the researchers. A large majority comprising of 92.1% opine that they need training to effectively make use of the facilities and services of the regional libraries. Orientation as to the availability and facilities extended by the regional libraries needs to be provided to the researchers who are the external members of the library. This is the basic necessity to avail facilities under resource sharing programmes.

Table 9

Research Scholars and Research Supervisors on Knowledge of GL of RL

S. No.	Response	Scholars		Supervisors	
		Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
01	Positive	46.8%	32.3%	48.5%	35.6%
02	Negative	53.2%	67.7%	51.5%	64.4%
	Total	667 (100%)	263 (100%)	295 (100%)	45 (100%)

Table 9 shows gender-wise response of research supervisors and research scholars on the knowledge of GL collections available in the holdings of the regional libraries. Majority of the researchers are unaware of the collections of the regional libraries. Among the female research scholars 67.7% have no knowledge of the regional library collections. Among the research supervisors 64.4% do not know the collection of GL of regional libraries. Female researchers find it difficult to travel long distance to visit regional libraries where GL collections are strong. Secondly, the timings of a large majority of the regional libraries are not convenient for them. Therefore, it is recommended to keep open the libraries for longer hours and also digitize the useful GL and provide on line access. VTU has to initiate steps in this direction on top priority so as to share the resources available in the regional library holdings.

Table 10

Demand for Notifying New Arrivals of GL on the Website

Sl. No.	Category of GL	Positive Responses in Percentage		
		Research Supervisors	Research Scholars	Total
1	Theses	93.2%	93.5%	93.4%
2	Dissertations	92.1%	91.2%	91.6%
3	Inst. publications	86.5%	86.7%	86.6%
4	Trade literature	85.0 %	85.9%	85.5%
5	Technical reports	91.8%	92.8%	92.3%
6	Proceedings of CSW	93.8%	92.4%	93.1%
	Average percentage	90.4%	90.4%	90.4%

Table 10 furnishes the opinion of researchers on notifying the new arrivals of GL on the institution websites. An overwhelming majority of researchers representing 90.4% subscribes to the view that new arrivals of GL be brought to the attention. This presupposes that the researchers of the engineering institutions are highly in need of getting required current information on the web. Hence, it is high time that important information resources that are in great demand be digitized creating institutional repository and provide remote access for research.

Findings and Recommendations

- Active users of regional libraries (RL) stands at 37.35%.
- Theses, technical. reports and proceedings of CSW are used to a greater extent.
- Performance of library staff is appreciated at large.
- Large percentage of female researchers is unaware of the GL collections of the regional libraries.
- Immediate need of creating Institutional Repository is noticed.
- Lower dependency of librarians on RL is depicted.
- Orientation Programme has to be conducted for researchers on facilities and services of regional libraries.
- Notify the new arrivals of GL on the institution web sites.
- Libraries have to be kept open on weekends to facilitate research
- Steps need to be initiated to up-date GL collections in the libraries.

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