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USER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEFT, MUTILATION AND MISPLACEMENT OF RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN KARNATAKA STATE: A STUDY

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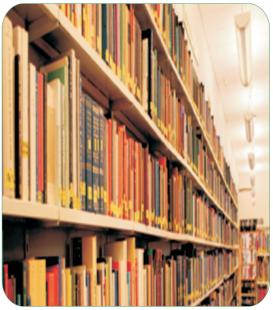
ABSTRACT

This study examines the acts of vandalism caused by the users in university libraries, such as theft, mutilation and misplacement of resource materials and also the extent of library staff's involvement and the various measures in place to detect and deter the acts. Survey research method is used to identify the reasons for theft, mutilation and misplacement and its impact upon sincere users of in the libraries. The study suggest some preventive measures which include procuring more books/ journals, making provision for providing photocopy service (Xerox) at cheaper price and providing remote access to e-resources, use of electronic security systems (CCTV, and smart gates) and availing the services of well trained security personnel are also suggested.

KEYWORDS : Theft, Mutilation, Misplacement, Academic Libraries, University Libraries, Karnataka, User Survey.

1.INTRODUCTION

The libraries are the social institutions that play vital role in the overall development of nation by providing information service to the citizen of a country. In the modern education system, libraries have become an integral part which supports learning and research activities. In the present era. Universities libraries provide resources for course work and research of students, teachers and researchers. In brief library is meant to optimum utilization of its resources, however, the problem of anti social activities like book theft, mutilation and misplacement of library resources is laying waste to vital and expensive library collection. Too often, the damage is done quietly and is not discovered until long after the act has taken place. Damage ranges from a few pages to entire volumes. It is important to maintain and protect the library materials in order to provide optimum service to library users. In this study the researchers have examined the kind of theft, mutilation and misplacement of books that took place often in university libraries and what users think about these problems. The study also looked into the possible remedies for protecting library materials from theft, mutilation and misplacement for its optimum use by the library users.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are very few studies have been reported on this subject in the scholarly literature. Some of them have been reviewed for identifying the exiting research problems and also carry this study further to fill the existing knowledge gap. Jimoh, et al (2014) focuses on the event of delinquency, the most serious delinquent acts, causes of delinquency, the methods, opportune time for stealing and mutilation. The study also focuses on the extent of staff involved and the various measures to detect and deter delinquency. The study reveals that delinquency is a serious problem that libraries are facing. There are most serious delinquent behavior like withholding, hiding of books and mutilation. The study found that selfishness, fear of others might borrow and not return and inadequate numbers of books are the major causes for delinquency. Further the study says that hiding books/materials inside/under dresses and rushing to exit during library closure hour when there is rush is the common method of stealing the book/material. Parvathamma & Anandhalli (2001) highlighted that the major reason for such delinquent activities of students were high cost of books, lack of photocopying facility. The study also suggests some of the preventive measures like provision of more copies of text books, provision of photocopying facility at affordable cost and organizing regular library tour and orientation programs in the library. Janus (2008) investigated issues of mutilation and theft of library materials. The study analyzed library literature and media coverage of thefts of rare boo materials and archival repositories. The study suggested to impose severs legal penalties to raise awareness against thefts, mutilation and misplacement of library books. Kumbar (2000) studied the method of stock verification for assessing the loss of books. The study suggests loss of 5 books for every 1000 books issued or consulted in the library premises be regarded as normal loss and written off, orientation program have to be organized for the users to create awareness about theft and mutilation of library materials. Adomi (2002) made a study on users malpractices at delta static university library in Nigeria. Higgins (2015) examined the reason and motives behind the book theft and vandalism, the study summaries existing security measures and offers suggestions for theft and vandalism prevention.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are:
1.To study the users attitude towards theft, mutilation and misplacement of library resources.
2.To study the reasons behind theft, mutilation and misplacement of library resources.
3.To identify preventive measures to control theft, mutilation and misplacement of library resources

4.METHODOLOGY

In this study questionnaire method was using to collect data from the library students, research scholar and faculties of the library users separately. It is the structures or closed form of questionnaire. For library users the questions consist of mainly graded alternatives. Most of the graded alternatives are on five point Likert scale while others are on a dependent questions. The study was conducted between June 2015 to December 2015. Seven State run University Libraries [See Table-1] in Karnataka was considered for the study. The first author of the paper visited all the seven universities personally and collected the data. Convenient Sampling method was used for data collection. The students, research scholars and teaching faculty who have visited the libraries during the researcher visits for the study purpose was asked to fill up the questionnaire to collect their response. Total 1328 respondents participated in the study.

5.DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1.User Response

Table 1 indicates the total user response of the study. It is found that almost 81% o the respondents are students followed by research scholars representing 18% of the total respondents. Merely 1% of the faculties have participated in the study. Since we have used convenient sampling method the response rate of the teaching community was less compared to students and research scholars. However we have aimed our study at students mainly. The distributions of the questionnaire across seven universities were more are less equal ranging between 10% to 20%.

Sl. No.	University	Students	Research scholars	Faculty Staff	Total (%)
1	Bangalore University	135	15	03	153 (11.52%)
2	Gulbarga University	141	57	03	201 (15.13%)
3	Karnataka University	173	45	02	220 (16.56%)
4	Kuvempu University	133	25	01	159 (11.97%)
5	Mangalore University	130	14	02	146 (10.99%)
6	Mysore University	204	72	01	277 (20.85%)
7	Tumkur University	157	12	03	172 (12.95%)
	Total	**1073 (80.79%)**	**240 (18.07%)**	**15 (1.12%)**	**1328 (99.97%)**

Table-1: distribution of Questionnaire and User Response

5.2. Family Income Status of Library Users

Table 2 depicts the monthly income status of the family of library users. It can be found from Table 2 that 49.54% of the respondents' families' income is between 5000 to 10000. Thirty eight percent of the respondents' family income is between 10000 to 25000. Only 11% of the respondents' family income is above 25000. This shows that majority of the respondents have come from poor and marginally middle class family.

Monthly income	Respondents	Percentage
5000 to 10000	**658**	49.54%
11000 to 25000	502	37.80%
26000 to 50000	131	9.86%
50000 and Above	37	2.78%
Total	**1328**	**99.98%**

Table 2: Income Status of Respondents

5.3. Geographical Distribution of Users

Table 3 indicates the geographical distributions of respondents. It is evident from Table 3 that majority of the respondents have come from rural background. Only 25% of the respondents have the background of having born and brought up in urban areas. This Table shows us that there is a drastic increase in rural mass to enroll for higher education. However Indian higher education enrollment rate is low (10%) compared to other countries such as China (22%), and US (28%). One of the reasons of low response rate of urban students category is that data collection was done in library itself so that many of

the students who are staying in the hostels spend long hours in the library. Thus response from the students and research scholars having rural background is high compared to the urban students and research scholars.

User Response	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Rural	993	74.77
Urban	335	25.22
Total	1328	99.99

Table 3: Respondents Geographical Distribution

5.4. Problems of Theft, Mutilation and Misplacement of library Resources

Table 4 indicates the illegal activities that are often takes place in the library. It is found from Table 4 that shelving books in different locations deliberately (21.76%), downloading e-resources using stolen login Id and password (20.70%), excessive downloading of e-resources from authorized users (20.03%), tearing pages from the books (19.57%) are some of the major illegal activities frequently faced by the respondents.

Illegal activities	Responses				Total (%)
	Frequently	**Sometimes**	**Rare**	**Never**	
Theft of library materials	213 (16.03%)	295 (22.21%)	331 (24.92%)	489 (36.82%)	1328 (100%)
Mutilation of library materials	252 (18.97%)	441 (33.20%)	444 (33.43%)	191 (14.38%)	1328 (100%)
Book hiding and misplacement	361 (27.18%)	465 (35.01%)	364 (27.40%)	138 (10.39%)	1328 (100%)
Unofficial borrowing	200 (15.06)	331 (24.92%)	448 (33.73%)	349 (26.28%)	1328 (100%)
Borrowed books are not returned	230 (17.31%)	391 (29.44%)	446 (33.58%)	261 (19.65%)	1328 (100%)
Pages torn or removed from the books	260 (19.57%)	465 (35.01%)	415 (31.25%)	188 (14.15%)	1328 (100%)
Books are shelved in different locations deliberately	289 (21.76%)	438 (32.98%)	428 (32.22%)	173 (13.02%)	1328 (100%)
Library staff hide important books or use it for personal purpose	226 (17.01%)	324 (24.39%)	362 (27.25%)	416 (31.32%)	1328 (100%)
Excessive downloading of e-resources from authorized user	266 (20.03%)	422 (31.77%)	390 (29.36%)	250 (18.82%)	1328 (100%)
Downloading e-resources with a stolen login and password	275 (20.70%)	362 (27.25%)	320 (24.09%)	371 (27.93%)	1328 (100%)

Table 4: Problems of Theft, Mutilation and Misplacement of library Resource

5.5. Reason for Theft, Mutilation and Misplacement of Library Resources

Table 5 presents the data about reasons for theft, mutilation and misplacement of library resources. Majority of the respondents have strongly agreed that high price of textbooks (35.84%), high cost of photocopying of text books (34.18%), lack of proper photocopying facilities and less number of required books (30.42%), library restricted environment in accessing library materials (30.79%), and insufficient borrowing periods (30.94%) are some of the major reasons for theft, mutilation and misplacement of library materials in libraries. In a similar study Ogunyade (2005) found that short period of loaning of library materials and less number of copies of required books were some of the major reason for stealing books in libraries.

Sl No	Reasons	Responses					
		SA*	AG*	CS*	DA*	SD*	Total (%)
1	Library restricted environment	409 (30.79%)	521 (39.23%)	126 (9.48%)	104 (7.83%)	168 (12.62%)	1328 (100%)
2	Restricted to access or borrow rare book materials	277 (20.85%)	604 (45.48%)	208 (15.66%)	86 (6.47%)	153 (11.52%)	1328 (100%)
3	Incompetence/connivance of library staff	309 (23.32%)	443 (33.35%)	290 (21.82%)	99 (7.43%)	187 (14.08%)	1328 (100%)
4	Fear of others may borrow and fail to return in time	262 (19.72%)	517 (38.93%)	287 (21.61%)	116 (8.73%)	146 (10.99%)	1328 (100%)
5	Uncirculated volumes (e.g., reference materials)	296 (22.28%)	534 (40.21%)	277 (20.85%)	104 (7.83%)	117 (8.81%)	1328 (100%)
6	Library opening hours are insufficient	262 (19.72%)	517 (38.93%)	287 (21.61%)	116 (8.73%)	146 (10.99%)	1328 (100%)
7	Insufficient number of copies	404 (30.42%)	542 (40.81%)	219 (16.49%)	71 (5.34%)	92 (6.92%)	1328 (100%)
8	Insufficient borrowing periods	411 (30.94%)	510 (38.40%)	224 (16.86%)	81 (6.09%)	102 (7.68%)	1328 (100%)
9	Lack of photo copying facility	435 (32.75%)	451 (33.96%)	204 (15.36%)	93 (7.00%)	145 (10.91%)	1328 (100%)
10	High cost of photo copying	454 (34.18%)	458 (34.48%)	195 (14.68%)	83 (6.25%)	138 (10.39%)	1328 (100%)
11	High price of textbooks	476 (35.84%)	476 (35.84%)	193 (14.53%)	81 (6.09%)	102 (7.68%)	1328 (100%)
12	Ignorance of the impact of theft of library materials	368 (27.71%)	436 (32.83%)	276 (20.78%)	109 (8.20%)	139 (10.46%)	1328 (100%)
13	Financial condition of the students	392 (29.51%)	481 (36.21%)	262 (19.72%)	83 (6.25%)	110 (8.28%)	1328 (100%)
14	Insensitivity towards the needs of others	328 (24.6%)	482 (36.2%)	295 (22.21%)	103 (7.75%)	120 (9.03%)	1328 (100%)
15	Lack of awareness of library use	380 (28.61%)	462 (34.78%)	246 (18.52%)	92 (6.92%)	148 (11.14%)	1328 (100%)

*Key: - SA-Strongly Agree, AG-Agree, CS-Cannot say, DA – Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree

Table 5: Reason for Theft, Mutilation and Misplacement of Library Resources

5.6. Preventive Measures of Reduce Theft, Mutilation and Misplacement of Library Resources

Table 6 depicts the preventive measures for reducing the theft, mutilation and misplacement of library resources. Almost 54% of the respondents have strongly agreed that providing more books and journals for circulation was one of the strong preventive measures to reduce the theft, mutilation and misplacement of library books in the library, followed by installing electronic security systems at appropriate place in the library (46.68%). Respondents have also strongly (agreed) opined that making availability of photo copies at cheaper rate would prevent theft in the library. Providing more number of reference books (40.36%) Remote access to e-resources (40.96%), trained security personal (40.21%) are some of the other preventive measures that the respondents have strongly agreed would reduce theft, mutilation and misplacement of library resources.

Measures	Responses					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Cannot Say	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total (%)
Provide more books/journals for circulation	713 (53.68%)	472 (35.54%)	72 (5.42%)	30 (2.25%)	41 (3.08%)	1328 (100%)
Make provisions for more reference copies	536 (40.36%)	581 (43.75%)	125 (9.41%)	45 (3.38%)	41 (3.08%)	1328 (100%)
Make provisions for providing photocopy service (Xerox) at cheaper price	568 (42.77%)	497 (37.42%)	163 (12.27%)	42 (3.16%)	58 (4.36%)	1328 (100%)
Publicize the negative impact of theft/ mutilation/misplacement of library resources	469 (35.31%)	519 (39.08%)	212 (15.96%)	64 (4.81%)	64 (4.81%)	1328 (100%)
Conducting regular library orientation programs for users	493 (37.12%)	538 (40.51%)	184 (13.85%)	55 (4.14%)	58 (4.36%)	1328 (100%)
Strict vigilance of library staff	562 (42.31%)	499 (37.57%)	175 (13.17%)	39 (2.93%)	53 (3.99%)	1328 (100%)
Providing access to e-resources remotely	544 (40.96%)	496 (37.34%)	188 (14.15%)	56 (4.21%)	44 (3.31%)	1328 (100%)
Use electronic security systems (CCTV, smart gates, etc)	620 (46.68%)	482 (36.29%)	134 (10.09%)	46 (3.46%)	46 (3.46%)	1328 (100%)
Thorough search at exit points	539 (40.58%)	513(38.62%)	172 (12.95%)	57 (4.29%)	47 (3.53%)	1328 (100%)
Use well trained security personal	534 (40.21%)	524 (39.45%)	137 (10.31%)	58 (4.36%)	75 (5.64%)	1328 (100%)

Table 6: Preventive Measures

6.FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Some of the major findings of the studies are:

• Shelving books in different location deliberately is one of the major problems that the library users often encounter.

• High price of textbooks is one of the major reasons for stealing library books, this can be corroborated with the income status of the respondents that majority have come from lower income strata of the society (84% of the respondents have family income status of 5000 to 25000). However to examine the relationship between income status and book theft in the library there is an in depth behavioral study is required.

• High price of photocopying facilities, insufficient number copies and insufficient borrowing periods are some of the major problems for theft, misplacement and mutilation of books in the library.

• Majority of the respondents have suggested that there was immediate need to increase the number of copies of books available in the library and also providing photocopying facilities at a cheaper rate to curtail illegal practice at the library.

7. Suggestive Measures to Prevent Library Theft, Mutilation and Misplacement of Library Resources

Following suggestions are derived from the findings of the study to prevent theft, mutilation and misplacement of library materials in libraries in general and university libraries in particular.

• Library management should enact rules and regulations that are stiff and stringent enough to discourage potential illegal activities

• Use sign board at appropriate places in the library to educate the users regarding ill effects of theft, misplacement and mutilation of library materials

• Conduct regular user education/ orientation programs for users

• Libraries should engage more trained security personnel.

• The photocopying services of the library should be subsidized. This will reduce the tendency of stealing or mutilating library materials.

• Provide remote access to e-resources
• Use electronic security system (CCTV, Smart gates magnetic strips trigger's alarm, etc)
• Those found guilty of theft, mutilation and misplacement should be given counseling and should warned of the consequences.

CONCLUSION

The result of the study showed that theft, mutilation and misplacement of the library is a serious problem in university libraries in Karnataka. This kind of unnatural attitude of the library users would strongly effects library users to use library resources to the optimal level. In order to prevent theft, mutilation and misplacement of library materials in university libraries there is a urgent need to implement the suggestions made in this study. That will help library authorities and committees to reduce illegal activities within the library premises.

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