

Veterinary College Libraries in India Vs Veterinary Medical Library Standards: An Evaluation

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Abstract - The study attempts to evaluate the existing status of Veterinary College Libraries in India by applying the prevailing standards of the Academic Veterinary Medical Library, USA have been applied to the results of this study for inference and discussion, as no such standards are available in Indian context from the perspective of Veterinary College Libraries especially from Veterinary Council of India (VCI) - an apex body for Veterinary Colleges. Results report on the Library Building and adequacy of Space, financial resources and provisions, status of qualified library professionals and library services rendered to the users by Veterinary colleges in India.

Keywords: Library Standards, Veterinary Libraries, Veterinary Standards

I. INTRODUCTION

Veterinary education formally began in the western world in the 1760s in Lyon and Alfort in France with the establishment of first western veterinary colleges. These institutions were established in an effort to reduce the severe economic impact of animal diseases, particularly rinderpest. The French colleges had high standards for producing well educated veterinarians who quickly addressed important animal health problems of the day and the new profession flourished. The first Anglophone College was established in London in 1791. Although founded on high principles, it adopted low standards resulting in a profession with limited competence and low public esteem.

The first successful colleges in North America were private institutions modeled after British Veterinary Colleges viz., the New York Veterinary College established in 1857 and the Ontario Veterinary College in 1862. Private colleges, generally with low standards, dominated veterinary education in North America. During the World Wars, veterinary education in the United States was consolidated in the land-grant colleges. The land-grant tradition of teaching, research, and public service was adopted by veterinary colleges. Veterinary education, however, was poorly supported during this period, which reflected the lack of public concern for the profession. But, World War II was a turning point for veterinary science education ushering in a "Golden Age". Veterinary colleges adopted high standards and were strongly supported. Well-educated veterinarians provided for a wide

variety of human needs. The profession flourished as never before and gained a high level of public acceptance (Pritchard, 2005).

Libraries are providing strong support to achieve the goals of veterinary system through ensuring quality based services to the students, faculty and staff. Libraries are deeply committed to update the collections continuously in order to reinforce and enrich the knowledge base for assisting the institutions to achieve excellence in academic, research and development and continuing veterinary education activities. Veterinary Librarians should employ new information technologies and new approaches to better serve their users in new ways of acquiring information. These libraries should organize their services so that they bring their information resources closer to the busy veterinary practices. In the veterinary information world, there are a lot of opportunities to seize new possibilities presented by ICTs to provide relevant information for veterinary practitioners in the most convenient way. In order to really understand the realms of the existing current status and prospects of Veterinary College Libraries in India, the study has been undertaken.

II. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

To keep abreast of current developments in the field of Veterinary sciences, access to the information to the veterinarians, academicians and scientists is very much essential, for which Libraries and Information Centers occupy significance to cater to the timely information needs of the veterinarians. The studies in Indian context are very less, as veterinary is an evolving discipline in India. Studies carried out in Indian context are briefed.

Sami and Jadhav (2009) proposed to form a consortium of veterinary college libraries of Karnataka discussing major consortium initiatives of India, budget position, dissimilarities in collection development, staffing pattern, and elements of resource consortium.

Rathinasabapathy and Mohana Sundari (2008) studied the characteristics and advantages of virtual libraries and profile of important virtual libraries dealing with Agriculture, Veterinary and Animal Sciences. Rathinasabapathy and

Amudhavalli (2005) attempt to present a preliminary proposal to develop a web portal for sharing resources among State Agricultural University and ICAR institute libraries. Ahmad and Haridasan (2005) report the results of a questionnaire survey to investigate the use of the periodical collections of the National Library of Veterinary Sciences (NLVS), India, by post graduate and research students. The results indicated that majority of the users are satisfied with the periodicals collection at the NLVS.

Resource sharing and cooperative functioning through networking becomes vital for library and information centers and efficient resource sharing can be achieved by using the recent advances in information technology for realizing a network of libraries and information centers (Swaminathan 2006). In India, veterinary profession began late, compared to Western world, Arvindan (2002), mentioned that, the Bengal veterinary college was opened first in 1892, the Madras veterinary college in 1903 and Veterinary College was opened in Patna in 1930, with an objective to create a cadre of veterinarians to look after the health problems of domestic animals, and to manage the dairy herds maintained by the military and Government farms.

Joshi (2001) evaluates the present status of the veterinary college libraries in Maharashtra based on data collected using questionnaire method found that, there is no uniformity in the growth of the collection in veterinary college libraries in Maharashtra and the periodical section is mostly neglected. There is no separate library building for any of the veterinary colleges in Maharashtra. There is no separate reading room facility except the Nagpur Veterinary College. It also reveals that almost all the Veterinary College libraries in Maharashtra are understaffed. Hutchinson (1999) conducted library evaluation in Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANVASU), Madras (Chennai) by means of SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) and recommends for library improvements to increase access to and use of information technologies for providing better service and for more efficient technical operations. Pathan and Karisiddappa (1989) present an overview in general that, libraries play an important role in educational systems and suggested the need for strengthening of library collections, and need to train more staffs, and suggest for a model network at the national level.

Rajasekharan (1983) reiterates that veterinary science is provided with adequate abstracting and indexing sources and is not confined to veterinary journals alone. The combined resources of the existing information system can meet most of the requirements of veterinarians. Computer applications in the retrieval of both retrospective and alerting services are mentioned.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study is to explore the current status of Veterinary College Libraries available in India in the light of the Standards for the Academic Veterinary Medical Library were approved by members of the Veterinary Medical Libraries Section during Medical Library Association 2003 in San Diego, California with respect to

- Library Building and Adequacy of Space
- Adequate financial resources
- Qualified library professionals
- Library services

IV. METHODOLOGY

Survey method has been employed to elicit information from the Veterinary College Libraries in India which has been imparting veterinary and animal science education. The population of the study consists of Veterinary College Libraries in India. There are 43 veterinary colleges in the country. Out of 43 Veterinary Colleges, 39 Veterinary Colleges located in different states of India responded with a response rate of 90.6%. The data collected from the Veterinary College Libraries in India has been coded and decoded by feeding the independent and dependent variable in the SPSS-Statistical Package in Social Sciences (16.0 version).

The Standards Committee of Academic Veterinary Medical Libraries Section was appointed in May 2000 and charges to create standards for the ideal academic veterinary medical library written from the perspective of veterinary medical librarians. The resulting Standards for the Academic Veterinary Medical Library were approved by members of the Veterinary Medical Libraries Section during Medical Library Association 2003 in San Diego, California. The standards were approved by Section Council in April 2005 and received final approval from Board of Directors of the Medical Library Association during Medical Library Association 2004 in Washington, DC (Murphy et. al, 2005). These standards are applied to the current status veterinary college libraries in India are discussed.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

Table I reveals that 48.72% of veterinary colleges in India are having exclusive library buildings and the remaining 51.28% of colleges with no separate library building, alternate arrangements are made to house the collections in college rooms. Out of 39, only 07 (17.94%) veterinary college libraries are air-conditioned and the remaining 32 (82.06 %) libraries do not have air condition facility.

TABLE I DETAILS OF VETERINARY COLLEGE LIBRARIES BUILDINGS

Particulars	No. of Veterinary College Libraries	Percentage
Independent Library Building	19	48.72
No Separate Library Building	20	51.28
Air-conditioned	07	17.94
Non Air-conditioned	32	82.06

TABLE III SOURCES OF INCOME OF VETERINARY COLLEGE LIBRARIES (N=39)

Sl. No.	Types of sources	No of Libraries	Percentage
1	Library fees	39	100
2	State Government	33	84.62
3	Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)	32	82.06
4	Dept. of Social Welfare	03	7.7

TABLE IV BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR BOOKS, PERIODICALS AND CD-ROM DATABASES

Budget (In lakhs)	Books		Periodicals		CD-ROMs/ Online Sources	
	No. of Libraries	%	No. of Libraries	%	No. of Libraries	%
Up to 00.50	07	17.92	09	23.08	-	-
0.51-01.00	05	12.82	03	7.70	-	-
1.01-05.00	18	46.14	13	33.33	16	41.02
5.01-10.00	03	7.70	06	15.37	09	23.08
10.01-20.00	02	5.12	03	7.7	01	2.56
20.01-40.00	04	10.26	03	7.7	-	-
40.01-80.00	-	-	02	5.12	-	-
Not allocated	-	-	-	-	13	33.33

Majority of veterinary college libraries 84.62 % are getting financial support from their respective state government, followed by 82.06 % of libraries getting financial support from ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) - a central agency of the government established for the purpose of improvement and development of agricultural and animal husbandry higher education in the country. On the other hand, only 7.7 % of libraries are receiving financial support from the state Social Welfare departments to purchase library text books for the benefit of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students (Table III).

Out of 39 libraries, nearly half of the libraries (46.14%) allocated an amount ranging between Rs.1.01 to 5 lakhs towards purchase of books. About 33.33 % of libraries have made budget provision for subscription of periodicals between Rs. 1.01-5 lakhs. However, three libraries each have allocated library budget towards subscription of periodicals from Rs. 10 to 20, Rs. 20.01- 40 and Rs. 40.01- 80 lakhs respectively. However, only one library has allocated maximum amount

TABLE II ADEQUACY OF SPACE IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES' BUILDINGS

Adequacy of Space	No. of Veterinary College Libraries	Percentage
Adequate Space available	25	64.1
Space is inadequate	14	35.9
Total	39	100

64.1 % of veterinary college librarians have indicated adequacy of space in their library building while the rest are of the opinion that the space is not adequate (Table II).

Libraries heavily depend on continuous supply of funds, for organizing their activities, programmes and services smoothly. For continuous supply of uninterrupted funds there should be some assured sources of income for each and every library.

ranging from Rs.10.01 to 20 lakhs for purchase of CD-ROM databases and the remaining 33.33 % of libraries indicated lack of budget provision for purchase of CD-ROM databases in their respective libraries. Comparative analysis of the allocation made between books, periodicals and CD-ROM databases, it is evident that the amount spent on periodicals is more than the books or CD-ROM databases (Table IV). An overall analysis of Table IV brings to the fore the fact that amount spent on subscription of periodicals is more than the amount spent on any other services.

Table V provides an insight in to the persons heading the different veterinary college libraries under study. Out of 39 veterinary college libraries, only 10.3 % of libraries are headed by a full time professional librarian. More than one third of libraries (35.9%) do not have full time professional staff and are headed by non library professionals, which poses greatest challenge for Library and Information Science professional.

TABLE V STATUS OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF IN VETERINARY COLLEGE LIBRARIES

Sl. No.	Types Personnel	No of Libraries	%
1	Librarian (Full Time)	4	10.3
2	Deputy Librarian	2	5.1
3	Assistant Librarian	16	41
4	Library Assistant	3	7.7
5	Non Library professional heading the Library	14	35.9
	Total	39	100

TABLE VI PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF LIBRARY STAFF

Qualifications	No of Libraries	Percentage
B. L. I. Sc.	5	12.82
M. L. I. Sc.	20	51.2
M.L.I.Sc, M. Phil	5	12.82
M.L.I.Sc, Ph.D.	4	10.26
Non professional	14	35.9

TABLE VII INFORMATION SERVICES OFFERED AT VETERINARY COLLEGE LIBRARIES

Sl. No.	Services	No of Libraries	Percentage
1	Reference Service	39	100
2	Bibliographic service	27	69.24
3	Reprographic Service	39	100
4	C A S	20	51.28
5	S D I	20	51.28
6	On-line database services	11	28.2
7	E- Journal Services	11	28.2
8	Inter Library Loan	17	43.58
9	CD-ROM services	26	66.66

Majority of (51.2 %) librarians working in Veterinary College libraries possess M.L.I.Sc qualification and 12.82 % of librarians have M.L.I.Sc with M. Phil qualification. However, only 10.26 % of library staff possesses the highest qualification of Ph.D. in the field of Library and Information Science (Table VI).

All the libraries are providing reference and Reprographic services to their users. Further 69.24 % of libraries are providing bibliographic service. Where as, 51.28 and 43.58 % of libraries are providing Current Awareness (CAS), Selective Dissemination Information (SDI) services and Inter Library Loan services to the users. However, 28.2 % of libraries provide online and E-journal services to the students and faculty members of the colleges. About 66.66 % of libraries provide CD-ROM database services to its users.

It is the information services offered by Veterinary College Libraries that signifies the role of Veterinary College Libraries for their visibility. Hence, the result calls for comprehensive and need based services to the users especially with the advent of ICT. IT based services are focused to be very less among Veterinary College Libraries and hence there is a need for Veterinary College Libraries to concentrate on designing and developing e-resources and

extend e-services to the desktop of users with better ICT infrastructure and bandwidth.

Many libraries in India have set up resource consortia for resource sharing at national level such as UGC Infonet Consortia set up by INFLIBNET., INDEST Consortium, (Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences & Technology) etc. CeRA - a National Consortia in the field of Agriculture and Veterinary Science, developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi. The libraries and information centers around the world have developed networks over a period of time for exchange of information to serve the user community.

It is observed from the table that, majority of the Veterinary College Libraries 74.36 %, are subscribing to CeRA consortium accessing online journals and electronic databases available in the field of veterinary and animal sciences, while 23.08 % of Veterinary College Libraries form consortia members of ARIS network .It is also observed from the table that only one library is a part of INDEST consortium. About 7.7 % of libraries are members of INFLIBNET network and one (2.56%) library is connected to DELNET and one to MALIBNET.

TABLE VIII ACCESS TO LIBRARY NETWORKS AND CONSORTIA AMONG VETERINARY COLLEGE LIBRARIES

Member of Library Consortia	No. of Libraries	Percentage
INDEST	01	2.56
ARIS	09	23.08
CeRA (Consortium for e-Resources in agriculture)	29	74.36
INFLIBNET	03	7.7
DELNET	01	2.56
MALIBNET	01	2.56

TABLE IX RESOURCE CONSORTIA ACTIVITIES

Sl. No.	Consortia activities	No. of Libraries	Percentage
1	Co-operative Acquisition	9	23.07
2	Union Catalogue	9	23.07
3	Document Delivery of Service	6	15.38
4	Exchange of Experience & Expertise	5	12.82

It is observed from the table that, 23.07 % of veterinary college libraries are carrying out co-operative acquisition activities and have union catalogue; where as 15.38 % of libraries are following co-operative document delivery service among the participating libraries. Similarly, 12.82 % of libraries exchange their experiences and expertise of the staff through the consortia activities among participating member libraries. The result from the above table calls for improving and enhancing resource consortia activities among Veterinary College Libraries in India.

VI. DISCUSSIONS

As per the Standard 5 for Academic Veterinary Medical Library - 'appropriate space is provided for the library's collections, personnel, and services and supports the research and study needs of students, faculty, and staff'.

It is indicated from the results of Table I and Table II that, slightly less than half of the veterinary colleges in India are having independent library buildings and the rest do not have separate library buildings. Besides, 64 % of the veterinary college librarians indicated lack of adequate space to house library collections and render services to the users. Hence keeping in view of the standard 5, separate building for the veterinary library with spacious building is suggested to facilitate an active learning environment where students, faculty, and staff can engage in quiet study or scholarly debate, continuous assessment of library facilities related to library users is required. An active learning environment includes adequate space for group and individual study, information technology, library collections, and library staff.

As per the Standard 4 for Academic Veterinary Medical Library - 'The library's reporting relationship allows active participation in the institution's planning and resource allocation process. Adequate financial resources are provided to meet the information needs of the individuals the library serves. The library assesses the needs of its users and the quality of its services on an ongoing basis and provides evidence of effectiveness'

The results of Table III and IV show that, ICAR and State Government are the major source of finance to the veterinary college libraries in India. However, less than half of the veterinary college libraries make provision of library budget for books between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 5 lakh and one third of libraries have allocated library budget for journals between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 5 lakh and so also for online databases. As veterinary colleges have developed as independent discipline due to its strength in research and development activities segregating from Agriculture wing, sufficient budget needs to be provided in order to meet information needs of the individuals the library serves and thereby satisfy the standard 4 framed by Board of Directors of the Medical Library Association during Medical Library Association in Washington, DC. This is because library requires discretion to allocate financial resources independently to satisfy user needs and provide balanced collections and services.

Academic Veterinary Medical Library standard 3 states that 'The library's services are directed by a qualified professional librarian. Additional qualified professional and paraprofessional staffs are provided to support library services and address user needs'. This is because a qualified librarian is a person who has earned a master's degree and doctorate in library and information studies accredited or recognized by UGC and this is supported by Veterinary Council of India.

Table V and Table VI shows that only four Veterinary College Libraries have full time librarian out of 39 Veterinary Colleges under study and only ten percent of librarians possess PhD. Hence, the standard 3 needs to be kept in mind and academic veterinary medical librarians and paraprofessional staff should actively participate in continuing education, research, and professional activities, maintaining the unique knowledge and skills required to successfully operate a veterinary medical library. The professional responsibilities include, but are not limited to, educating users to search for and evaluate information resources; selecting, acquiring, and organizing veterinary medical collections; negotiating license agreements for electronic resources; evaluating library services; strategic planning; selecting, training, and supervising personnel; and assessing and implementing new information technologies to support and enhance library services. To achieve this, professional qualification occupies significant role.

The Standard two for the Academic Veterinary Medical Library approved by members of the Veterinary Medical Libraries Section during Medical Library Association in San Diego, California states that 'the library's services support the educational, clinical, and research programs of the veterinary medical institution and encourage optimal use of the library's resources'.

Hence the veterinary library anticipates user needs by establishing and maintaining a close relationship with users and developing services to meet their information needs. All the services are periodically reviewed which include: user orientation, bibliographic instruction and/or information literacy, reference, database and index searching, interlibrary loan and/or document delivery, circulation of materials and outreach programs offering resources, Internet services and online database services etc. But as per the results from Table VII, reference and Reprographic services are extended in all the veterinary libraries and however the remaining services are not provided to the users to a full extent and hence, the standard 2 has to be taken into account by veterinary colleges in India to extend need based services to the users.

The standard six enumerates that 'the library participates in cooperative programs with other libraries, consortia, networks, vendors, and agencies to assist it in meeting its goals and addressing user needs'.

The idea behind the standard six is to supplement library collections and resources and comply with national standards for interlibrary cooperation and overcome financial crunch by means of cooperative programs with other libraries, consortia and networks. Although the results from table VIII and IX reveals that, all the Veterinary College Libraries are subscribing to CeRA consortium accessing online journals and electronic databases available in the field of veterinary and animal sciences, but its optimum use of e-resources is still a big question, as the availability of computer and network infrastructure is found to be inadequate in the veterinary colleges in India except a few. Thus, the standard six is need of the hour and therefore there is a need to build strong ICT infrastructure to access and use CeRA consortia and other e-resources for the benefit of users.

VII. CONCLUSION

Veterinary libraries in India are at infant stage. Any planning can be easily adopted and implemented in the initial stage and therefore the Veterinary libraries can be developed on modern lines to suit the changing needs of users and technological developments, so that investments will be less and the output efficiency will be optimum to meet the organizational goals. More specifically, the veterinary

libraries have to work on mobilizing financial resources, qualified library professionals and render ICT based current awareness services, assistance to patrons with bibliographic searching, need based training, development of virtual libraries, develop and access consortia based e-resources, promotion and training in use of knowledge management tools, online Collaboration tools and maintenance and updation.

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