



## Best LIS Services Attract The Library Users In Post Covid Era: A Case Study

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### Abstract

The standard for assessing the quality of library services needs to be updated. Library support for differently able students needs to be provided. Students should be able to access the internet in the library. In the recent past significant developments have been reported in library and information services and the libraries are shouldering newer responsibilities in higher education. Users want comfortable seating in the library. Users are happy if they are allowed to use technical gadgets in the library. Assessment of the quality of library services should better be based on the user's judgment or operation. The college library is expected to be a place for quiet study and research, where information materials are daily collected and organized for all library users. Due to the NAAC process a lot of positive changes are happening in the library to maintain the quality standard. A study was conducted at Maharshi Dayanand College, Mumbai library to know the users perception about infrastructure and innovative services and find out the reason for declining readers in the library in the post covid era.

**Keywords:** *Library - Infrastructure; NAAC library standards; Library innovative services*

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### Introduction

It's a tough task for libraries and librarians to get the users back to the library after two years of gap. Libraries were closed physically for almost 20 months from March 2020 to Oct 2021. During that time libraries started giving online services to the users, however, physical books were untouched by the users completely due to Covid -19 spreading all over the globe. Government college libraries do not have enough funds/budget to cope up with the e resources. During the year 2020-21 the government had already curtailed the infrastructure fees for the students, due to lockdown, they should be trained online only. Libraries in the Indian scenario were not really ready for the online services. Slowly librarians trained themselves and started giving online library services, except for the issue of physical books.

Many colleges have changed library furniture and building structure and introduced some innovative services, as per NAAC standard.

Lot of changes has come after the NAAC assessment is mandatory for the academic institutions. NAAC has given weight age to infrastructure and learning resources in criteria IV. Before,

NAAC libraries were not in good condition in terms of infrastructure, especially in government college libraries. Library facility has 20 marks out of 1000, however, library facility reflects in each criterion indirectly. Research which comes under criteria III is incomplete without the usage of library resources and services.

The percentage maintenance expenditure of the total budget shall be at least 4%. All the facilities have to be maintained well to create an ambience for teaching & learning. NAAC has also given importance to facilities provided to students with special needs. The growth of infrastructure shall keep pace with the academic growth of the institutions.

Criteria IV seeks to elicit data on the adequacy and optimal use of the facilities available in an institution to maintain the quality of academic and other programmes on the campus. NAAC expects sustainable good practice for adequate infrastructure and learning resources and its optimal use. Ministry of human resource development has stressed the importance of equipping HEIs with adequate ICT infrastructure for quality higher education

(Verghese, 2020) The library should have an approved policy on the collection development support, introduction of new innovative services, support in terms of fund, annual increase of budget, binding procedure, removal of obsolete books and policy on loss of books and an ongoing commitment of the institution in deputing library professionals for continuing and further education.

(Verghese, 2020) as per NAAC the benchmarks for the library are mentioned as below -

Sophisticated instruments are procured from time to time.

- All equipments are well maintenance
- Utilization rate >50%
- No. of books / students = 10-15
- Total no. of books >1 lakh
- No. of journals subscribes >10
- No. of books added / yr >100 cost 3-5 lakhs
- No. of hours library is open >8 hrs
- Use of Library >50%
- Computerization of library & information services - Fully computerized
- Adequate reprographic facilities
- Computer availability to the students 1:10
- Computer maintenance -AMC
- No. of students making use of internet facility 50-100%
- No of teaching staff making use of computers and internet 100%
- Library support for differently-abled students (books in braille, audio facilities, font size enlargement facility on computers, special ergonomically suitable chairs, wheelchairs, elevators and such other facilities) needs to be provided.

### **Reasons for not coming to the library in post covid era [Students]**

- Online content is available and students are fully dependent on online resources provided by the teachers.
- Teachers are providing pdf files, ppts etc through google classroom.
- Question bank of MCQs distributed to the students for practice for mock tests.
- Students find it very easy to pass the exam with a high score.
- Teachers also get the pdf file of textbooks and pass on to the students as a screen shot of the chapters.
- Library is also providing a lot of online resources which students feel that this material is enough to pass the exams.
- Library provided online library orientation and all the relevant documents, manuals, handouts, etc put on the library website.
- Users think that when everything is available online why should we go to the library now.
- This feeling distracts the students going to the library.

#### **Reasons for not coming to the library in post covid era [Teachers]**

- They get the material by the publisher
- They prepare notes and circulate to the students via google classroom
- They prepare question banks and share the study material on their youtube channel or on institution websites.
- They get e-newspaper on WhatsApp group

The library occupies a central and primary position in the college because it performs all the functions of the college such as teaching, research, and creation of new knowledge and transmission of information to the users. The primary function of an academic library is to fulfill the information needs of the instructional programmes of its institution and research needs of students, faculty, and members of staff of the academic community.

The library is one of the instruments needed for the improvement of educational standards and the key to national development. Information and resources are necessary ingredients for rapid university growth and attainment of its set goals to the users, therefore, librarians must broaden their concept by accepting the fact that their services should be for all users of the library. Quality and efficient library services encourage the user in feedback and participation, design and implementation, and development of trust to meet their expected desires. The user perceptions of a library service have the ability to evolve and improve rapidly on educational activities. The user of a library service is a participant, co-operator, builder and consultant whether the product is vital or physical.

Technology and automation have also changed the way people perceive libraries. As a result, the roles of libraries and librarians themselves have been re-evaluating their role as reflected in many literatures. They emphasize the provision of good and quality services as more important to the user than mere physical library building. Accessing service quality is therefore the first step in retaining users in today's competitive environment. When library users are perceived with

a variety of alternative channels of information delivery, many of which are more convenient and can compete on cost, libraries need to re-examine the range and quality of service they provide and develop systems for consultation and cooperation with their users' needs and user expectations to the highest degree just to retain them.

(Umoh & Abua, 2020) Library environment could affect users, staff and library resources in the absence of light, ventilation, temperature, and humidity control, layout of stack, convenience and adequate space. For a user to benefit from the services rendered by the college library, these environmental factors must be put on check. In addition, other measures like noise control, padded chairs and air conditions are usually provided to encourage use of libraries.

## Review of literature

Ehigiafor (2002) posits that as a resources center, the library occupies the central and primary place because it serves all the functions of teaching, learning and research, the creation of new knowledge and the transmission of posterity of the learning and culture of the present and future generation.

According to Ujuanbi (2005) well stocked and efficient libraries act as pathfinders for researchers and provide them with the impetus to sufficient knowledge of the information needs of users.

Similarly, Ahidzu (2003) documented services designed and rendered by a university library to meet the need of its peculiar environments and audience which invariably includes students and other users such as academic and non-academic staff as well as a professional living within the university's catchments area.

Busayo (2003) sees the use of library as and its perception of the services provided as a requisite for all freshmen (undergraduates).

Elaturoni (2000) stated that no single library, no matter the largeness of its information resources, can be rich enough to provide all the resources relevant to the information needs of its users. Hence the relevance of inter-library loan and other resource-sharing programmes may be needed in libraries.

## Objective of the study

- To know the user perception of library services in post covid era
- Find out the reason why users are not interested to come back to the library
- To know whether the library actually meets the need of the users

## Scope & Limitations:

This study is conducted only to know the perception of the users towards innovative services and infrastructural facilities. General services and facilities are not considered under the study. All the innovative facilities are not at present available in the library. Study will give layout of better service requirements in coming days, so that management can give the priority to learning resource center.

## Methodology

The survey research technique was adopted for this work and research design is a case study. The research instrument is the questionnaire supported by documentary sources. This method was chosen because of its economy of use and it requires less time and effort in administration. It also presents ideas, opinions and copies of well structured questionnaires were used for the work and they were self administered by the researcher with the assistance of some library workers. The essence was to ensure high response rate and to explain certain items of the instruments to the respondents where the need arose. Another procedure for data collection was the interview method, primary and secondary sources, as well as the researcher's personal observation technique. Data collected between 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## Results and Discussions

Table 1: Categories of users Responded

Status	Responses received	Percentage
Junior level	200	36.23
UG	120	21.74
PG	75	13.6
Faculty	45	8.15
Self Financing students	100	18.11
Research Scholars	12	2.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>100%</b>

The respondents were carefully selected by a random sampling method to ensure that all categories of users were fully represented in the sampling size. Sample sizes of 552 users ranging from junior level to research students participated in the study. Maximum are junior level students and Undergraduate students.

Table 2 Frequency of library users

Frequency of Library visits	No of respondents	percentage
Frequently	295	53.44
Occasionally	95	17.21
Daily	87	15.77
Rarely	75	13.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 show the frequency of library use by the respondents. From the table, as many as 552 users representing 53.44% used the library frequently; 95 (17.21%) visited the library for their academic works occasionally; 15.77% said they used the library daily. 13.58% rarely use the library services.

Table 3 is to find out the user perception about innovative services in the library. What type of Library services users want in the post covid era.

**Table 3 : User's perception to innovative services**

SA =Strongly Agree ; A=Agree; N=Neutral; DA=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

Type of innovative services	SA	A	N	DA	SD
Internet section	502 (90.95)	50 (9.05)			
Free Wi-Fi	418 (75.72)	102 (18.47)	2 (0.36)		
Laptop allowed	345 (62.50)	175 (31.70)	2 (0.36)	30 (5.43)	
Mobile usage allowed	448 (81.15)	81 (5.52)		23 (4.16)	
Makers Space	186 (33.69)	235 (42.57)	75 (13.58)	56 (10.14)	
Space for group discussion required	335 (60.68)	186 (33.69)	31 (5.61)		
Separate place for researcher	246 (44.56)	225 (40.76)	81 (14.67)		
Online reservation of books	139 (25.18)	150 (27.17)	28 (5.07)	176 (31.88)	59 (10.68)
Self Check in out kiosk required	189 (34.23)	100 (18.11)	95 (17.21)	168 (30.43)	
Dynamic Library Website required	445 (80.61)	107 (19.38)			
Personalized services needed	274 (49.63)	135 (24.45)	32 (5.79)	111 (20.10)	
Web OPAC [Library Catalogue]	435 (78.80)	94 (17.02)	23 (4.16)		
Reprographic services	489 (88.58)	63 (11.41)			
Digital Display	284 (51.44)	193 (34.96)	28 (5.07)	47 (8.51)	
Library events	357 (64.67)	195 (35.32)			

Almost all the users required internet service in the library. 418 (75.72%) users want free wi-fi in the library. 345 (62.50%) respondents want to use laptops in the library, where they get free wi-fi also. During covid due to online classes and exams users are addicted to smartphones and now they (81.15%) want that library should allow using mobile devices inside the library.

445 (80.61%) & 107 (19.38%) respondents required a dynamic library website, so that they can be well informed about the library activities, services & events well in time. Data indicates that users are looking for innovative services in the library. If the library provides them, they will definitely come back to the library in large numbers.

**Table 4 indicates the perception levels of infrastructure of the library.**

359 (65.03%) & 193 (34.96%) respondents strongly agree and agree to Good Ambience appeals to attract the users. Maximum users strongly agree and agree to all the infrastructural facilities in the library. 98.73% (545) users give weight age to hygiene especially after Covid. 284 (51.44%) needs AC in the library. 469 (469 respondents give value to effective signage in the library.

**Table 4 : Users perception about library infrastructure**

SA =Strongly Agree ; A=Agree; N=Neutral; DA=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

Library Infrastructure	SA	A	N	DA	SD
Good Ambience	359 (65.03)	193 (34.96)			
Comfortable furniture	389 (70.47)	163 (29.52)			
Laptop charging point on table	345 (62.50)	175 (31.70)	2 (0.36)	30 (5.43)	
Prints from mobile required	333 (60.32)	209 (37.86)		10 (1.81)	
Space for leisure hours	275 (49.81)	202 (36.59)	8 (1.44)	67 (12.13)	
Hygienic place	545 (98.73)	7 (1.26)			
Air Condition required	284 (51.44)	256 (46.37)	12 (2.17)		
Proper ventilation	489 (88.58)	63 (11.41)			
Good lighting	476 (86.23)	62 (11.23)	14 (2.53)		
Effective signage	469 (89.85)	83 (15.03)			
Guide cards for location of books	356 (64.49)	186 (33.69)	10 (1.81)		

**Table 5 : Rating of the Library : 1 is least and 10 is the highest**

One question were asked the respondents to give the rating of the library in terms of Innovative services and Infrastructure

Benchmark	Respondents rating									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Infrastructure</b>	29 (5.25 )	58 (10.5 )	67 (12.1 3)	79 (14.3 1)	87 (15.7 6)	85 (15.3 9)	78 (14.1 3)	60 (10.8 6)	9 (1.63)	0
<b>Innovative services</b>	0	0	12 (2.17)	18 (3.26)	26 (4.71)	119 (21.5 5)	124 (22.4 6)	114 (20.6 5)	94 (17.0 2)	45 (8.15 )

In order to gather varying opinions, the respondents were asked to give ratings on infrastructure and innovative services in the library.

Information in table 5 shows that 29 respondents (5.25%) give the lowest rating in terms of infrastructure. Whereas 85(15.39%), 78 (14.13%) & 60 (10.86%) respondents gave rating to 6, 7 & 8 respectively. Only 1.63% was given a 9 rating for the infrastructure. Data shows that a lot of infrastructural changes are required to sustain quality.

Looking at the data for innovative services 119 (21.55%), 124 (22.46%) & 114 (20.65%) respondents give rating to 6, 7 & 8 respectively. 17.02% respondents give 9 ratings to innovative services provided by the library.

## Some Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Assessment of the quality of library services should better be based on the user's judgment or operation.
2. Funds should be made available to procure such facilities like air-conditions, generator, tables with laptop charging points, comfortable seats which enhance reading
3. The access points to effective delivery of service in the library should be enhanced such as adequate guiding, signposting and dynamic library website & free wi-fi with firewalls.
4. The library and the librarian should embrace modern technologies such as electric mail services, internet connectives, audio-visuals, personalized services, and need based services, services as new devices of information acquisition, organization and dissemination to information users.
5. Separate training sessions as per type of users conducted by the Librarians at regular intervals to utilize the resources optimum.



## Conclusion

The study on the user perception of the services of a college library; the case of Maharshi Dayanand College is a fact-finding research aimed at eliciting the necessary feedback from library users. From the finding of the study, one of the aspirations of college libraries is to satisfy the information needs of the user up to some extent. Thus, user perception towards innovative services can be measured by such parameters as Free Wi-Fi, allowed to use Laptop and mobile in the library, and need of maker's space. The finding of this study will definitely act as a guide to the management of Maharshi Dayanand College in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of its services and improve the infrastructural facilities for the users. Users want a good ambience in the library that attracts them to sit longer hours in the library premises.

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