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Current Status of Special Libraries' Resources and Services in Faisalabad, Pakistan

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Abstract

The core objective of this study was to evaluate the current status of resources and services of Special libraries existing in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Quantitative research approach based on survey method was used to conduct this study. A semi-structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data from head librarians of special libraries existing in the city of Faisalabad. Census taking approach was used to approach the population of this study. It was found that 55 special libraries were working in the city of Faisalabad, Pakistan. The findings revealed that the special libraries under study held a variety of information resources but limited in numbers and formats. The status of ICT infrastructure, classification, cataloguing, automation and knowledge management was found poor in special libraries. Special libraries were providing a range of services but at a poor level. The special libraries were providing the services including reference service, borrowing service, internet & Wi-Fi, e-mail service, printing & photocopy service but not at a good level. The status of services including access to HEC digital library, interlibrary loan, scanning services, SDI/CAS, virtual reference service, article alert and document delivery service were found very poor and critically required to be promoted in special libraries. The study provided insights about evaluating the information resources and services of special libraries which could be used for evidence-based decision making. This study might be helpful in improving the quality of information resources and services of special libraries in Pakistan. The study might also provide assistance to policy makers, parent organizations/institutions of special libraries and library professionals in developing information resources, services and infrastructure of special libraries in Pakistan.

Keywords: Resources; Services; Special libraries; Faisalabad city.

Introduction

Assessment of library resources and services is very important to manage special libraries and information services, because the evaluation process produces data that can help librarians to make decisions and to improve resources and services (Melo & Sampaio, 2006). During the last two decades, researchers and librarians made efforts to assess and evaluate quality of resources and services of special libraries from all over the world.

Special libraries are the key requirement for the innovation and scientific and technological research and development. Presently, a vast number of scientific oriented information resources are available electronically and in conventional format. Special libraries have to keep up-to-date these resources with novel discoveries according to requirements of their target audience (Schofield, Fielden, Harris, & Wilkinson, 2001). However, this is not easy, especially when the budget for subscriptions to scientific journals and serials is cut, as is so often the case (Wolf, 2000). Special libraries acquire and manage a range of information resources including lending books, journal articles, government documents, patent documents, directories, journals/periodicals, standards, data files/databases, conferences/minutes, atlases/maps, own prepared resources, abstracts/indexes, catalogue/OPACs, referrals, fetching from stores (Blake, 2005; Griffiths & King, 1994). Special libraries' services include brokerage service, current awareness services, enquiry, users-related functions, access to collections including internal and

external, photocopy services, reference and research services, database search services, user instruction, access to facilities, ,operational functions, material receiving and processing, cataloging, processing, support functions, automation, management and administration (Blake, 2005; Griffiths & King, 1994).

Increasing use is being made of information technology to facilitate the management of collection, retrieval, searching, cataloguing, acquisitions, and subject indexing, and so on. These factors have pushed science & technology information service centers to shift their role into being more of a "switching center" equipped with a networking system and electronic resources, rather than a provider of hard copy services. Ideas from knowledge management and artificial intelligence as well as traditional services, such as current awareness, are being used to enhance access to digital library services in special libraries. Furthermore, web-based services have been developed to provide a faster system for research communication and access to validated and authentic information in special libraries (Dodsworth, 2003; Tam & Robertson, 2002; Youngok & Henderson, 2006). Therefore, several developed countries including the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), Canada, and Australia are paying more attention to develop information management and related research in terms of the development of user-friendly information systems that are provided through gateways and networking services. Various terms are used to describe advanced models of information services such as networking collaboration

between public and private sectors, resource sharing, consortia, portals, concepts which are mostly new to developing countries (Tanase, Joiner, & Stuart-Moore, 2006).

Rapid expansion of industrialization has made Faisalabad the second largest Industrial Town in Pakistan (Ahmad, 2006). A study is needed to evaluate the resources and services provided by special libraries existed in the city of Faisalabad. An ample research had been done on the resources and services of libraries including academic and public in Pakistan except special libraries. Faisalabad division of Pakistan is an industry-oriented territory of Pakistan. No work has focused on this division regarding special libraries in this area. The present study is an effort to fill these gaps in the literature. Therefore, this study aimed at knowing the current status of special libraries' resources and services in Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Literature Review

Special libraries are established to reflect their parent bodies' aims and objectives through their nature, collections and services. The special libraries are required to meet the interests of their patrons through providing relevant, qualitative information resources and services. Critically the survival and effective functioning of special library depends on the nature of policy guiding the activities taking place in the library (Ekene, Agbo, & Onyekweodiri, 2016).

Undoubtedly, evaluation of special libraries' resources and services is relevant to the progress of library and its parent organization. What is required to be assessed regarding functions include management structure, functions and operations relating to information materials (cataloguing and classification, indexing, etc.), services to users, new programs of service delivery, new possibilities for technological support to services or alternative possibilities (Ekene et al., 2016; Wilson, 2009).

Ekene et al. (2016) carried out a descriptive study to assess the status of resources and services of selected medical libraries in Nigeria. The findings revealed that these libraries were providing all the services enlisted in questionnaire but not at adequate level. These libraries were offering specialized services including current awareness service (CAS) reference and searching databases at most adequate level. Isebe (2021) analyzed the growth and development of special libraries and their parent bodies in Effurun Delta State. The author revealed that special libraries were providing indexing and abstracting services, SDI, CAS, technical reports, magazines,

newspapers, computers, photocopying service, abstracts in order to help the general promotion of the parent body.

A quite old literature described the status of resources and services of special libraries since the existence of Pakistan. These studies identified improper services and functions performed in special libraries, outdated practices, non-professional staff, lack of indexing, abstracting, bibliography compilation and current awareness services. Special libraries were providing only circulation and certain amount of acquisition and reference services (Haider, 1969; Saqlain, 1973; Siddiqui, 1977). Haider (1969) presented the status of 'Science and Technology Libraries in Pakistan' and "reported poor status of resources and services in these libraries, poor production of books in the country, inadequate bibliographical control, absence of standards, paucity of science graduate on certain places and insufficient funds were the major factors". Ramazan (1982) identified ample printed resources on the fields of pure and applied sciences in the Faisal Shaheed Library of UET, Lahore. Library was also rendering a range of traditional as user-centered services. Rehman (1983) identified a need to subscribe research journals, establish book bank and microfilm section and offer user education in the UET library of NWFP. Sultana (1999) conducted a study to identify services of a medical center library. The author found that the services including reference, assistance to student and researchers, bibliographic, and document delivery were being provided in the center and out of the center.

Anwar and Safdar (2004) described in their study that the Central Library of UET, Taxila was providing a range of services to fulfill its users' needs. Sadiq (2005) recommended few certain steps including centralized planning, coordination, centralization in acquiring and distributing foreign literature, development of union catalogue, provision of ICT-based services, inter-library loan system, etc. should be taken for the improvement of special libraries of the country. Haq (2009) reported an acute shortage of professional staff in medical libraries. The author further emphasized to increase the number of professional librarians in medical libraries in order to meet the minimal standards. The professionals should also enhance their IT skills. Bhatti and Asghar (2010) explored the services provided by the Quaid-e-Azam medical college library to its students using a questionnaire survey. The students were found dissatisfied with library services and partially satisfied with the other services including, information, reference, CAS, SDI, indexing & abstracting and bibliographic services. This library was not providing the facility of inter-library

loan, user education and translation services. Furthermore, there was a demand of more textbooks, latest journals and internet facility.

Raufullah (2010) described that "concept of special libraries is not clear in Pakistan. Most of special libraries attached with scientific organizations are used for employee's gossip and serve as conference room of the organization. Furthermore, special libraries of Pakistan cannot afford to get latest scientific publications and other material due to budget problems and high costs of scientific material".

Asghar and Shafique (2012) conducted a study to reveal the current status of the special libraries of remote/less-developed areas of Pakistan and services provided by special libraries existing at Bahawalpur. This study used a survey questionnaire to collect data from library users as well as interviews of librarians of three special libraries. The results revealed that special libraries of Bahawalpur were not providing up to the mark services. The users of these special libraries were found dissatisfied with service quality and outdated materials. Inadequacy of computers and internet facility was also observed in these libraries. This study disclosed that libraries were not offering specialized services (SDI, CAS, OPAC, etc.), lacking open shelf system, not providing facility of online or CD-ROM databases, internet, or any other service necessary in special libraries.

During the covid-19 Pandemic, special libraries are playing a great role for the provision of services to their users. Yu, F and Mani (2020) observed that how American academic medical/health sciences libraries responded to the COVID-19 health crisis. They investigated the status, provision of resources and services through the websites of 157 academic and medical/health sciences libraries (MHSLs) existed in the United States. The study also investigated that how these libraries supported their users to fight the health crisis and infodemic. It was revealed that MHSLs played a great role to support academic communities, local healthcare professionals and general public by providing resource curation, clinical care support and education. MHSLs also provide a comprehensive and customized search queries to help the researchers to locate the latest and relevant publications on COVID-19, curated multiple data resources and data exploration, visualization tools, and selected the latest biomedical and health evidence in a wide range of topics. MHSLs are still playing a vital role to support the academic communities, healthcare facilities, and the general public to fight against the pandemic and the information crisis.

Objective of the Study

This study is based on the following objectives:

1. To know how many special libraries are working in Faisalabad
2. To identify what kind of resources are available in the special libraries
3. To know the types of services being provided to the users of special libraries
4. To determine the problems faced by the staff during the provision of services
5. To make the recommendations for the improvement of information resources and services of special libraries

Methodology

The present study used quantitative research method based on survey method to acquire the data for the analysis of information resources and services of special libraries.

The population framework consisted of special libraries and head librarians existing in the city of Faisalabad, Punjab. This study used the Census approach to collect data from the population. "Census approach observes everyone or every unit in a population, known as "complete enumeration survey method". "Census survey is an insightful approach to acquire accurate data and understand the association between different personal characteristics of a small demographic group" (Baffour, King, & Valente, 2013). Hence, the researcher identified 55 special libraries existed in the city of Faisalabad only; the researcher would have to get response from the entire population of the target population.

Data Collection Instrument

A semi-structured survey questionnaire was framed for this study with help of literature review, field experts and peers. The formulated structured questionnaire was revised to make it simple, clear, and short with the help of experts. The survey instrument contained 12 sections and twelve questions. Multiple options for factors, dichotomy (yes, no) scale and 5-points Likert-type scale were used to acquire the perceptions of research participants.

Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Tool

Data collection instrument was designed for this study in consultation with the peers and experts of the field and literature review. The validity of the instrument was ensured through pilot testing. The data was collected from eight libraries situated in the district of Lahore, other than the selected sample and the analysis of collected data was carried out in SPSS.

<div align="center">**Results and Discussion**</div>

Demographic Information

      The demographic information included the name of library, gender, designation, qualification, professional experience, human resources comprising LIS professionals, LIS paraprofessionals, IT professionals, IT paraprofessionals, non-professional/allied staff and total staff members available in the libraries.

Gender

      The survey was responded by 34 (62%) male participants and 21(38%) with their female counterpart. Majority of library heads were found male persons in the special libraries of Faisalabad city as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Gender distribution
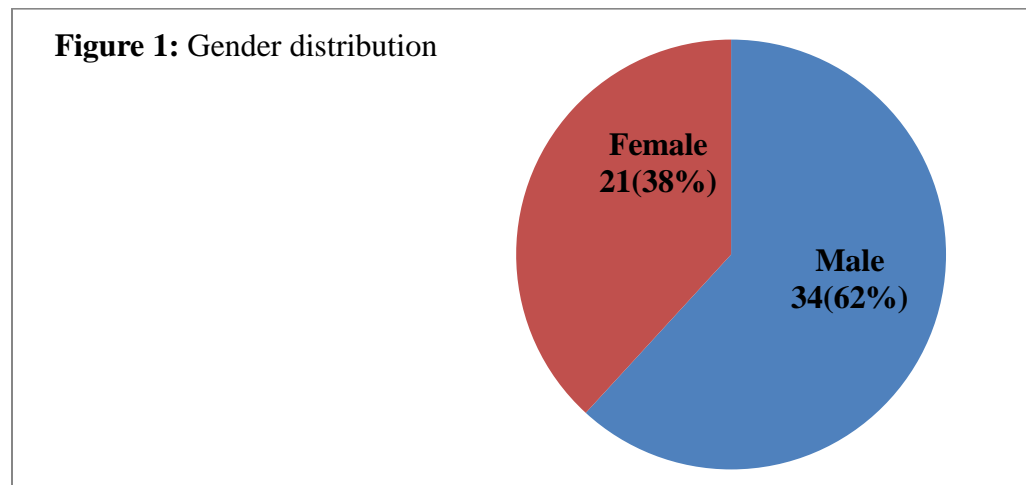
Special libraries types existing in the city of Faisalabad

      The researcher identified 55 special libraries existing in Faisalabad city. Table 1 categorized these special libraries in eight types. Table 1 showed that majority of the special libraries (n=19) were found in educational institutes followed by medical and hospital libraries (n=9), and libraries of non-governmental organizations (n=9). Whereas, this survey could found a few special libraries for Government/Military (n=2), Legal (n=2), and Theological (n=2) organizations.

Table 1

Types of Special libraries (N=55)

Sr.	Types of Special Libraries	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Institutional Libraries	19	34.5
2	Medical & Hospital Libraries	9	16.4
3	NGO Libraries	9	16.4
4	Scientific & Research Libraries	8	14.5
5	Corporate Libraries	4	7.4
6	Government/Military Libraries	2	3.6
7	Legal Libraries	2	3.6
8	Theological Libraries	2	3.6

Human Resources

A question was included in the survey questionnaire to explore the job categories in special libraries for library workers as well as to identify the designations of special library staff working as head of respective special library.

The results of the Table 2 showed that out of 55 special libraries, 31(56%) special libraries were run by the qualified library professionals only. On the other hand, 24(44%) special libraries were not having qualified library professionals by designation and education. The special libraries without LIS professionals might working under the charge of LIS paraprofessionals, non-professionals or allied staff available in special libraries. This situation was found quite alarming in special libraries due to shortage of library qualified professional staff.

Furthermore, it was found that a number of special libraries 24(44%) were run by paraprofessionals or non-professionals including clerks, attendants, superintendents, or other staff appointed by the particular organization. The special libraries parented by NGOs, theological and corporate were found without professional staff. Special libraries were also facing scarcity of IT professional or IT paraprofessional staff except one library.

Table 2

Type of library staff by job designation (N=55)

Type of Library Staff	Available	Not Available

LIS Professional	31	24
LIS Para Prof	5	50
IT Prof	2	53
IT Para Prof	6	49
NON/Allied	36	19

Status of academic qualification

The findings of the Table 3 showed that only 28 library professionals working in special libraries were holding qualification at master degree level and 3 M.Phil in library & information science. The results of this also exposed that a shortage or insufficiency was identified in special libraries regarding professional library staff.

Table 3

Status of academic qualification (N=55)

Professional Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
M.Phil	3	5
MLIS	28	51
BLIS	3	5
Non-prof. Education	21	38
Total	55	100

Library experience

Special libraries existed in Faisalabad city are managed by library staff but a vast majority of them not possessing professional education. Therefore, such staff could not be considered library professionals with professional experience.

The results of the Table 4 revealed that majority of the LIS professionals (n=36) were holding limited experience (ranged 1-5 years) in the field of library. It might be due to the shortage of LIS professional in special libraries or limited intake by special organizations for libraries' staff.

Table 4

Library experience with designation (N=55)

Professional Experience	Designations						Total
	Assistant Librarian	Deputy Librarian	Librarian	Senior Librarian	Chief Librarian	Para-prof./ Non-prof.	
1-5 Years	7	0	7	0	1	21	36
6-10 Years	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
11-15 Years	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
16-20 Years	1	0	2	1	1	0	5
21-25 Years	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
26-30 Years	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
31 & above	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Total	9	1	20	1	2	22	55

Status of Information Resources in Special Libraries

The survey instrument explored the availability of information resources in special libraries printed and non-printed information sources. The Table 5 described the status of these parameters of special libraries.

Printed information Resources

The survey explored that special libraries were holding print-based sources including books, monographs, reports, research journals and bound volumes, magazines, maps, theses and dissertations and newspapers as mentioned in Table 5.

a) Availability of books/monographs and reports in SLs. Table 5 showed a great number of special libraries had limited collections of books, monographs and reports. Only one special libraries (Library University of Agriculture) held good collection in numbers as mentioned in Table 5. The author personally observed during data collection process that a large number of visited libraries (including corporate, NGO, institutional, medical & hospital libraries) were holding collection just in a few hundred only.

b) Availability of research journals (RJs) and magazines in SLs. The results also revealed that special libraries subscribed very limited issues of research journals as mentioned in Table 5. A few special libraries including agricultural and medical libraries were subscribing international journals in limited numbers. Special libraries were also providing general magazines for their specific community. Special libraries also arranged to keep the previous volumes of research journals and magazines in bound volumes.

c) Availability of maps and manuscripts in SLs. This survey could not found any manuscript available in any categorical special library of Faisalabad city as mentioned in Table 5 whereas, libraries were holding maps as per the requirement of their users but in limited numbers. A great number of special libraries (n=20) were not acquiring any map for their users as mentioned in Table 5.

d) Theses and Dissertations in SLs. Theses and dissertations are produced as primary research in research oriented institutes. Majority of special libraries are related to educational institutions but not research oriented, therefore, these special libraries could not arrange such collections. Out of 55 special libraries, 46 were not holding any thesis collection. Only 9 special libraries possessed this collection in limited numbers as mentioned in Table 5.

e) Availability of Newspapers in SLs. The results of the Table 5 showed that almost all the special libraries were subscribing daily newspaper (English and Urdu). Out of 55 special libraries, 31 special libraries arranged 1-3 daily newspapers followed by 17 special libraries subscribed 1-5 daily newspapers. One library was arranging 76 dailies.

Non-printed and e-resources in special libraries

 Table 5 presented that special libraries of Faisalabad city arranged the non-printed and e-resources for their users.

a) Analogue and electronic resources. It was found that special libraries arranged electronic sources of information including CD ROM, DVDs, microfilms, and microfiche for their users but in very limited numbers. Out of 55 special libraries, 12 were not arranged any such type of source of information for their users as mentioned in Table 5.

b) Online databases subscribed by SLs. Special libraries faced great problems regarding budget allocation. Most of the special libraries did not receive independent budget for their collections development and service delivery. Therefore, special libraries could not be able to subscribe online databases for their users. Only three special libraries were providing commercial online databases on limited access as mentioned in Table 5.

c) Availability of HEC provided Online Databases. The digital library of HEC is providing access to a range of digital resources through www.digitallibrary.edu.pk. This portal provides access to digital resources on two levels including open access and IP based access. Open access is available freely to everyone but majority of special libraries were found unaware of this service or not possessing IT infrastructure to access this service. The result of Table 5 showed that only 14(25.5%) special libraries could make HEC e-resource available for their users as mentioned in Table 5.

d) Electronic Theses & Dissertations (ETDS). Access to ETDs is also need of current time in order to understand trends in modern research around the world. Unfortunately, the provision of this service is available in one special library only as mentioned in Table 5.

Table 5

Status of information resources (printed/Non-printed) (N=55)

Types of Information Resources	No. of Items	Available in Library	Percentage (%)
Printed Information Resources (Books/Monographs)	Up to 1000	15	27.3
	1001-2500	17	30.9
	2501-5000	13	23.6
	5001-10000	4	7.3
	10001-20000	1	1.8
	20001-30000	3	5.5
	30001-40000	1	1.8
	274629	1	1.8
Reports	Up to 50	34	61.8
	51-100	1	1.8

	201-500	3	5.5
	501-1000	1	1.8
	2001-5000	1	1.8
	5001-10000	2	3.6
	Not available	13	23.6
Research Journals (RJs)	Up to 5	33	60.0
	6-10	7	12.7
	21-30	1	1.8
	31-40	1	1.8
	41-50	1	1.8
	2489	1	1.8
	5000	1	1.8
	Not available	10	18.2
Journals(Bound volumes)	Up to 50	21	38.2
	50-100	4	7.3
	983	1	1.8
	2489	1	1.8
	5000	1	1.8
	Not available	27	49.1
Magazines	Up to 5	30	54.5
	6-10	18	32.7
	11-20	3	5.5
	100	1	1.8
	Not available	3	5.5
Maps	Up to 5	34	61.8
	Not available	20	36.4
	Available	0	0

Manuscripts	Not available	55	100.0
Theses and Dissertations	Up to 100	2	3.6
	101-500	3	5.5
	501-1000	3	5.5
	5000	1	1.8
	Not available	46	83.6
Newspapers	Up to 3	31	56.4
	4-5	17	30.9
	6-10	3	5.5
	11-15	2	3.6
	16-20	1	1.8
	76	1	1.8
Non-printed and e-resources: CD ROM, DVDs, Microfilms, Microfiche	up to 50	37	67.3
	101-200	2	3.6
	201-500	1	1.8
	501-1000	3	5.5
	Not available	12	21.8
Online Databases (Subscribed by library)	Available	3	5.5
	Not available	52	94.5
Online Databases (Subscribed through HEC)	Available	14	25.5
	Not available	41	74.5
Electronic Theses & Dissertations (ETDS)	Available	1	1.8
	Not available	54	92.2

Knowledge Management Approaches Used in Special Libraries

Libraries use the methods including subject- based classification schemes (Library of Congress), decimal classification scheme (DDC), electronic databases, or home-made approaches to organize their collections. Figure 2 represented that the collections of special libraries in majority of the cases were found arranged systematically. Majority of the special libraries organized their collections through classification schemes. Few libraries arranged their collections by alphabetically or by accession numbers in this advanced technological-oriented era.

Figure 2: Collection Arrangement
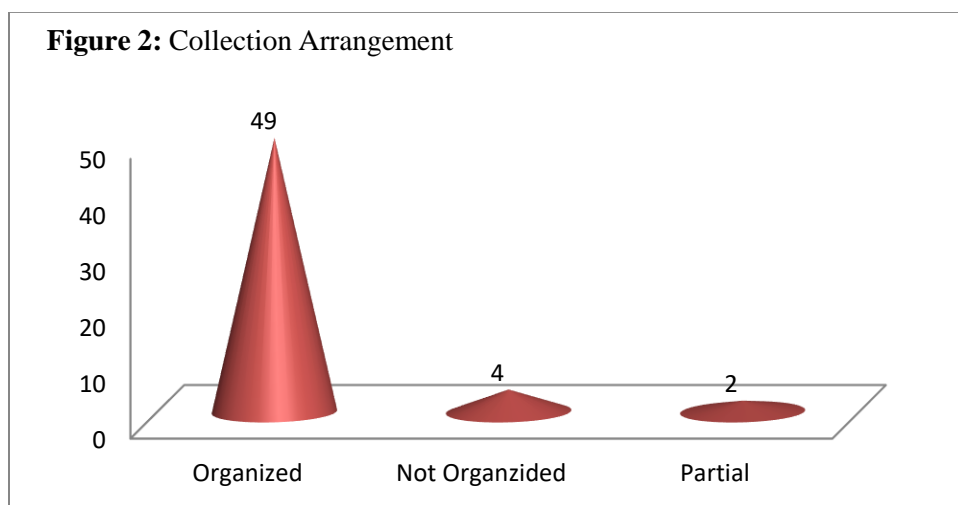
Status of Automation

The automation can benefit to users and efficient and cost-effective operations in libraries. However, Libraries in Pakistan have not achieved any noteworthy progress in library automation and are still in the experimental stages (Haider, 1998). Libraries need to be fully automated using standard library software/management systems (Ramzan & Singh, 2009).

Figure 3 illustrated that out of 55 special libraries of Faisalabad, 24(44%) were automated while 31(56%) special libraries were not automated.

Figure 3: Status of automation
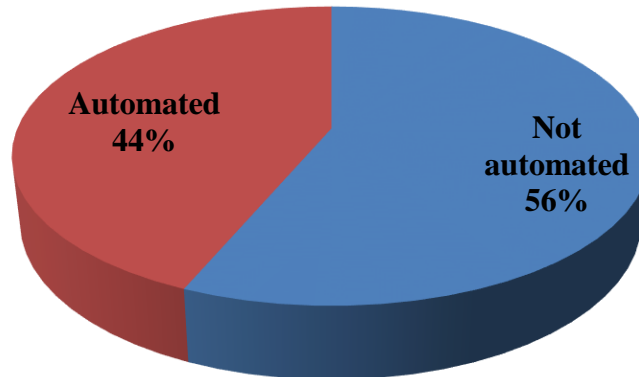
Status of Physical Resources in Special Libraries

The survey found that limited special libraries were equipped with necessary physical facilities and infrastructure. Table 6 showed that out of 55 special libraries,43(78%) special libraries had standard library furniture available, 28(51%) reading rooms, 29(53%) had taken security & disaster mitigation measure (SDMM), 33(60%) cooling and 24(44%) heating facilities.

A serious attention of parent organizations is required to maintain and uplift the special libraries at standard level.

Table 6

Status of physical facilities available in special libraries (N=55)

Sr.	Physical Facilities	Available		Not Available	
		n	%	n	%
1	Is standard Library furniture available?	43	78	12	22
2	Air-conditioning	33	60	22	40
3	Generator	30	55	25	45
4	DMM taken	29	53	26	47
5	Reading rooms	28	51	27	49
6	Heating	24	44	31	56
7	Tuck shop	24	44	31	56

| 8 | Carpeted | | 19 | 35 | 36 | 65 |
| 9 | Lavatories | | 2 | 4 | 53 | 96 |

Status of ICT Infrastructure in Special Libraries

Analysis of data in Table 7 regarding status of information technologies available in special libraries revealed that that the majority of special libraries 22(40%) did not have ICT infrastructure installed for the provision of ICT-based services. Out of 55 special libraries, 33(60%) special libraries had full and partial access to ICT infrastructure. Furthermore, only five special libraries were maintaining their institutional repositories on local level not for public access using open source software (OSS).

Satisfaction with ICT infrastructure were also explored and only 30(54.5%) respondents were found satisfied with installed ICT infrastructure in their respective special libraries.

Table 7

Status of ICT Infrastructure

	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Information Communication Technology (ICTs)　Infrastructure	Available	33	60
	Not available	22	40
For archiving the digital contents	Available	25	45.5
	Not available	30	54.5
Maintaining the Institutional Repository	Available	5	9
	Not available	50	91
Software used for Institutional Repository	Green stone	2	

	E-prints	1	
	Others	2	
Satisfaction with available infrastructure	Satisfied	30	54.5
	Not satisfied	25	45.5

Status of Services in Special Libraries

To analyze the overall services provided by special libraries, various statements were explored regarding the provision of services. This survey showed not a so good status of library services including ICT-based, alert services, resource sharing services, access to information services, etc. However, out of 55 special libraries, Table 8 exposed that 62% special libraries had the provision of reference service, 60% borrowing service, internet 60%, printer 60%, 44% e-mail service, 40% photocopy service, 26% access to HEC Digital Library, 35% interlibrary loan, 31% scanning services, 27% SDI/CAS, 25% virtual reference service, and 24% document delivery service.

The analysis showed a poor status of special libraries services especially internet, access to digital resources, SDI/CAS and DDS. Special libraries should provide the services including internet, Wi-Fi, CAS, SDI, article alert, manual and digital reference, and e-mail alert service according to the need of specific user.

Table 8

Status of services in special libraries

Sr.	Provision of Services	Available		Not Available	
		n	%	n	%
1	Borrowing services	33	60	22	40
2	Reference services	34	62	21	38
3	Internet	33	60	22	40

4	Printer	33	60	22	40
5	Wifi facility	30	55	24	45
6	E-mail alerts	24	44	31	56
7	Photocopier	22	40	33	60
8	Access to HEC Digital Library	20	26	35	64
9	Interlibrary Loan	19	35	36	65
10	Scanning services	17	31	38	69
11	SDI/CAS	15	27	40	73
12	Virtual references	14	25	41	75
13	Document Delivery Service (DDS)	13	24	42	76

Budget Allocation

Figure 4 illustrated that out of 55 special libraries, only 64% special libraries had allocated budget whereas 36% special libraries did not receive allocated budget. "Special libraries are attached with research and specific types of institutes and would have ample or appropriate budget whereas government special libraries don't have appropriate budget. International economic crisis has affected the purchasing power of libraries. In some cases, budget allocated for special libraries are used on other things" (Asghar & Shafique, 2012).

Figure 4: Allocation of Budget

Not Allocated
36%

Allocated
64%
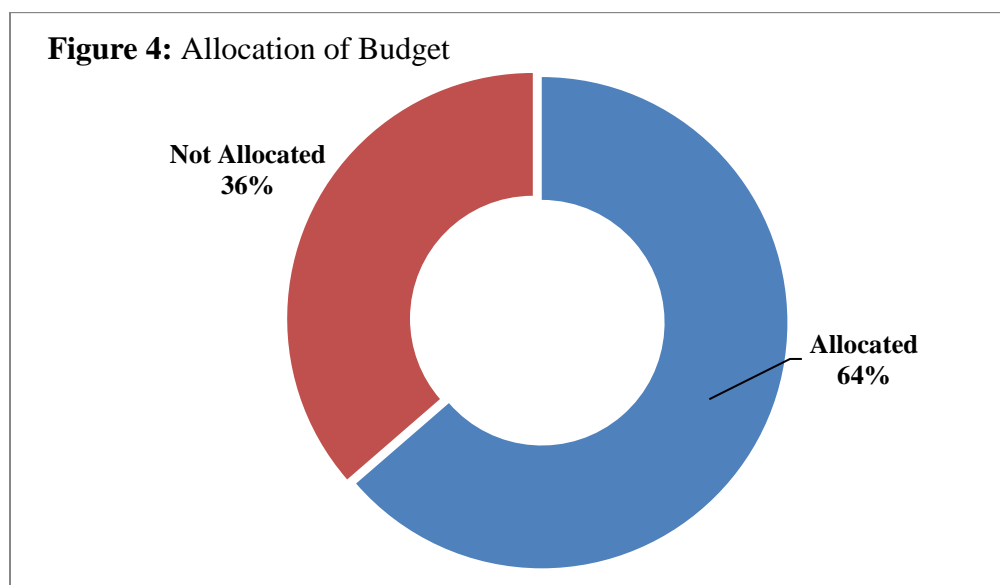
Problems Faced by Special Libraries

Special libraries especially medical faced serious problems including inadequacy of resources, limited trained staff and research journals (Joshi, Anwar, Ullah, & Kuruppu, 2014). Furthermore, special libraries are suffering from other issues including inadequate budget, lack of professional staff, lack of access to digital resources, and ineffective use of ICT. It is also recommended to build digital libraries in special libraries to foster services(Ezeala, 2009).

Table 09 highlighted the problems faced by special libraries. Most the problems faced by SLs were found Limited printed information resources, inadequate human resources, unavailability of integrated library software for automation, lack of financial support, unavailability of technical support, insufficient infrastructure, lack of training opportunities for LIS professional, inadequate experienced professionals, lack of interest towards IT expertise and awareness, electricity breakdowns, outdated collections and reluctance among library users to use IT.

Table 9

Problems faced in the special libraries (N=55)

Sr.	Problems	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Limited printed information Resources	1.84	.958
2	Limited human resources	2.38	.991
3	Unavailability of standard ILS	2.60	1.116
4	Lack of financial resources	2.64	1.282
5	Unavailability of technical support	2.65	1.126
6	Inadequate infrastructure	2.67	1.090
7	Lack of training opportunities for LIS professionals	2.69	1.086
8	Insufficient IT literate	2.71	.994

9	Insufficient experienced LIS professionals	2.82	1.234
10	Reluctance among LIS professionals to use IT	2.95	.951
11	Lack of commitment from the management	3.07	1.152
12	Lack of LIS professional's interest in introducing IT based resources and services	3.07	1.152
13	Lack of IT expertise among library users	3.11	1.100
14	Lack of awareness about IT among LIS professionals	3.16	1.135
15	Interrupted power supply	3.18	1.263
16	Outdated Collection	3.56	.856
17	Reluctance among library users to use IT	3.64	.847

Scale: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree

Conclusion

Special libraries are facing a great shortage of professional and experienced LIS staff. Limited number of special libraries was found under the supervision of professional librarians. Quantitatively, a large number of special libraries have not ample collection of books and research journals for their users. A large number of special libraries (including corporate, NGO, institutional, medical & hospital libraries) are holding very limited collection of books, subscribed research journals, magazines and maps. Almost all the special libraries are subscribing daily newspaper (English and Urdu). Non-printed resources are also arranged by one third special libraries only including CD ROM, DVDs, microfilms and microfiche but in a very limited numbers. A critical need is determined to promote access of HEC digital library in special libraries. Approximately, collections of half of the special libraries are not properly classified, catalogued and organized systematically. Half of special libraries have their own OPACs. Majority of special libraries are poorly equipped with ICT infrastructure and lack of automated library operations. A significant number of special libraries are not well aware of automation and a serious planning is needed for the process to automate library operations. Furthermore, a few special libraries are

maintaining their institutional repositories on local level not for public access using open source software (OSS). A great number of library heads are dissatisfied with ICT infrastructure installed in their respective special libraries. This survey showed a not so good status of library services including ICT-based, alert services, resource sharing services, access to information services, etc. A poor status of special libraries services is facing special libraries especially internet, access to digital resources, SDI/CAS and DDS.

Recommendations

The researcher presented the following recommendations on the basis of results.

1. Special libraries are required to be developed effective user-centered library and information services.
2. The library collection should be built up according to the needs of special libraries users.
3. Library staff should be properly trained in information retrieval and electronic resources management.
4. Comfortable and reasonable furniture like carrels, chairs, tables, computer chairs would be made available in special libraries.
5. Spacious place with comfortable environment, lighting, heating and cooling system would be provided to the users in special libraries.
6. The specific user community should be adequately informed of what materials are available in special libraries.
7. The users should be sensitized to the importance and type of materials in the library and regarding the use of library through orientations and user education.
8. There is dire need of establishing a network among all the special libraries for better communication and exchange of ideas and information resources on provincial and national level.
9. Network and related online facilities should be available in the library to attract more information seekers and users since the need for connectivity can no longer be ignored in this era of information and communication technology.
10. There should be new services to attract more users; and the physically challenged people should be considered and there is need to recruit more qualified librarians to enhance library services.

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