

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF GOVERNMENT FIRST-GRADE COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT -

The present study was envisaged to evaluate the status of the Government First Grade College libraries in the state of Karnataka. The college library manual was used to examine the status of libraries' staffing patterns, the proportion of grants, building space, furniture and ICT equipment, services, and library automation. A survey method with a quantitative approach was used and the data was collected using a questionnaire tool. A total of 249 filled-in copies of the questionnaires were obtained showing a response rate of 89.56%. The MS Excel and SPSS packages were used to process, tabulate, and validate the data collected. Inadequate support staff, lack of space, insufficient grants, poor collection, and lack of furniture and equipment were found in most of the GFGC libraries of Karnataka state. The investigator recommends that governing bodies should appoint full-time librarians, and free up library grants for ICT implementation. The libraries already automated with proprietary software should migrate to open-source software. The study implies that there is a need to network all government and private-aided college libraries for common use to provide access to the resources of individual libraries and improve resource utilization. Participation in networking will benefit libraries in overcoming the problem of rising prices of information resources and insufficient library budgets.

Keywords: College library, Library building, Library space, Library collection, Library grants, Library services, ICT equipment.

INTRODUCTION

Information is the key component of any type of research and a fundamental resource that is essential for development in the competitive and connected world (Krolak, 2006). The library plays a crucial role in the scholarly world by providing access to information as well as stimulating research and advancement in the country (Chiware, 2010). The primary philosophy of any library is to serve quality information resources and services to its users (Adeoye & Popoola, 2011).

Library and information professionals have to address these tech-savvy library users' needs and align their services to satisfy them (Keralapura, 2009). The invention of the computer has transformed almost every aspect of its services, resulting in automation of library barcoding, OPAC, remote access, digitization, digital libraries, etc. (Onuoha & Obialor, 2015). Utilization of Information Technology in libraries offers ease in operating different library activities and avoids repetition of efforts, increasing the range of services. (Jantz, 2012). It can be successfully implemented when adequate trained staff available (Vijayakumar & Vijayan, 2011). Library facilities include furniture to accommodate users, library space, fans, lighting, ventilation, restaurant, location of the exit point, notice board/bulletin, photocopy facilities, computers, carrels, racks, circulation desks, and other facilities that provide comfort to users (Abdulahi et al., 2020). One of the serious issues that have bothered librarians from the earliest times to the present is ensuring the security of library materials which has become easy by using modern ICT equipment (Osayande, 2011). It is pertinent for the library staff to work in the direction of providing adequate information resources that will satisfy the library users (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018). This study is confined to assess the current state of the art of the Government First Grade College (GFGC) libraries bounded to the Departments Collegiate Education (DCE), Gov't of Karnataka. The DCE published a College Library Manual for the improvement and development of libraries of GFGCs in Karnataka. However, previous studies reported that the GFGC libraries in Karnataka are in a prevailing situation and are far from satisfactory.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Fulfilling user needs is an important aspect of library management (Kaur et al., 2006). Regular evaluation of user needs against existing services and the library collection is a management technique for upgrading the facilities and services. (Yemi-Peters et al., 2013). A library with well-organized facilities encourages users to locate and borrow physically available resources. A study by Akakandelwa in 2016 examined the challenges of academic libraries in Africa and states that academic libraries are confronted with chronic financial problems, inadequate infrastructure, and poor internet usage. A study by Wilders, in 2017 found that the majority of students consider textbooks as the most important library materials, while the teachers consider current journals as the most important. Ranganathan & Babu, in 2012 concluded that the majority of students opined that their library has adequate resources for their use and are satisfied to a large extent the digital information sources. Gunasekera, in 2010 found that most students consider reference materials as the most important source of information followed by the internet and textbooks. In 2011, Israel stated that the majority of the library users suggested improvement in the lending collection, reference collection, journal collection, and IT facilities, while the academic staff has a strong appeal for improvement in the journal collection. A study by Akobundu in 2008 revealed that information resources are not easily accessible to users due to conditions such as indexing and cataloging tools, inefficient charging and discharge system, poor shelving arrangement, and administrative and physical barriers. A study by Goswami, (2021) showed that library users were satisfied with the

number of computers available for students' use and photocopy service to some extent. Different types of furniture are used in the library such as reading tables, chairs, book supporters, shelves, and circulation desk. In a study Reddy, (2015) stated that due to a mismatch of furniture design with body dimensions students faced posture-related problems during studying in the library. Thus, it is essential to make library furniture user-friendly, designing each component of furniture by considering the body dimensions of users carefully(Parvez et al., 2022). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought unprecedented changes and transformations to academic libraries and information services(Chiemeke et al., 2007). The application of barcode technology in circulation system is most successful due to its speed, accuracy, and reliability(Singh & Sharma, 2015). A study by Baby & Mathew, 2012 found that most of the libraries are using library management software such as CDS/ISIS, LIBSYS, Koha and SOUL, etc. Self-check machines that work with library magnetic strip security systems can only checkout one book at a time(Singh & Roy, 2020). The job performance of staff in an academic library is geared towards meeting not only the users' information needs but also it is the basic criteria for promoting the library services(Saka & Salman, 2014). In a study by Hussain, library users were mostly satisfied with infrastructure, followed by collection, and library services to users in that order. A study by Haliso, in 2011 revealed that, challenges of better facilities are poor funding, untrained library staff, poor facilities. However, lack of e-resources, inadequate collections, and insufficient physical facilities were identified as major issues in the effective use of library collections and

services(Khan, 2016). Ara & Ara (2015) investigated Gov't College libraries of Karnool district. The study found that 67% of libraries do not have sufficient human resources and it is needed to have modernization and more space for the stack. The most serious problem in providing better services to patrons is inadequate funding by the government and some of the parent organizations (Krubu & Osawaru, 2011). The library staff should be aware of the current requirements of their clients/users. (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018). Internet facility should be improved university library as well as the departments also for easy access(Ranganathan & Babu, 2012). The furniture should be made based on target population's anthropometric dimensions(Reddy, 2015). Library should improve the physical environment of the library especially by providing required ventilation in the stacks area while taking measures to control the noise inside the library (Sanjo&Pavithra, 2020). It is essential to conduct staff training sessions while increasing the staff for the reader service counters (Sanjo & Pavithra, 2020). The government should provide technical and human infrastructures aimed at reducing Internet access costs across the country(Chiemeke et al., 2007). The development of effective information delivery system is a key component of teaching and learning(Andrews & Eade, 2013). University librarians should experience the state-of-the-art library technology, by overcoming the conceptual difficulties to effectively support institutional planning(Tosaka & Park, 2013). Technical skills as well as traditional skills require upgradation to remove the barriers to information access(Mohsenzadeh & Isfandyari-Moghaddam, 2009). A paper by Holt (2005) reported that librarians should use key responsibilities of

library such as financial planning, cash flow, satisfactory reserves, managing the annual budget, expenditure, donor and funding, and conflicts of interests, etc. while dealing with library finances with authorities.

OBJECTIVES

The study was conducted with an aim to investigate the current status of the GFGC Libraries in Karnataka. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the availability of professional and non-professional support staff in GFGC libraries.
2. To identify the proportionate of grants sanctioned and satisfaction level among the GFGC librarians.
3. To ascertain the adequacy of library building and space, furniture, ICT equipment, and collection.
4. To examine the services and facilities offered by the GFGC libraries.
5. To identify the problems encountered in GFGC libraries and suggest measures to restructure.

Hypotheses

1. Most of the GFGC libraries are lacking with independent library building and adequate space.
2. Lack of ICT infrastructure in GFGC libraries is the major impediment to introduce ICT services.

METHODOLOGY

The study implemented a descriptive survey method with a quantitative approach. The investigator has undertaken the survey during 2021-22. This method does not refer to the characteristics of individuals but presents the opinions as a whole to understand the status of Government First Grade College Libraries in Karnataka. The Full-time librarians of the GFGC were considered as the study population to ascertain greater accuracy in responses and results. Of the 340 GFGCs statewide, 278 colleges have permanent librarians. The respondents were asked to tick the questions on a three-point and five-point Likert scale. A total of 249 filled-in copies of the questionnaires were obtained showing a response rate of 89.56%. The collected data was tabulated and tested using MS Excel and SPSS for the data frequency and testing of the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collective responses from the respondents are shown in the tables.

General information about the respondent colleges

The presentation of general information shows the current status of GFGC colleges under study. The below table shows the UGC recognition, NAAC accreditation, Academic programmes, and Locations of the colleges.

Table 1 : General information about the colleges

General information		Total	%
UGC Recognition	2(f) and 12(b)	107	42.98
	2(f)	88	35.34
	No status	54	21.68

NAAC Accreditation	Accredited	162	65.06
	Not Accredited	87	34.94
Academic Programme	Under Graduation (UG)	169	67.88
	Both UG and Post Graduate (PG)	80	32.12
College Locality	Rural	111	44.58
	Urban	80	32.13
	Semi-urban	58	23.29

Table1 reveals that majority (42.98%) of colleges are recognized with 2(f)&12(b) status, 1/3 (35.34%) of colleges received 2(f) status from UGC, and the majority (65.06%) of colleges are accredited from NAAC. This shows that nearly a quarter of colleges are neither UGC-recognized nor NAAC accredited. Majority (67.88%) of colleges offer UG, followed by both UG Programme and PG programme (32.12%). The further majority (44.58%) of colleges are located

in rural areas, followed by semi-urban (23.29%), and urban (32.13%).

Library support staff

Libraries need staff for running their operations and services and to meet their objectives. The staff should be recruited and positioned at various levels of library management. (Rafiq&Mohmood-2010).

Table 2 : Library support staff

Staff	Designation	Total	%
Professional	Library assistants	29	11.65
Non-Professional	Library attenders	71	28.51
	Library clerks	6	2.41
	Security guards	6	2.41
	No support staff	137	55.02

Table-2 shows that more than half (55.2%) of the GFGC libraries have no support staff, and are operated by full-time one-hand librarians. Only few libraries (11.65%) have professional staff as library assistants and non-professional staff such as Library attender in 28.51% of libraries, Library clerk, and Security guards in 2.41% libraries. This shows that the majority of GFGC libraries have not followed staffing guidelines of the College Library Manual i.e., 1 Assistant librarian

and 2 Library attenders for every increase of 500 students or every addition of 10,000 volumes.

Library grants

The college library grants an important resource for the management of libraries and the systematic implementation of ICT in libraries. The supply of sufficient grants encourages librarians to attract their users to the library.

Grants proportionate and Satisfaction

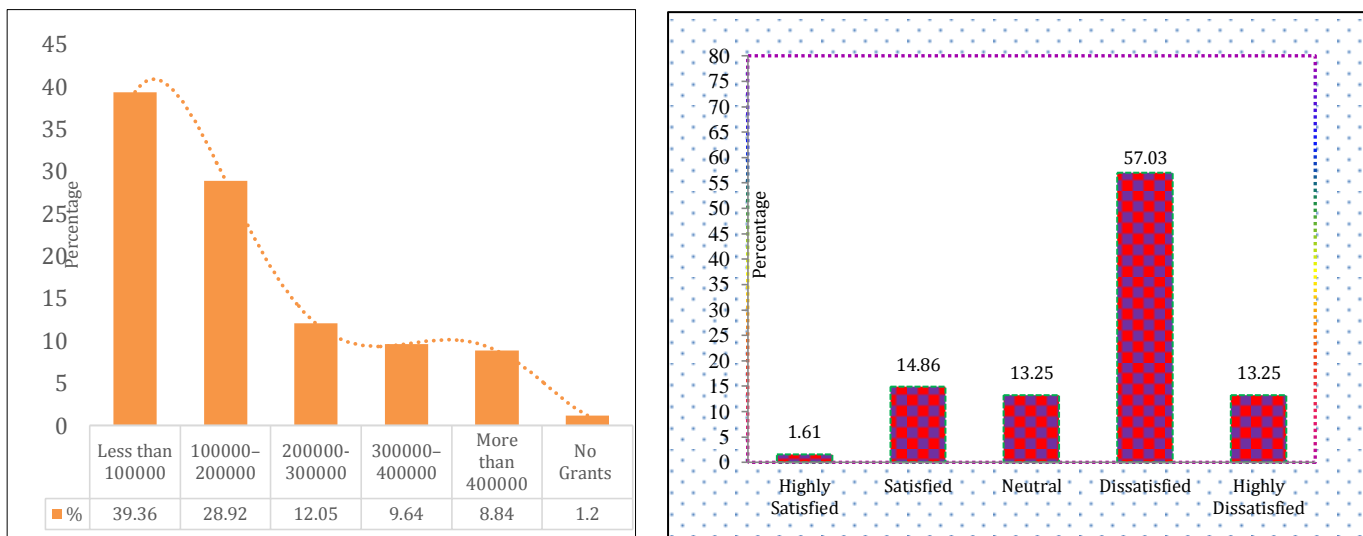


Figure 1 : Proportion of grants and level of satisfaction

Fig-1 depicts the grants made by the government to the libraries over the last 3 years. The majority (39.36%) of libraries received less than 1 lakh rupees, and 28.92% of libraries received a grant of 1 to 2 lakh. It is pitiful that 1.20% of libraries did not receive any grants. More than half (57%) of librarians reported dissatisfaction with the approved grants. According to the Dr. Radhakrishnan Committee of Higher Education, a library should receive 6% of the grant from the

college's annual budget. Whereby as in the case of GFGC libraries, none of the libraries followed the guidelines.

Library building and space

The library building is an important factor, that must support all the operations of the library. Adequate space is a primary need and it would help to create an ambient library environment that attracts all the users.

Table 3 : Independent Library Building

Responses	Total	%	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Yes	53	21.29	249	.21	.410	.026
No	196	78.71				
Total	249	100.00				

Table-3 depict that, out of 249 GFGC libraries 21.29% of libraries operate in independent building, and the remaining 78.71% of libraries operate in academic building. Further, the table

also depicts one-sample test conducted to know whether libraries are housed in independent building. The sample statistic mean for independent building is 0.21. It is found to be highly significant.

Table 4 : Library Space

Sufficiency	F	%	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sufficient	25	10.04	2.53	.672	.043
Timely manageable	68	27.31			
Not Sufficient	156	62.65			
Total	249	100.00			

Table-5 shows that the majority (62.65%) of libraries reported that the available space is not sufficient, and 27.31% of libraires reported timely manageable. Only 10.04% of libraries reported sufficient. The library space sufficiency was weighted by three-point. The sample statistic mean is found 2.53 and Std. From the one-sample t-test for sufficiency of library space, it is found highly significant at a 5% level of significance.

Consequently, the hypothesis “Most of the GFGC libraries are lacking with independent library building and adequate space” is accepted.

Library furniture and equipment

Furniture and equipment help the readers stay informed, educated, flexible, healthy, and entertained. If people visiting the library feel their needs are being met, they are much more likely to return.

Table 5 : Adequacy of furniture

Furniture	1 (%)	2(%)	3(%)	Mean	SD
Book rack	78 (31.33)	73 (29.32)	98 (39.36)	2.09	0.838
Display rack	69 (27.71)	95 (38.15)	85 (34.14)	2.06	0.785
Reading table	88 (35.34)	100 (40.16)	61 (24.50)	1.89	0.767
Chairs	52 (20.88)	119 (47.79)	78 (31.33)	2.10	0.716
Charging desk	25 (10.04)	42 (16.87)	182 (73.09)	2.32	0.772
Catalog cabinet	76 (30.52)	89 (35.74)	84 (33.73)	2.63	0.660
Dictionary Stand	7 (4.70)	21 (14.09)	121 (81.21)	2.86	0.422
Book trolley	10 (4.02)	15 (6.02)	224 (89.96)	2.86	0.449

*Weight assigned for the values as 1=Fully Adequate, 2=Partially Adequate, 3=Not Adequate. **Values presented in parenthesis are percentage *** Multiple responses allowed.

Table-6 shows that no GFGC libraries reported that they have adequate furniture. Whereas nearly an average percentage of libraries reported partial adequate with furniture like Chairs (47.79%),

reading tables (40.16%), display racks (38.15%), and catalog cabinets (35.74%). Similarly, the majority of libraries reported that furniture such as Book trolley, dictionary stands, charging desks,

and book racks are not adequate. From the above table subsets of means-plot, the average response of the respondents for all furniture is above 2 except a reading table.

Table 6 : Adequacy of ICT Equipment's

Equipment's	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	Mean	SD
Computers	39 (15.66)	98 (39.36)	112 (44.98)	2.29	0.723
Printer	46 (18.47)	100 (40.16)	103 (41.37)	2.23	0.740
Scanner	66 (26.51)	127 (51.00)	56 (22.49)	1.96	0.700
Barcode reader	60 (24.10)	75 (30.12)	114 (45.78)	2.22	0.809
Xerox	18 (7.23)	50 (20.08)	181 (72.69)	2.65	0.610
LED projector	12 (4.82)	4 (1.61)	233 (93.57)	2.89	0.444
Audiovisual	12 (4.82)	2 (0.80)	235 (94.38)	2.90	0.437
Storage devices	12 (4.82)	41 (16.47)	196 (78.71)	2.74	0.539
e-book readers	1 (0.40)	4 (1.61)	244 (97.99)	2.98	0.178
Television	15 (5.77)	11 (4.23)	234 (90.00)	2.84	0.509
UPS	69 (27.71)	104 (41.77)	76 (30.52)	2.03	0.764
Vacuum cleaner	3 (1.20)	10 (4.02)	236 (94.78)	2.94	0.291

* Weight assigned for the values as 1=Fully Adequate, 2=Partially Adequate, 3=Not Adequate.

** Multiple responses allowed.

Table-7 shows that only a quarter of GFGC libraries reported fully adequate with the ICT equipment like UPS (27.71%), Scanner (26.51%), and Barcode Reader (24.10%). This shows that the majority of libraries are lacking with ICT equipment's. A few libraries reported fully adequate ICT infrastructure. Further, some libraries reported partially adequate with scanner (51%), UPS (41.77%), and printer (40.16%). It is observed from the above given homogeneous subsets means-plot, the average response of the respondents for all ICT infrastructure are above 2 except scanner. This indicated a maximum number of respondent's response is not adequate

.Table 7 : Post hoc tests homogeneous subsets

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	396.434	11	36.039	102.362	.000
Within Groups	1047.783	2976	.352		
Total	1444.217	2987			

To know significant factors in the group of factors, the post hoc test is carried out. From the one-way analysis of the variance of several means, it is found significant at a 5% level of significance with p-value 0.000 (table-8). Therefore, the hypothesis “The lack of ICT infrastructure is the major impediment to introduce ICT-enabled services” is accepted.

Library collection

The library collection is a total of library materials that includes a variety of formats, including print and electronic media. A well-balanced collection is the backbone of every college library.

Table 8 : Collection of print resources

Collection	Frequency	%
>2000	8	3.21
2001-4000	12	4.82
4001-6000	13	5.22
6001-8000	19	7.63
8001-10000	33	13.25
>10000	164	65.86
Total	249	100.00

Table-9 reveals the library collections in GFGC libraries. The majority 65.86% of libraries under study have more than 10000 collections, and 13.25% of the libraries' collection is 8001 to 10000. A Few (7.63%) colleges have 6000-8000 collections, and 5.22% of libraries have 4001-

6000 collections. This shows nearly 8% of GFGC libraries do not meet the standard collection (minimum of 5000 to 50000 volumes) reported by the library committee of UGC-Delhi (1965) and guidelines mentioned in the library manual published by the DCE, Govt. of Karnataka.

Table 9 : Collection of e-resources

E-Resources	Frequency (N=249)	%
N-List	89	35.74
e-journals	82	32.93
e-Books	80	32.13
e-Newspaper	24	9.63
e-Zine	21	8.43
e-Reference Books	20	8.03
Repository collection	19	7.63
Video Films	14	5.62
e-Dissertation/Reports	10	4.02

Table-10 depicts the collection of e-resources in GFGC libraries. 1/3rd (35.74%) of libraries subscribe to e-resources from N-list consortia, followed by 32.93% of libraries subscribe e-journals and 32.13% of subscribe e-books. The other e-resources listed in the table are available in very few college libraries.

Library services and facilities

Academic library facilities and services have become a key concern and an integral part of library and information science practitioners. This is because the ultimate objective of all libraries is to satisfy the users' needs either through manual or ICT. (Singh, 2017).

Table 10 : Library services

General services	Frequency (%)	ICT enabled services	Frequency (%)
Issue and Return	243 (97.59)	Internet access	123 (49.40)
Question paper	228 (91.57)	N-List	89 (35.74)
Reference service	220 (88.35)	OPAC	111 (44.58)
Book bank facility	203 (81.53)	CAS	98 (39.36)
Newspaper clipping	163 (65.46)	SDI service	56 (22.49)
Career Guidance	157 (63.05)	Printing service	56 (22.49)
User education	155 (62.25)	CD-ROM search service	48 (19.28)
Extra book facility for meritorious students	150 (60.24)	Digital library	45 (18.07)
Referral Service	144 (57.83)	Institutional Repository	42 (16.87)
UGC book bank facility	69 (27.71)	Mobile alert service	37 (14.86)
Inter-library loan (ILL)	5 (2.00)	Web-OPAC	30 (12.05)

Table-11 depicts the various services of GFGC libraries. A lion percentage (97.59%) of libraries offer issue return service followed by old question paper 91.57%, book bank facility 81.53% and reference service 88.35%. Further, a few libraries offer services like referral services, extra books for merit students, newspaper clippings, career guidance, and ILL. The table also depicts the various ICT-enabled services/facilities internet access 49.40%, OPAC at 44.58% and CAS 39.36%, SDI and print service 22.49% each. This shows that the GFGC

libraries are lagging in offering ICT-enabled services to the user community.

Library automation

The introduction of library automation benefited libraries to be held with ease, accuracy, great speed, sharing, and use of information resources. Automation not only saves costs, time, and human resources, but also helps to develop strategies to improve library collection and services. (Kuri-2022)

Table 11 : Library Automation status

Status	Frequency	%
Automated	160	64.26
Not Automated	89	35.74
Total	249	100.00

Table-12 depicts the automation in GFGC libraries. It is observed from the data that the majority of libraries i.e., 160(64.26%) are automated while 89(35.74%) of them are not automated.

CONCLUSION

The discussion of the data analysis provides insight into the status of the GFGC libraries in Karnataka. The facilities and services in 2(f) and 12(b) college libraries are better compared to other colleges which not recognized the UGC status. More than half (55%) of GFGC libraries have no support staff and are served by a single librarian. It has appeared that insufficient grant is one of the major issues that the GFGC librarians are facing, almost 57% of libraries reported dissatisfaction with the sanctioned budget. More than 3/4 (78%) of the GFGC libraries do not have an independent building and the space in existing building is not enough for the strength of the college. There is a lack of adequate furniture and ICT equipment facility in GFGC Libraries. The 1/5th (20%) of GFGC libraries have collections under 10000. However, the conditions of the libraries in recently established GFGC are poor, and their collection is too inadequate. More than 60% of GFGC libraries have not introduced ICT-enabled services and 35% of libraries are not yet computerized due to lack of computers, funds,

and supporting staff. A large number of GFGC libraries do not meet the guidelines of Library Manual for college library published by the Department of Collegiate Education (DCE) and UGC committees in the process of recruiting library staff pattern, library collection, building, and space. whereas a few colleges excel in all the ways and means to meet the objectives of the DCE, and Higher education as well. The performance of majority of GFGC libraries in Karnataka is not satisfactory. Many of them have just managed by non-professional staff as in-charge librarians of the library. To establish user-centric college library, every GFGC library should have an adequate number of qualified staff and DCE should appoint well-trained and qualified staff from time to time and allot budget proportionate to the number of students or as per the recommendations of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's committee. So that it helps GFGC libraries to have an independent library building, to procure sufficient library collection, furniture, and ICT equipment to computerize the library, and also to introduce ICT-enabled library services. This would make GFGC libraries an ideal center for teaching and learning in the higher education system.

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