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Awareness, Acceptance, Observations and Competency towards E-books Among University Library Staff: A Survey

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Abstract:

Adoption of e-books in university libraries has become the need of the day as no library can fulfill all the increasing requirements of their users only with the printed books. Though the movement away from the printed books towards e-books is not possible at present in the traditional university libraries in India; it can be the movement e-books along with the printed books. When we compare the usage of e-books India with the developed foreign countries, we find there is a big difference. E-books have many advantages over printed books. Some of them are many users can use them at the same time; no need of going in the library to issue or return the e-books, users can issue costly or reference e-books also; no physical space of stack is required to keep them; no threat of theft and damage of e-books etc. Users from traditional universities should get orientation and training of using e-books is necessary. And at the same time the library staff which is directly in contact with the users should know, aware and competent enough to give the electronic services to the users. Ultimately getting the relevant information in least efforts is the requirement of users and user satisfaction is the ultimate aim of any library. This paper focuses the idea that not only the higher level staff in the library but also the end staff who deals with the users should be aware and competent towards e-books.

Keywords: Electronic resources, University library, Library staff.

Introduction:

Libraries and Information centers are service organizations provide ground for formal and informal education. Librarianship is the profession of achieving skills for data, information and knowledge communication. Communication is the essence of human development since the existence of human being on the earth. There are three pillars on which library system stands; they are information resources, library staff and users. Library staff acts as the mediator between users and information resources. Many times it has been observed that library staff is not well

acquainted with the changing scenario in the library. This includes the information technology skills, switching from traditional resources to newly developed digital resources.

Libraries get easily switched from print journals to e-journals. But libraries are lacking behind in the acceptance of e-books. One of the reasons for this is unawareness of library staff, unwillingness of the staff to acquire new technology or passive attitude of the parent organization towards the training of the staff which result into incompetent staff. E-books and e-resources are emerging culture in all types of libraries. Academic libraries are not exception to this phenomenon. University libraries provide leadership to all other academic libraries. Even though University Library is procuring electronic books (e-books) it seems that e-books are not get utilized as they are expected. One of the reason for less usage is the library staff is unaware about e-books and its usage. Three main things in library are users, staff and knowledge resources. Library staff acts as the communicator between users and the knowledge resources. The balance among all these three components leads to the success.

Review of Literature:

Tripathi, M., and Jeevan, V. K. J. (2008) point out that the e-book subscriptions at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Library, New Delhi, India, and explains the many publishers and vendors of e-books, collections, costing models, use, practicality, and other main features of various encloses. It emphasizes the problems to rise above in alleviating e-book solutions for libraries, especially libraries controlling for the advantages of off-campus users. He also believed that the aspects and policies of e-book collection development and usage which must be adopted by libraries.

Vasileiou, et.al (2012) analyzed the E-book management in academic libraries and a structure of the steps in the e-book organization process is created; the structure reviews the key performance and related issues and problems for each step. The connections that they create with e-book sellers and the decision of some of the problems that they recently face in administration their collections of e-books, will have important cost for the approval of e-books in knowledge.

Aims and Objectives:

- To establish whether library staff is aware and competent about e-books;
- To study the problems library staff is facing about use of e-books;
- To recommend solutions on the problems of library staff about e-books.

Scope:

The population for this survey is the library staff working in Jayakar Library, Savitribai Phule Pune University.

Hypothesis:

E-books are less used by the users in Jayakar Library, Savitribai Phule Pune University.

Research Methodology:

Descriptive Research Methodology is used to study the awareness of library staff. Survey technique of Descriptive Research Methodology is used to get quantitative data. Questionnaire tool is used for data collection from the library staff.

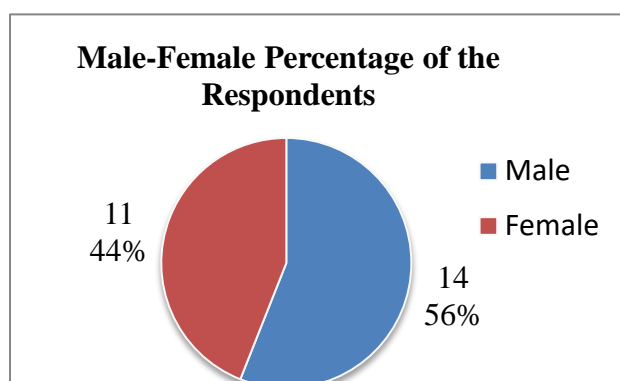
Sampling:

Questionnaire is distributed to all the professional (Technical) Jayakar Library staff. Hence 100% population is taken into consideration.

Background Context:

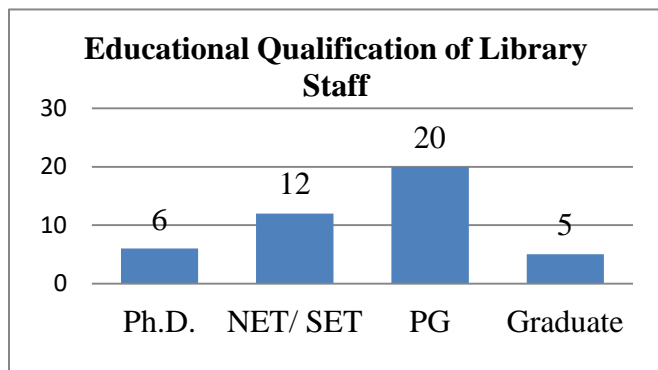
Savitribai Phule Pune University is one of the leading universities in India, Popularly known as ‘Oxford of the East’, established in 1949. The university has got A+ grade from NAAC. The central library Jayakar Library of the university named in honor of the first Vice-Chancellor of University of Pune Dr. M. R. Jayakar. Jayakar Library is established in the year 1950. The total collection of Jayakar Library is around 5,00,000 which mainly includes books, e-books, bound volumes of periodicals and thesis. Library is subscribing 17,000 online and 210 print periodicals and 13 databases. At present, the total library staff is 35, of which 25 are the library professionals. The library has purchased more than 8600 e-books till date which is a good number as compared to other statutory traditional universities in Maharashtra. More than 3000 users take membership of Jayakar Library every year. Still it is observed that the usage of e-books is not as expected and as per the expenses on the e-books. There are many reasons for the less or no usage of e-books. The reasons can be stated as non-availability of e-books in many subjects; users’ unawareness, library staff’s unawareness; old habits of users of reading printed books and so on. One of the major reasons for the fact is unawareness and lack of competence about e-books among the library staff. This research is undertaken to find out the awareness, acceptance and competency of library staff towards e-books.

The Survey Analysis:



Questionnaire is distributed to the professional (Technical) Jayakar Library staff, which includes Deputy Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Technical Assistants and Library Attendants. They are 25 in all. All of them filled the questionnaire. Thus the percentage of filled questionnaires is 100%

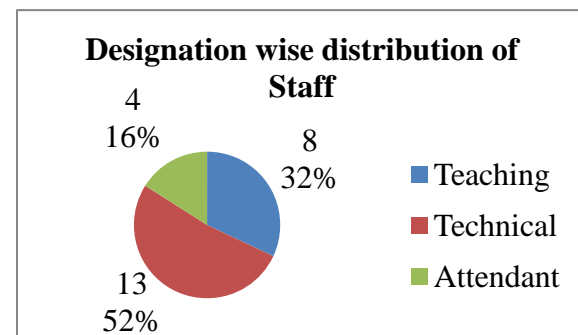
The male female percentage of the staff is 56 and 44 respectively.



Question regarding educational qualification is asked. Out of 25 staff 6 are Ph.D. degree holder, 12 are NET/SET or both qualified, 20 are postgraduate and 5 staff members are graduate. This shows that library staff members are qualified enough to acquire

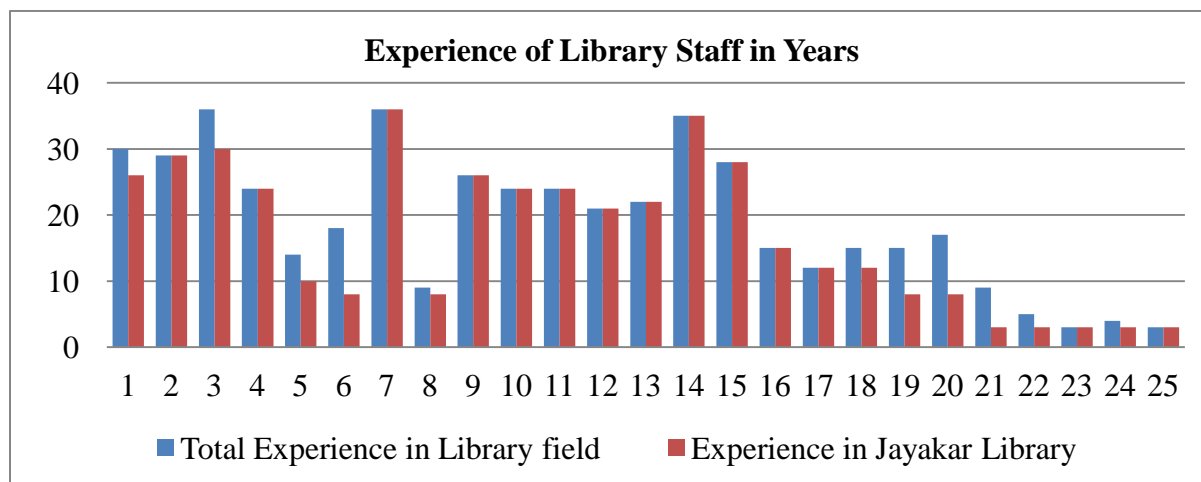
new technology of e-books.

52% of the total staff is technical staff, 32% staff is having assistant librarian or deputy librarian designation and 16 % staff is library attendant. This shows that more than half staff is technical assistant and highly qualified.

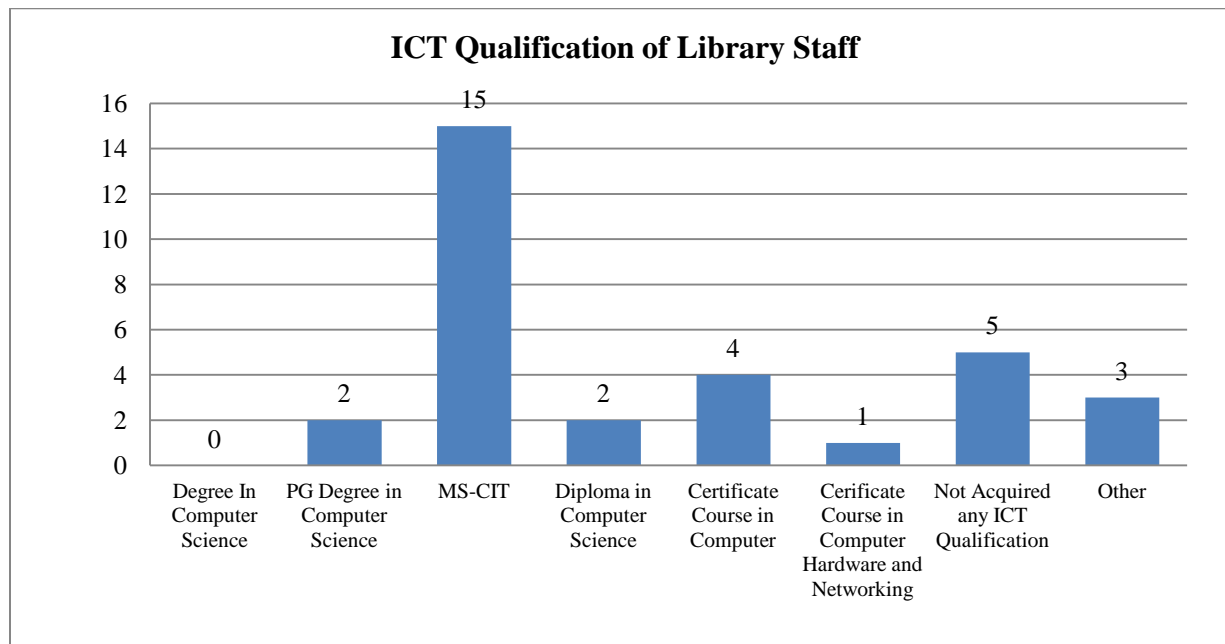


Age group of this staff shows that almost 50%

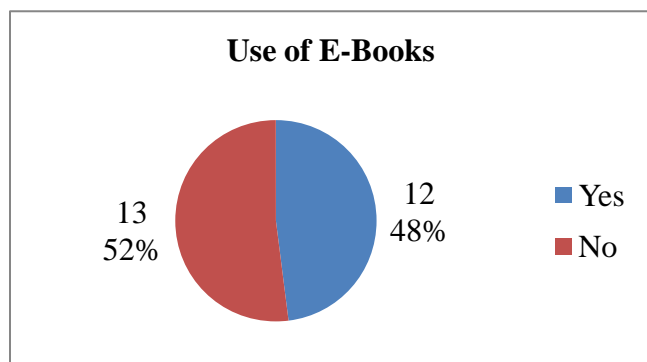
staff is from the age group 46 to 55, 25% staff is between the age 36 to 45, 15% staff is between the age 26 to 35 and only 10% staff is between 56 to 60. This shows that the staff going to retire within 5 years is very less and most of the staff will be there in service for next 10 to 20 years.



The graph shows that most of the library staff's total experience and experience in Jayakar Library is same or almost same. This means, the staff is working in Jayakar library since their very early career. This is the strength of Jayakar Library that the staff being here for many years, they know the library thoroughly. At the same time the parent organization should give trainings to the staff as the staff is going to use the acquired skills in the library and for the library.



As computer course MS-CIT is made compulsory for technical staff by government, most of the staff (60%) has completed MS-CIT course and get good grades in it. Deputy librarian, Assistant librarians are also IT literate with PG degree or Diploma or certificate course in IT. Some of the senior technical staff (20%) has not acquired any ICT qualification. 12% library staff has acquired other degrees than the above mentioned. This shows that library staff is capable enough to learn the ICT technology which is necessary for e-books handling.



52% staff members do not use e-books for themselves while 48 % staff uses e-books for their personal reading needs.

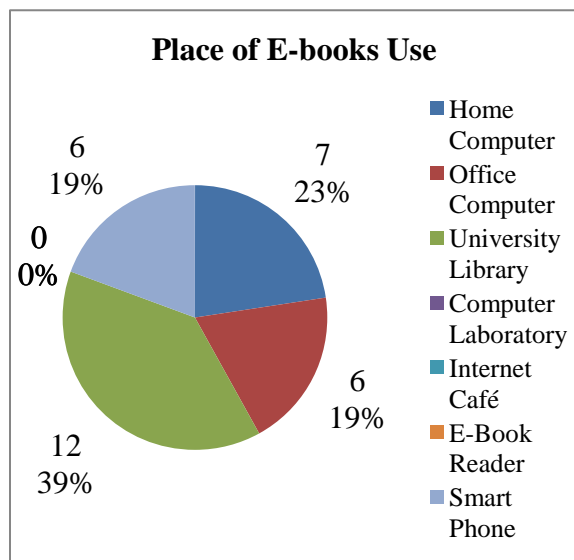
The main purpose of using e-books is finding information on certain topic and discipline for their own studies. No staff member uses e-book on the non-availability of print book. Only 5% staff members use e-books for specific title of their interest on

their reading list. All the staff members who use free e-books available on internet and paid or subscribed e-books purchased by the university library. 52% library staff do not read e-books at all, while 20% staff uses e-books occasionally; 20% staff uses e-books often and 8% staff uses e-books very rarely.

All 100% library staff members are aware that there are e-books in the library.

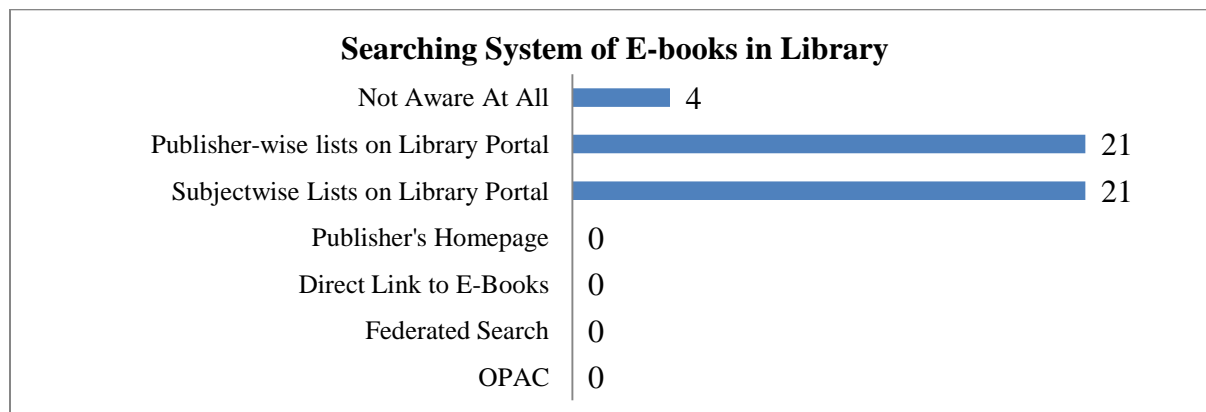
60% of the library staff knows that there are four types of e-books available in the library. They are Free (Open) e-books, Purchased e-books, Scanned E-books and E-books in databases. 20%

library staff does not aware that there are scanned e-books as well and 20 % library staff does not aware that there are e-books in the databases also.



23% library staff uses computer at their home to use e-books; 19% library staff uses office computer to use e-books; 39 % staff uses university library to read e-books; no staff uses internet café, e-book reader and computer laboratory to read e-books while 19% staff uses smart phone to read e-books.

All that is 100% library staff is aware that there is a separate section in the library for e-book reading. It is the internet center of the library where users can use computers to read and download e-journals and e-books. Printers are available in this section along with the computers.

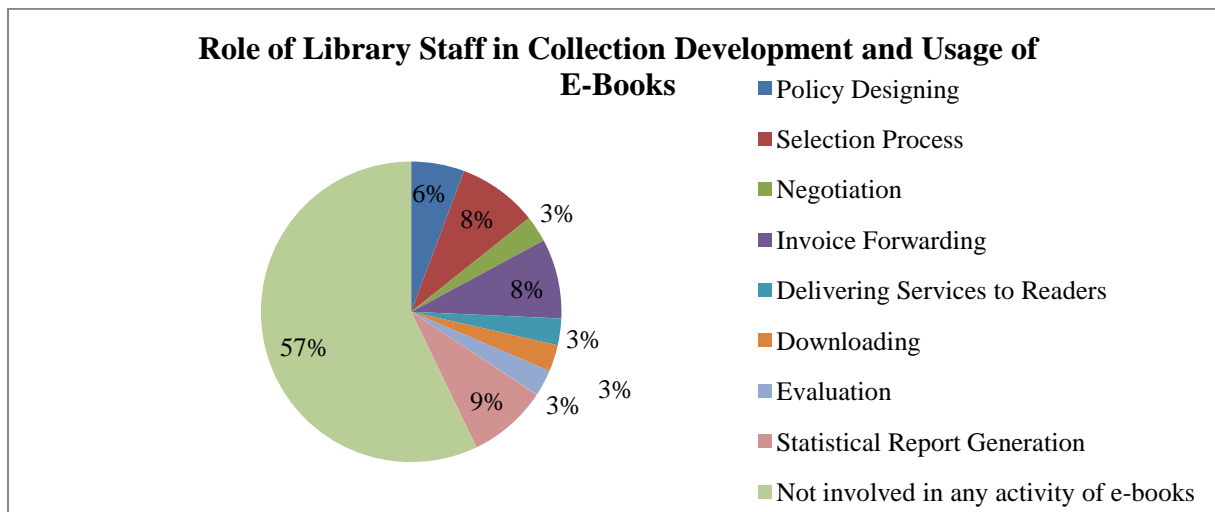


84% library staff is aware that E-books can be searched publisher-wise and subject-wise as these lists are on the library portal. 16% staff is not aware at all about how to search e-books. The effective method of e-books searching is federated search and library OPAC. But these search facilities are not available to search e-books though these are available for e-sources other than e-books. In OPAC direct links to the e-books also can be given to increase the use of e-books.

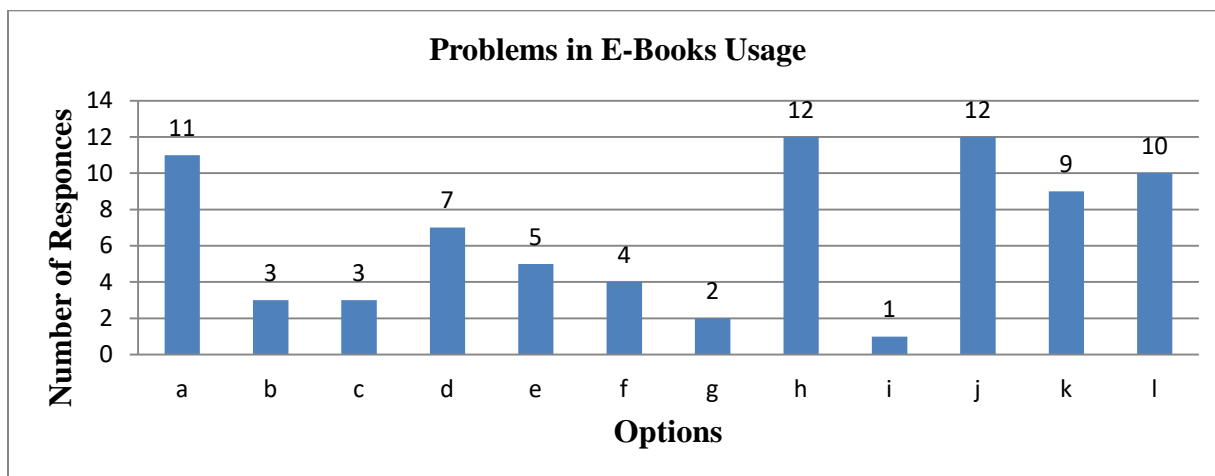
The question regarding the role of library staff in the collection development and usage of e-books is asked. The results of the responses are as shown in the below pie chart.

57% library staff is not being involved in collection development and usage of e-books. The staff which is involved in the processes of selection, negotiation, policy designing, invoices forwarding are the staff working in acquisition section only. The staff which is working in reference section, circulation section, internet section who are always in the directly with the

users of library are not aware of any of these processes. They are supposed to aware and competent enough in e-books handling, downloading, delivering services to readers, evaluation of services and circulation of e-books. The technical staff is found not at aware of any of these processes regarding e-books.



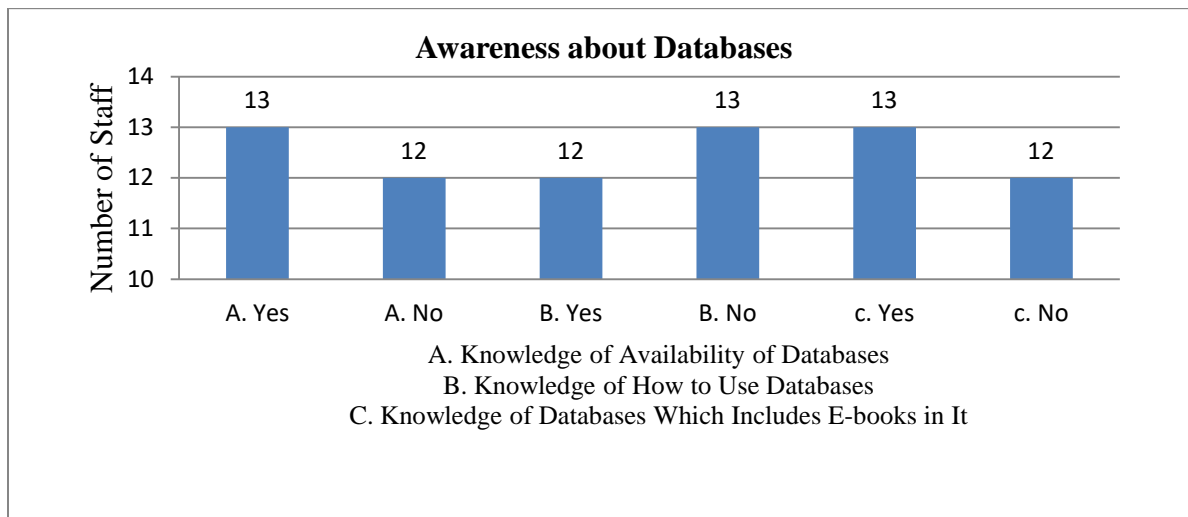
The question about the problems library staff is facing regarding e-books is asked.



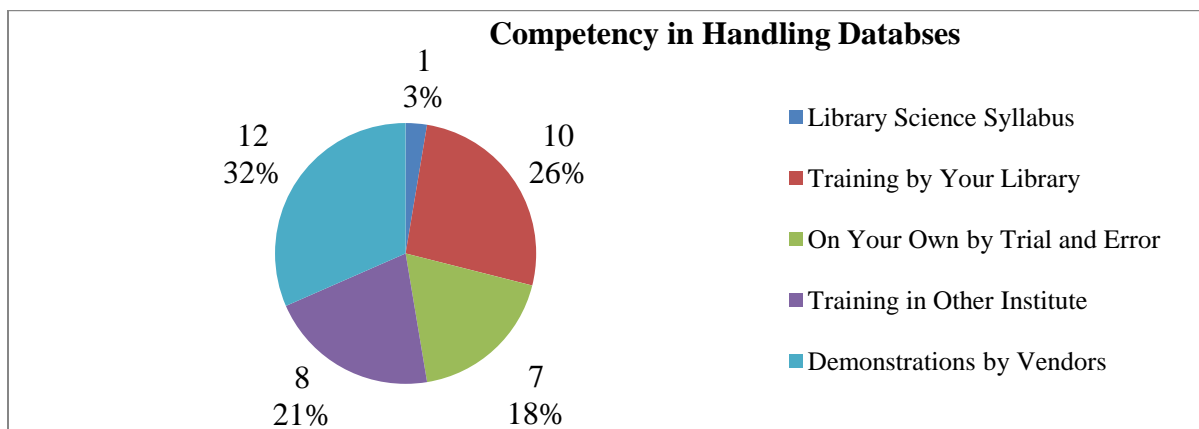
Almost 50% library staff is not aware of any problem regarding e-books. The staff working in acquisition section (12%) is aware about the problems of authentic price proofs are not available; duplication checking is difficult; duplication occurs many times when e-books modules are purchased and availability of e-books is not equal in all subjects. Only one staff (4%) claims that there are limitations on downloading. But in fact this is not true in case of Jayakar Library’s e-books, as all the e-books purchased till date are on perpetual basis and there is not any limitation on downloading or printed of pages of these e-books. 16% staff selected the option format of e-books is not user friendly; 8% staff selected the option that quality of content

in e-books is not good; almost 50 % staff agrees that searching e-books in the collection is difficult; 50 % staff says that graphics, tables and figures are not good; 36% staff is of the opinion that they themselves cannot generate usage statistics and 40 % staff says that only one click on the e-book is counted as use in the usage statistics given by the publisher.

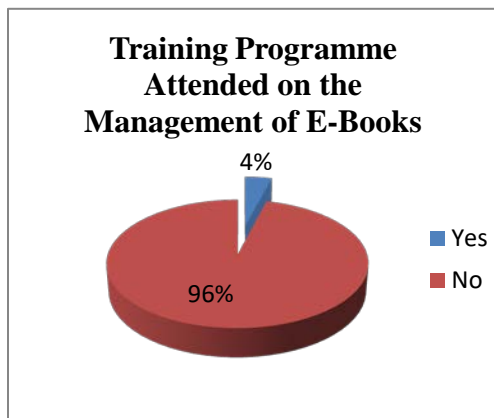
It means users' and library staff's unawareness is the major problem in the less usage of e-books in the library. Though it's a truth that e-books are less used, publisher's statistics about the usage are totally different as only click on the e-book is counted as the usage which is not always true.



52% staff does not know which databases are available in the library. 48% staff is aware about the availability of databases. 48% staff knows how to use the databases while 52 % staff does not know about how to use databases. 52% staff knows that some databases also includes e-books in it, but only some of them are competent to use these e-books; while 48% staff does not know the databases which includes e-books. These figures show that the awareness and competency is low in the usage of e-books.

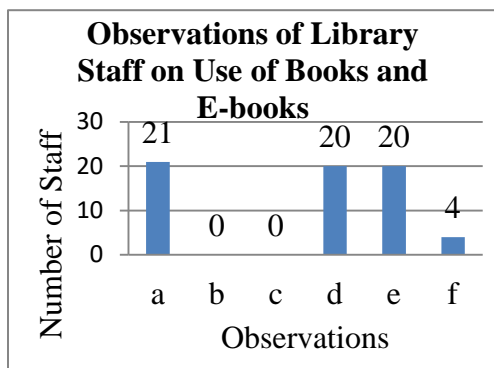


Those who are aware and can use the databases are asked from where they learned about the databases and how to use them. Only 3 % staff claims that library science syllabus helps him to be competent in databases using. 26 % library staff states that their library has arranged training for them; 18 % staff says that they learn to use and handle databases on their own by trial and error method; 21 % staff attended the trainings arranged by other institutes to learn about databases and 32% staff learned the database handling by attending the trainings and demonstrations arranged by the vendors.



Only one (4%) staff has attended training program on management of e-books. He has attended total three trainings on e-resources management arranged by INFLITNET NISCAIR and IISc Bangalore of 1 month each; out of these one training was on management of e-books in libraries. The charges to attend these trainings are paid by the parent organization. 96% staff has not attended any training on e-books management. 40% of them only attended demonstrations given by e-books vendors, but this was not the hands on training and

library staff who attended this feels that this was not sufficient for competency in e-books handling and giving services. As e-books in this university library is new concept for staff as well as users, there should be more trainings for staff. This will cause into good increase in e-books usage.



Almost 80% library staff agrees that users are not aware of availability of e-books in library; so they use printed books more than e-books. This is resulting into a very less usage of e-books. 20% library staff does not comment anything on this question as they are not much aware about e-books and their usage. No staff observed that usage of e-books is more than printed books and users use both printed as well as e-books. Still 76% staff says that they face queries regarding e-books while only

24% staff says that they do not face any query regarding e-books.

It is observed that the staff which is not directly in contact with the staff members e.g. staff working in acquisition section, classification and cataloging section do not face any queries about e-books. But the staff working in circulation section, periodical section is facing queries from users regarding e-books. This shows users are ready to use e-books but some guidelines are necessary. And the fact is that the staff which is facing queries is not much aware about e-books; while the staff which is actually dealing with the e-books is not aware of the queries of the users. The staff agrees on all the options given about questions asked by the users. These questions include how to search e-books; how to copy/ print/ save/ e-mail e-book; which e-books are

available in the library; are e-books searchable on OPAC; do they need to pay extra charges to use e-books. This shows the library staff agrees that users have very basic question in their mind regarding use of e-books. If they get answers of their questions, they will certainly use e-books but staff should be aware and competent enough to answer their queries.

Some questions regarding orientation of students are asked to library staff. From the answers given by the library staff, the following information is collected. The staff says that the students get orientation once at the beginning of every year. And there are 25 to 50 or more than 50 students of one class in each orientation group. Mostly assistant librarians, reference librarian, technical assistants and sometimes deputy librarian give information about library to students in the orientation session. This information includes the oral information about library; sometimes power point presentation is also given; how to search books on OPAC is told; arrangement of the printed books on the shelves is shown to the students; detailed information about how to use printed resources is given but at the same time less emphasis is given on e-resources and specially e-books. The staff states that the information given in the orientation is not sufficient to use e-books.

The staff is further asked which points do you think should get included in orientation regarding use of e-books? 6 options were given to answer this question. All that is 100% staff agrees on inclusion of all the six points regarding e-books in the orientation. These are Power point presentation along with the oral information should be given; Legal aspects and rules and regulations regarding use of e-books should be told; hands on training on how to use, copy, download, share, print e-books should be given; frequent e-mails should be sent to users and staff about newly purchased e-books; library staff and users should be invited to attend demonstrations by e-books vendors.

The question do you think use of e-books should get increased was asked. All 100% staff is of the opinion that the use of e-books should get increase. To increase the use the staff expecting:

- a) to get themselves involved by the higher authority in all stages of e-books processes;
- b) training should be given to the staff so that they can give services to end-user;
- c) basic knowledge about ICT should be given to staff in house and in other institutions;
- d) the library staff who serves end-user should be well trained and well acquainted to the available e-books and its features.

Conclusion:

Though e-books have been in existence for almost two decades, they are not get utilized in traditional universities as compared to other electronic resources. Many reasons are being told for this starting from e-books are not user friendly and users still love printed form only. But if this is the case, we wouldn't observe the use of e-journals has increased many hundred times over the print journals. In future e-books will be used in many forms. Through orientation of users and competency of library staff of handling e-books and availability of good number of e-books in all subjects are the necessary basic things should be done. Staff is now aware about the

availability of e-books and they have accepted the arrival of e-books. But at the same time they wish to get training to deliver good services to the users.

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