
CHAPTER V

BEST PRACTICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

5.1 Introduction

“Change is life, monotony is death” goes the age old saying. Change for survival” is the inner belief among today’s Library professionals. Today the librarians have become information professionals by adapting to the latest technological innovation and gadget and other sources to collect, organize and disseminate at a faster speed. Like other profession the library information practitioners has also them using online media and internet to generate information and disseminating for the users.

5.2 Best practices: Definition

Best practices in the development of infrastructure and learning resources sustained practices leading to continuous improvement of infrastructure and learning resource development to create an optimum learning ambience. ODLIS (Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science) describes best practices as follows: “The application of theory to real-life situations, presupposes that, when properly applied, consistently yield superior results and are therefore used as reference points in evaluating the effectiveness of alternative methods of accomplishing the same task. Best practices are identified by examining empirical evidence of success.”

5.3 NAAC and best practices

University Grants Commission created a higher education body (whose job is to assess the quality of university and college institutions) in 1994 in Bangalore on the recommendation of National Policy of Education (NPE) in 1986. This is National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) which strives for quality and excellence in higher education and advocates for enhancing the role of library and Information Services in improving academic environment. Document prepared by NAAC for “Best Practices in Academic Libraries says : “Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solves a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations. “NAAC developed a set of

best practices followed in academic libraries and presented under the following four broad areas:

1. Management and Administration of Library.
2. Collection and Services.
3. Extent of User Services.
4. Use of Technology.

Academic library are now required to be provided high order physical facilities and infrastructure including ample and cleaned space, comfortable seating arrangement and adequate lighting in the libraries. The digital resources are now inevitable in academic libraries

For academic libraries, NAAC has developed some of the following best practices that can enhance the academic information environment and usability of academic libraries.

- Computerization of library with standard digital software.
- Inclusion of sufficient information about the library in the college prospectus.
- Compiling student/teacher attendance statistics and locating the same on the notice board.
- Displaying newspaper clippings on the notice board periodically.
- Career/Employment Information/ Services.
- Internet Facilities to different user groups.
- Information literacy programs.
- Suggestion box and timely response.
- Displaying new arrivals and circulating a list of those to academic departments.
- Conducting book exhibitions on different occasions.
- Organizing book talks.
- Instituting Annual Best User award for students.
- Organizing competitions annually.
- Conducting user surveys periodically.

University libraries have to adopt best practices in order to promote optimum utilization of the library facilities and services. The important Best Practices of University Libraries are highlighted below

5.3.1 User orientation

The orientation and induction programme for the benefit of library users in the beginning of academic year has become the most essential services in the university libraries. This programme helps the user to know about the infrastructure of the library and the systems of functioning of the library. This help the students in familiarize themselves with the library resource and services on computers.

5.3.2 Book bank scheme:

Under this scheme meritorious students and students belonging to SC/ST and low Income group are issued books for a period of one semester/ year. Such students return the book after their final exams.

5.3.3 Gold card facility:

Those student who have got more than 75% or 85CGPA marks they are eligible to borrow one book extra with their regular borrowing. The facility will be only for same semester. User can be encourages to develop reading habits and maximum use of library resources.

5.3.4 Silver card:

In this category top ten users will be selected on the basis of visits to the library, number of books issued during the period of one month or total transactions made during that period will be considered. Those who come under this category are eligible to issue one additional book along with their regular borrowings till the completion of their semester to motivates users to use library service and resources effectively

5.3.5 Book fairs and exhibitions:

For the purpose of build up quality collection of library every year organized book fair on the basis of demand of books from users. Exhibitions are organized regularly to create awareness among the student Publishers, faculty members. Librarians as well as faculty members areessentials to participate in book fair.

5.3.6 Database search for books and discovery tools:

The library through OPAC can enable the users for and quick retrieval of their needed resources in library. Resource discovery tools are helpful in searching multiple databases at a time

5.3.7 Book review contest:

This contest helps to promote the reading habit among the students community.

5.3.8 Book talk programme:

This programme can develop the public speaking ability of the students

5.3.9 Best user of the library:

The libraries can give the best user award every year to the students using a maximum resource of the library like time spent in reference, number of book transactions, every year an eligible student is chosen for “Best User” award.

5.3.10 Training programme on use of E-Resources:

The trends of using Internet and online services are growing rapidly. The volume of downloading information has immensely increased with the level of educational needs. This necessitates the university libraries to undertake demos and training for the use of online database such as INFLIBNET, N-List, and other academic web sites for benefit of students

5.3.11 Online free journals and their links:

Online Free Journals and useful links are to be provided to the Faculty, Students and Researchers in university libraries for optimum utilization of the available resources and to establish cordial relationship among them and also on a best practice not commonly found in similar other libraries.

5.3.12 Inter library loan:

The interlibrary loan facilities sharing multi-dimensional information needs of the user's main university libraries have adopted this practice

5.3.13 Web OPAC:

This digital era made a revolutionary impact on the libraries. Now a day's by extending the horizons of their services beyond four walls, traditional libraries become virtual libraries.

5.3.14 Newspapers:

Library receives various newspapers on various languages are made available in the Newspaper section. The back issues will be provided to users on request. Articles are being archived under different domains.

5.3.15 Micro documents and other Resources:

The Library is having non print materials, which are meant only for references like Institute Publications, Seminar Papers, Reports and Question papers which is useful to the students.

3.16 Onlinerenewal/ reservations

Under this practice the information is provided to the faculty and students about the claims for books and issue once by filling up reservation form available in the library.

5.3.17 Reprography service:

This is also available in the Central Library for the convenience of the staff and the students.

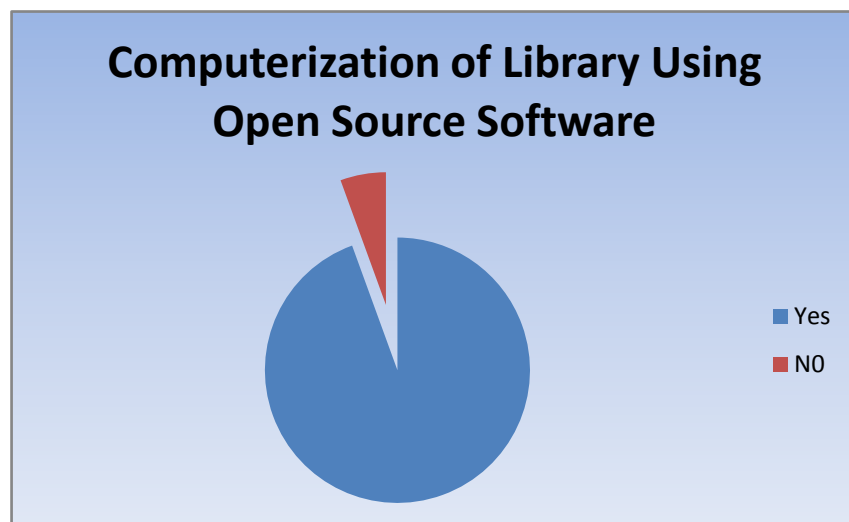
5.3.18 Best practices in universitylibraries in Maharashtra: Data Analysis

Best practices as quality of high standard, excellence, highly improved, outstanding, par excellence service. It means way of doing something that is usual or expected way in a particular organization or situation, guidelines for good practices. In this process of developing best practices we take action rather than good ideas, and we improve our skills. NAAC's concern for quality of library practices as well as NAAC's set of best practices in academic libraries. Efforts have been made to understand the best practices adopted by university libraries in Maharashtra and results are shown in graphical representation as shown below.

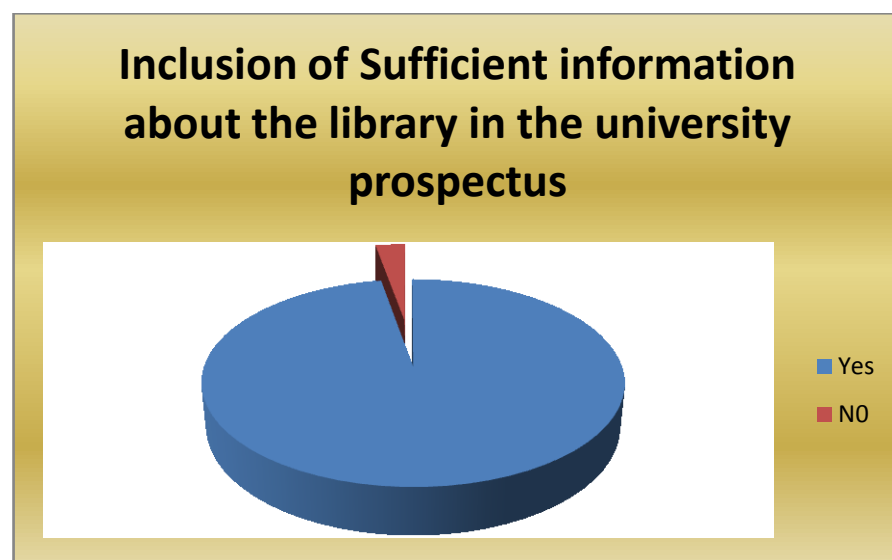
TableV:- 1: Best practices adopted in University libraries

Sr. No.	Best Practices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Computerization of Library Using Open Source Software	34	94.4
2	Inclusion of Sufficient information about the library in the university prospectus	35	97.2
3	Compiling student/Teacher attendance statistics and Locating the same on notice board	23	63.9
4	Displaying Newspaper clippings on Notice board	30	83.3
5	Career/employment information/services	31	86.1
6	Internet facilities to different user groups	34	94.4
7	Arranging Information Literacy programme	33	91.7

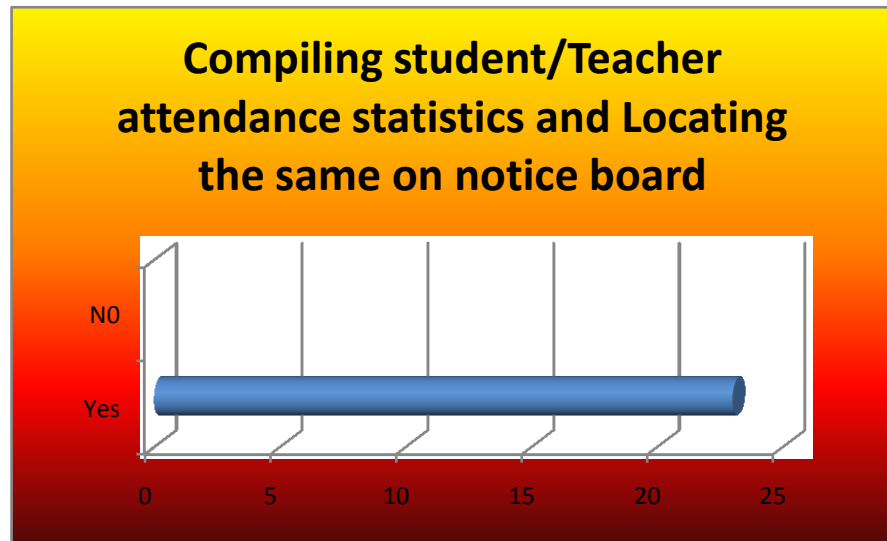
Sr. No.	Best Practices	Frequency	Percentage
8	Signage systems	24	66.7
9	Suggestion Box and timely Response	31	86.1
10	Displaying New Arrivals and Circulate list of Academic Departments	7	19.4
11	Conducting Book exhibitions on different occasions	13	36.1
12	Organizing Book Talks	21	58.3
13	University Annual Best user Award for student	4	11.1
14	Organizing Competitions Annually	13	36.1
15	Conducting User Surveys Periodically	4	11.1
16	Collection Development policy Print and E-resources	25	69.4



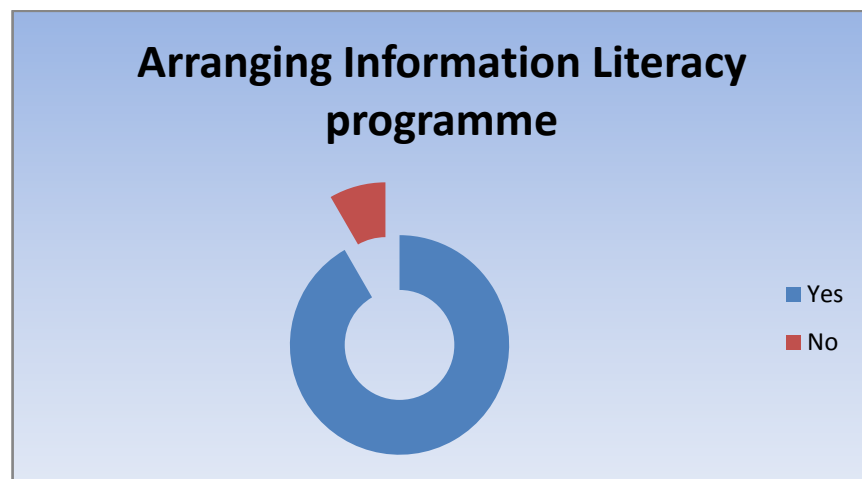
Graph-V: No-1 computerization of library using open Source software



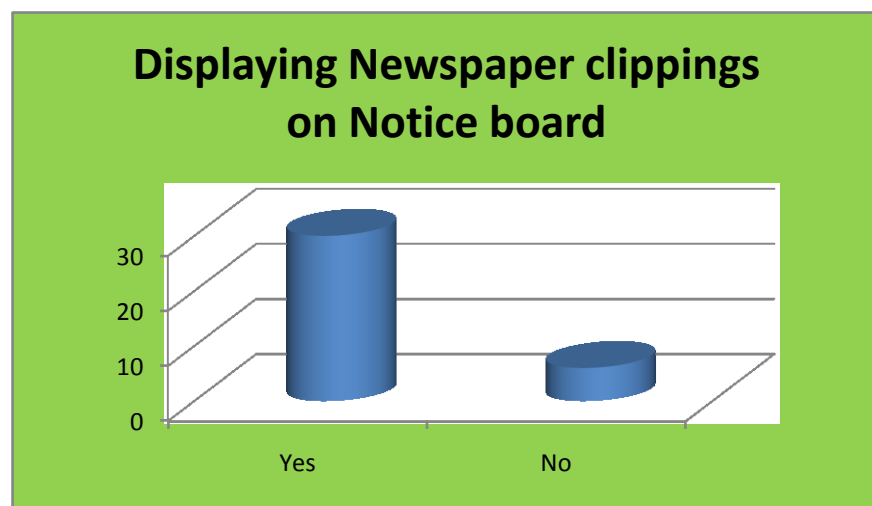
Graph-V:No-2 Inclusion of Sufficient information about the library in the university prospectus



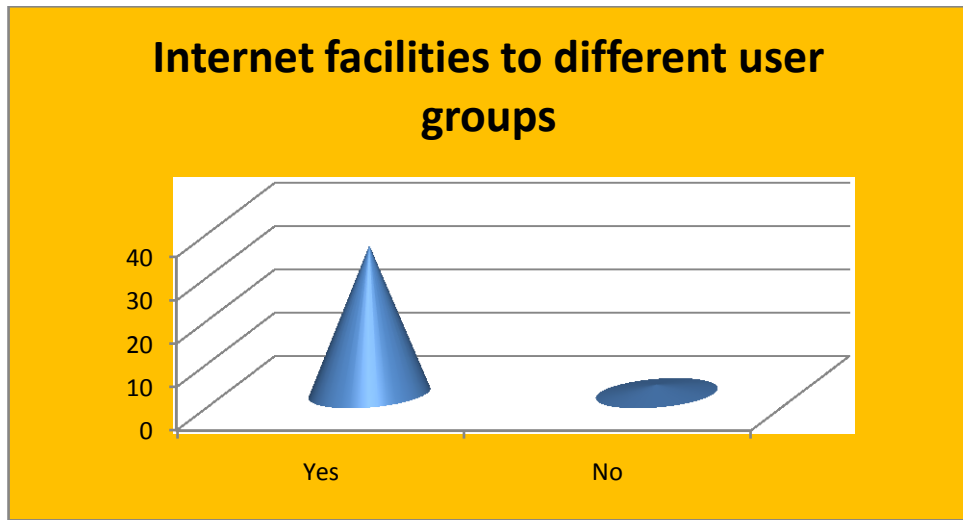
Graph -V:No-3 Compiling student/Teacher attendance statistics and locating the same on notice board



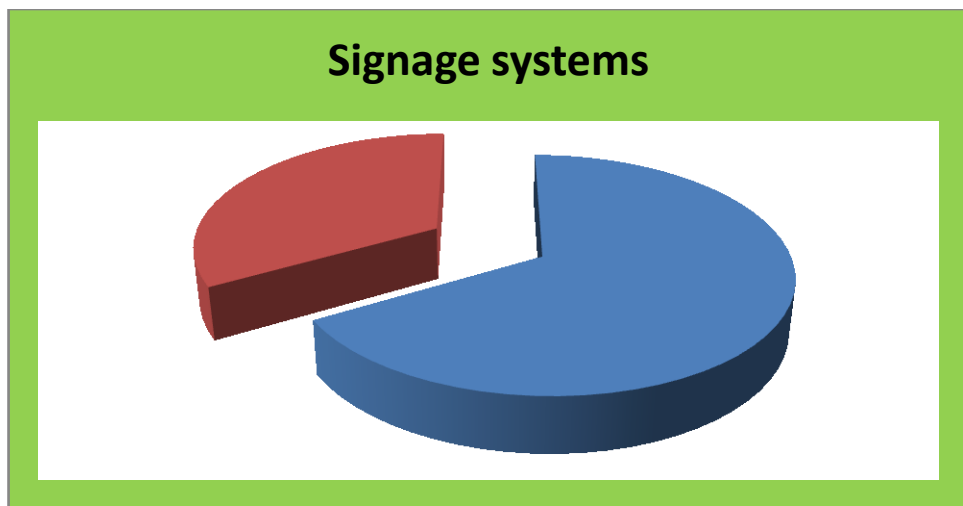
Graph -V:No-4 Arranging Information Literacy programme



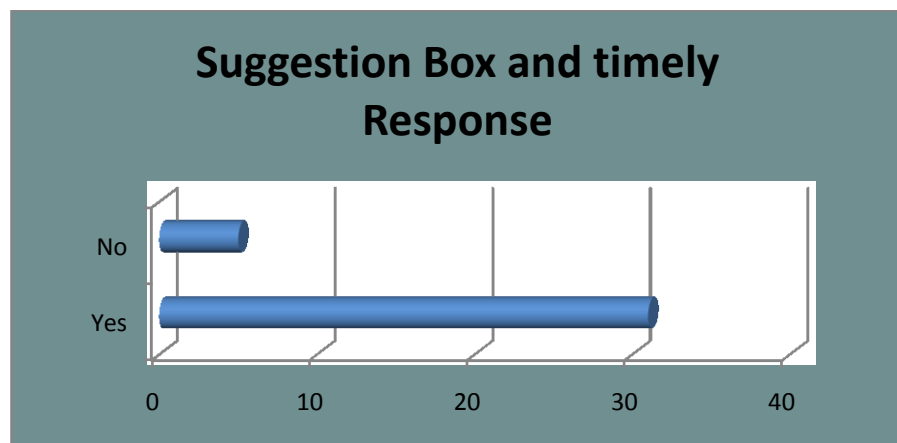
Graph -V:No-5 Displaying Newspaper clipping on Notice Board



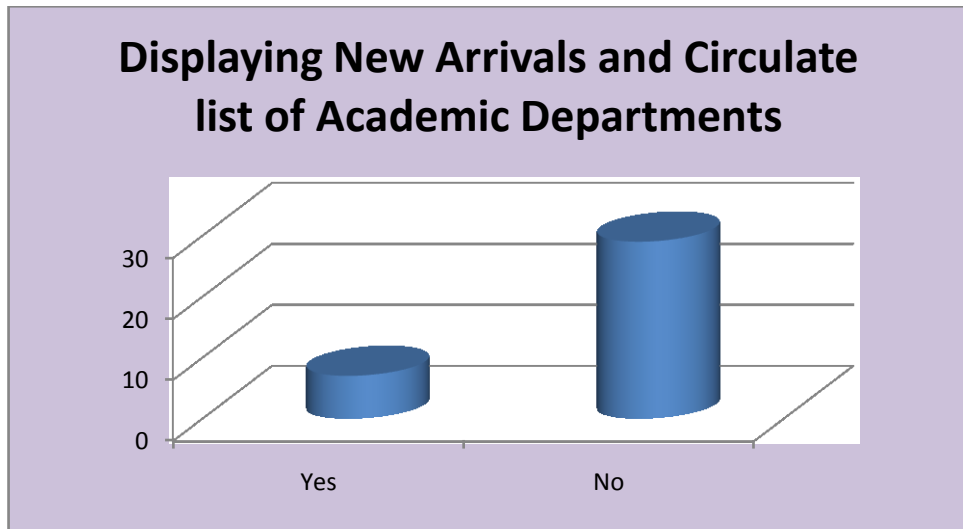
Graph -V:No-6 Internet facilities to different user groups



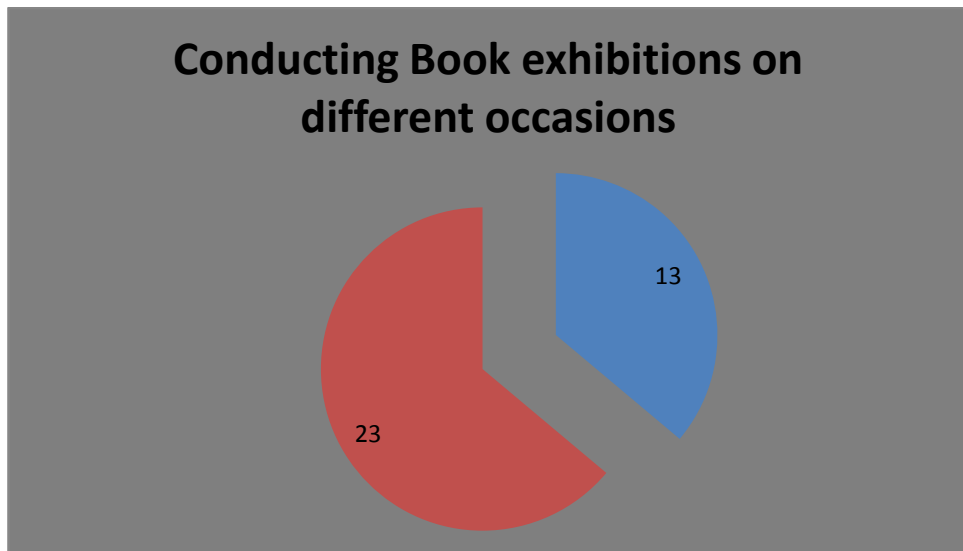
Graph -V:No-7 Signage System



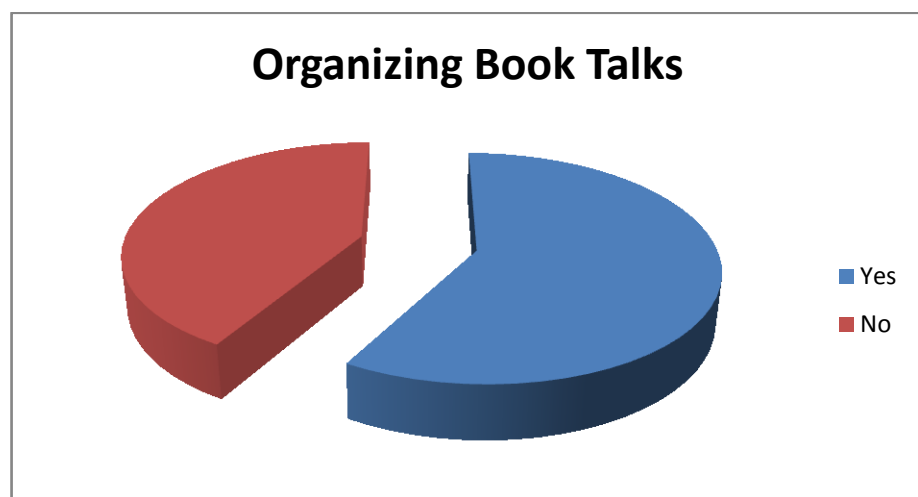
Graph -V:No-8 Suggestion Box and timely Response



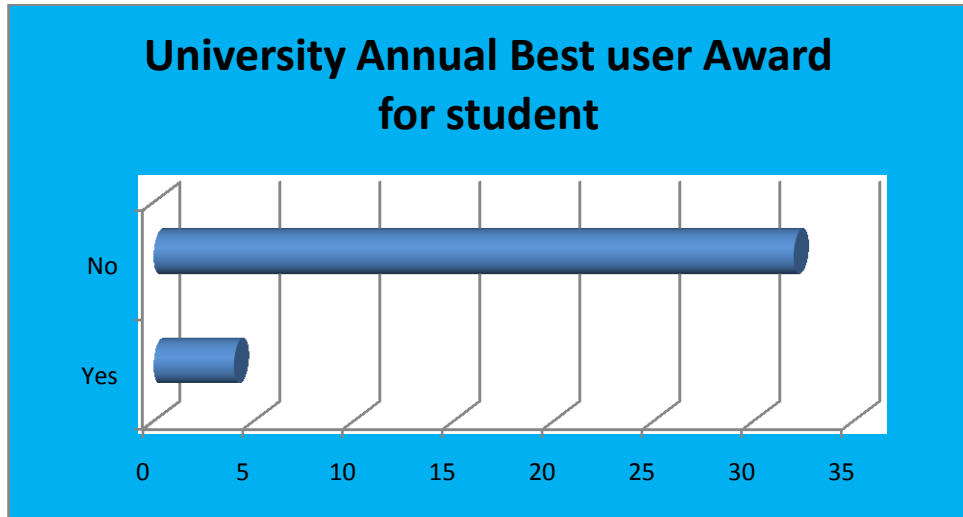
Graph -V:No-9 Displaying new arrivals and circulate list of academic departments



Graph -V:No-10 Conducting book exhibitions on different occasions



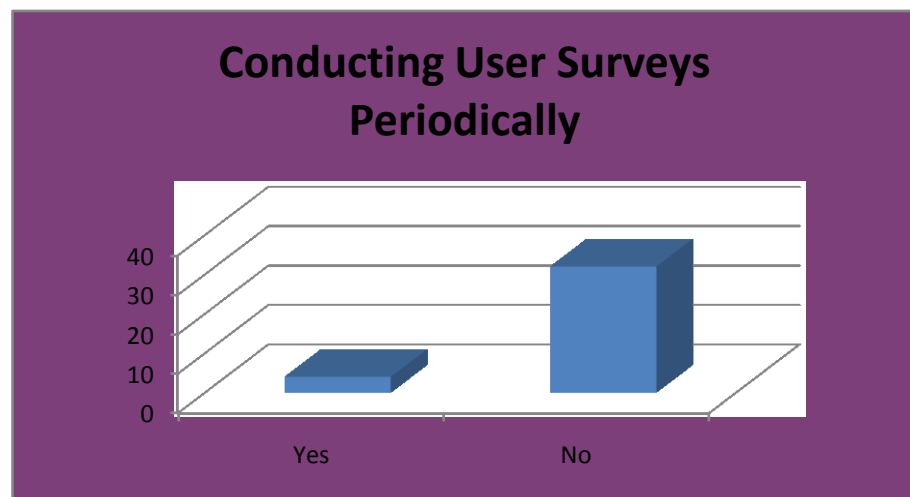
Graph -V:No-11 Organizing Book Talks



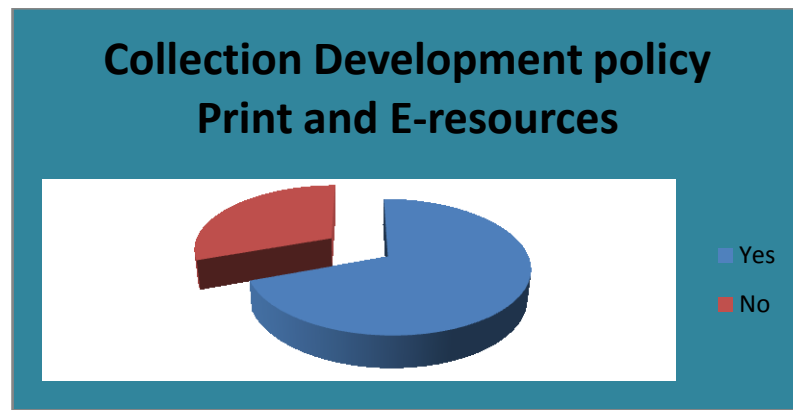
Graph -V:No-12 University Annual Best User Award for student



Graph -V:No-13 Organizing competitions annually



Graph -V:No-14 Conducting user surveys periodically



Graph -V:No-15 Collection development policy and E-Resources

Table 1 shows the best practices adopted in university libraries of Maharashtra. University libraries in Maharashtra have carried out various best practices for the benefit of students and faculties in the university libraries of Maharashtra state. Among them the best practices adopted by the university libraries are inclusion of sufficient information about the library in the university prospects (97.2%) computerization of library using open source software (94.4%), Arranging information literacy programme (91.7%), Organizing competitions annually (88.9%), career/ employment information services (86.1%), Suggestion box and timely response (86.1%), collection development policy - print and E- Resources (69.4%), signage system (66.7%), Compiling student/Teacher attendance statistics and locating the same on notice board (63.9%) and organizing book talks (58%). On the other hand some of the libraries adopt best practices to the little extent pertaining to conduct of book exhibitions (36.1%) circulate list of new arrivals in academic departments (19.1%) and conducting user survey periodically (11.1%).

Summary

Efforts were made to notify the significance of Best Practices in University libraries and enumerated best practices adopted in university libraries based on NAAC guidelines and also reported the findings of best practices being adopted in university libraries of Maharashtra state. Libraries need to focus on designing and delivering products and services to meet the identified needs of their community. Although disseminating information originating in the developed world, is certainly a useful activity, a more effective strategy for sustained long term human development is to disseminate the capability of creating information collections rather than the collections themselves. No doubt that the university libraries plays vital role for achieving goals and objectives of its parent institution. It is the responsibility of the academic libraries to follow the best practices in order to improve the quality of its services and sustenance

References:

1. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. (2007) Catherine Soanes & Angus Stevenson (edit). 2nd ed. New Delhi, Oxford University Press,
2. Mittal, R. L. (2007) *Library Administration: Theory & Practice*. 5th ed. New Delhi, EssEss Publications.
3. NAAC. (2006) *Best Practices in Library and Information Services*. [online] Available from: http://www.naac.gov.in/best_practices (Accessed on dt.14/06/2014)
4. NAAC. (2006) *Library and Information Services: A Case Presentations*. [online] Available from: <http://www.naac.gov.in/casepresentations> (Accessed on dt.14/06/2014)
5. NAAC. (2006) *National Assessment and Accreditation Council: A Brochure*. Bangalore, [online] Available from: http://www.naac.gov.in/manuals_ass_accrd/manual (Accessed on dt.14/06/2014)
6. NAAC. (2006) *Quality Indicators in Library and Information Services: Affiliated/Constituent Colleges*. [online] Available from: <http://www.naac.gov.in/guidelines/> (Accessed on dt.14/06/2014)
7. Reitz, Joan M. *Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science*. [online] Available from: <http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/searchODLIS.aspx> (Accessed on dt.14/06/2014)
8. Vyas, S. D. (2009) Best Practices in Academic Libraries in India: A Study. In: *proceeding of International Conference on Academic Library*. 2009, 5th-8th Oct. India, New Delhi. Delhi University Library System, University