

## ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION SERVICES AND PRODUCTS IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES OF KARNATAKA STATE: TOWARDS MARKETING APPROACH

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Based on the content analysis of websites of 51 universities of Karnataka state, an attempt is made to identify the information products and services indigenously developed by university libraries. Findings reveal that only 44 university libraries have functioning websites. Further, the study also reveals that university libraries do not provide advanced information services and information products beyond alerting level. This context suggests that the university libraries have to think of developing indigenous products and services on-line with Kotler's definitions, within the purview of McCarthy's 4Ps as outlined by Saracevic with the existing staff using emerging technologies that are worth marketing.

**Keywords:** Marketing; Information Services; Information Products; Web-enabled Services; University Libraries; Karnataka, India

## INTRODUCTION

Marketing of LI (Library and Information) services and products as a concept is more than five decades old. However, in the Indian context though much is spoken about it, its practice in the true spirit is still invisible. It is because there is a different belief about the concept among the LIS professionals. Many professionals subscribing to the thoughts of traditional LIS schools consider the concept of marketing as the one that violates the very philosophy of librarianship. Those who do not believe in traditional roots of librarianship see the concept of marketing as buying, selling process from profit point of view. But much of the Indian literature on marketing of LI services and products see it as an opportunity to prove the worthiness of libraries and stress on academic libraries to market the LI products and services based on marketing mix. Hence, an effort is made to know to what extent university libraries are providing information services and products to optimise the marketing concept.

## MARKETING AS CONCEPT

Marketing as a term connotes many meanings. The term is understood differently by different professionals. Though there is no uniformity in its definition, many professional organizations and individuals have defined the term from their perspective. Marketing is defined as “the analysis, planning, implementation and control of carefully formulated programme designed to bring about voluntary exchange of values, with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives” (Kotler, 2000). Bushing (1998) defined marketing as the management process that is responsible for the identification, anticipation, and satisfaction of customers’ requirements profitably. Rowley (2001) views marketing as “a management process by which customer or user requirements are identified, anticipated and supplied efficiently and profitably”. All definitions make it crystal clear that marketing aims at customer satisfaction and requires the entrepreneurs to consider marketing approach to sell their products and services. Core of marketing is considered to be the marketing mix proposed by Borden but converted by McCarthy into 4 P’s viz., Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Of all the Ps, the first P – the Product is the most essential component without which marketing as a process cannot start.

In this context, the ‘Product’ gets importance. In the context of libraries be it public or academic or special, products are information products including information services. Information product is any portion of information/ knowledge that has been recorded

in some systematic way. It means information product is an item that has been derived from more than one source to achieve a specific purpose. According to Saracevic (1986) Information product is the end result of the process of evaluation and compression of relevant documents in order to provide definite user groups with reliable and concise information in usable form. Information product is a source where data and information are structured in a specific format to educate, instruct and guide the consumers in order to meet a predetermined purpose. In the context of academic libraries information products may be educational materials, instructional guides, reviews, reports, databases, technical writings, handbooks, critical studies and requests for specific services. Unless these products are indigenously developed by academic libraries (entrepreneurs) one cannot expect the marketing of information products and services.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reported literature was searched in LISTA, emeraldinsight.com, JSTOR GATE and Google Scholar. Many studies are reported from practicing librarians, researchers and LIS teachers from different parts of the world. Much of the literature is quite theoretical only bringing in many issues of marketing in libraries and information centers. A number of studies were based on either Kotler’s theories or McCarthy’s 4Ps and their applications in libraries. Few studies highlight on the problems and prospects of marketing information products in libraries. Very few studies have been conducted based on field surveys.

Suresh Kumar (2013) studied the application of marketing mix variables, degree of marketing orientation and users’ attitude towards marketing

applications of the university libraries in Kerala by conducting a survey of universities in Kerala. The results indicate that university libraries in Kerala have moderate degree of marketing orientation. In another study Suresh Kumar (2013a) based on a survey of 842 users of university libraries in Kerala, found that a majority of users were willing to pay for quality information services rather than free services. The study also found that very few users were aware of existing information services. Sookhtanlo and others (2014) surveyed 90 staff employed in central libraries in the selected Faculties of Agriculture in Iran. The results indicate that majority of them (72.3%) have positive and very positive attitude to applying information marketing factors. Sarita Rani and Kaur (2005) examined the attitude of the professional staff at Guru Nanak Dev University Library Amritsar towards different aspects of marketing. The results reveal that the attitude of library staff towards marketing of LI products and services is positive.

Kanujia (2004) studied marketing of information products/services in LICs of R&D institutions of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research in India. The findings reveal that librarians have a positive attitude towards different aspects of marketing of a library's information products/services. Enweani's (2018) study of identifying the strategies used in marketing library and information services in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Okukwu University Teaching Hospital, Amaku, Awaka, Nigeria reveal that strategies used were ineffective compared to the then contemporary changing environment and suggests to use online marketing technique. Anil Kumar's (2014) study of users at Kurukshetra University

library found that users are ready to pay for the services and products but a majority of them were not aware and hence haven't used the services and products.

The review reveals that many articles have been published on topics like "pricing, strategies adopted and LIS professionals or user's willingness to accept the marketing concept". But a major component 'Product' hasn't received the attention from the researchers. Hence the big question 'whether the libraries have the required information products and services to market them' necessitates undertaking the present study.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The primary objective of the study is to identify the availability of different types of information services and information products indigenously developed by the Universities in Karnataka State which can be of worth marketing.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Websites of 51 universities (Appendix 1) which were established before 31.12.2015 were visited between 01.01.2019 and 31.10.2019. Basic information about universities was noted from the websites. Further, Library and Information Services including Web enabled services provided by the university libraries and Information Products indigenously developed by the university libraries were also noted down in a worksheet specially designed for the purpose. And the data was analyzed.

## **RESULTS**

### **General Information**

The table 1 depicts the nature of universities in Karnataka. The data shows that there is one

Central University (1.96%, N=1), twenty five (49.02%) state universities, fourteen (27.45%) deemed universities and eleven (21.57%) private universities as on 31.12.2015.

**Table 1: Nature of Universities**

Nature	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Central	1	1.96
State	25	49.02
Private	11	21.57
Deemed	14	27.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Accreditation of Universities

The accreditation details of the universities are provided in table 2. It is found that 21 (41.18%) universities were not at all accredited. More than half of the universities (N=26, 50.98%) were accredited to NAAC and three (5.88%) universities were accredited by ICAR and only one (1.96%) university was accredited by IACBE (International Accreditation Council for Business Education).

**Table 2: Accreditation of Universities**

Accreditation	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
No	21	41.18
NAAC	26	50.98
ICAR	3	5.88
IACBE	1	1.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Library Websites

It is found from the table 3 that all the universities have their websites. Nearly three fourth of the universities have (N=36, 70.59%) library website as part of the university website, only 15.69% (N=8) of the libraries have independent websites, in 5 (9.80%) universities

there are no details regarding their library and one each university library menu does not open and the library needs to develop their link. Hence, only 44 university libraries were considered for further processing of data on information products and services.

**Table 3: Nature of university library websites**

Nature of websites	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Independent	8	15.69
Part of University	36	70.59
Library menu does not open	1	1.96
Need to develop link	1	1.96
No details	5	9.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Information Services and Products

The table 4 provides the details of different library and information services provided by the university libraries mentioned in their websites. It can be seen that all the universities provide reprographic service (N=44, 100%) in their libraries. 81.82% (N=36) of them provide reference service, 56.82% (N=25) provide inter library loan, 47.73% (N=21) provide newspaper clipping service. It can also be observed that nearly 45.45% (N=20) university libraries provide document delivery service which is very much required by the university library users. 40.91% (N=18) university libraries provide current awareness service, very less number of universities i.e., 27.27% (N=12) provide referral service, 25% (N=11) provide literature search service and question paper bank service is provided by six (13.64%) university libraries. Only four (9.10%) university libraries provide selective dissemination of information service and the services like technical enquiry service,

translation service and outreach service are provided by one (2.22%) library each. The services like abstracting, data service and bibliometric services are not provided by any of the university libraries of Karnataka. This means the university libraries are not providing majority of the library services which are helpful to the user community to search information.

**Table 4: Library and Information Services provided by the university libraries**

LI services	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Reference service	36	81.82
Referral service	12	27.27
Literature Search Service	11	25.00
CAS	18	40.91
SDI	04	9.10
Newspaper Clipping Service	21	47.73
Abstracting Service	00	00
Data Service	00	00
Technical Enquiry Service	01	2.27
Translation Service	01	2.27
Reprographic Service	44	100.00
Inter Library Loan Service	25	56.82
Document Delivery Service	20	45.45
Bibliometric Service	00	00
Outreach service	01	2.27
Question Paper Bank	06	13.64

### Web enabled services provided by the University libraries

The table 5 provides the details of the university libraries providing web enabled services through their library websites. It can be found that more than three fourth (N=34) university libraries are providing web based user education in their libraries and 43.18% (N=19) of the university libraries provide access to online databases. 29.55% (N=13) provide subject gateways, 13.64% (N=6) provide virtual library

services, 9.1% (N=4) provide ask-a-librarian service, 6.82% (N=3) provide FAQ. It is also found that none of the university libraries are providing bulletin board service. It can also be observed that many of the innovative web-enabled services are yet to be introduced by the University libraries.

**Table 5: Web enabled services provided by the University libraries**

Web-enabled services	No. of respondents (N=44)	Percentage (%)
Virtual Library Service	06	13.64
Ask- A – Librarian	04	9.10
Bulletin Boards	00	00
Web based user education	34	77.27
Web forms	00	00
Access to online databases	19	43.18
FAQ	03	6.82
Subject Gateways	13	29.55

### Information Products indigenously developed by the university libraries

The table 6 lists the information products indigenously developed by the university libraries. It is found that majority of the university libraries (N=37, 84.10%) provide link to e-journals, 81.82% (N=36) provide link to e-books, two third (N=31, 70.45%) of the university libraries provide web OPAC and 68.18% (N=30) provide link to e-courseware. More than half of the university libraries (N=25, 56.82%) provide catalogue of theses and dissertations and ETD, 40.91% (N=18) provide institutional repositories of the universities, 22.73% (N=10) provide accession list/ list of new additions, 13.64% (N=6) provide e-newsletter, around 9.1% (N=4) of them provide in-house journals, 6.82% (N=3) of the university libraries provide Bibliographies,

**Table 6: Information Products indigenously developed by the university libraries**

Information products	No. of respondents (N=44)	Percentage (%)
Library brochure	02	4.55
Accession lists/ List of additions	10	22.73
Web OPAC	31	70.45
Catalogue of theses and dissertations	25	56.82
ETD	25	56.82
Link to e-books	36	81.82
Link to e-journals	37	84.10
Link to e-course wares	30	68.18
Current Awareness Bulletins	06	13.64
Bibliographies	03	6.82
Datasheets	00	00
Handbooks/Manuals	00	00
Expert Databases	00	00
State of the art reports	00	00
Trend reports	00	00
Technical digests	00	00
Translation pools	00	00
In-house journals	04	9.1
E-Newsletters	06	13.64
Institutional Repositories of the University	18	40.91
Reviews	01	2.27
Trade literature Bulletins	00	00
Infographics	00	00

4.55% (N=2) of them provide their library brochure, and only university library provides review service. Many other web enabled services like providing datasheets, handbook/manuals, expert database, state of the art reports, trend reports, technical digests, translation pools and trade literature bulletins are not provided by any of the university libraries. It can be interpreted that the status of providing indigenously developed information products is not really encouraging as many of them are yet to provide such products and services.

## CONCLUSION

The results reveal that the university libraries have not been putting considerable efforts in the design and development of

information products and services based on the principle of marketing which are worth of marketing. The services and products which one can find now in university libraries are mandatory ones. A majority of them are alerting types of products and services. In view of the contemporary changes worldwide, the very face of library has changed. In this context the university libraries have to think of developing indigenous products and services on line with Kotler's definitions, within the purview of McCarthy's 4Ps as outlined by Saracevic.

McCarthy's 4 Ps have put a clear responsibility on the LIS professionals. They have to carefully balance these 4Ps in their marketing mix to make sure that they have a visible, in-

demand product or service that is competitively priced and promoted to suit the demands of the user community which they are serving. The third P of McCarthy, in the context of Saracevic's definition, means product emanating from the process of information analysis and consolidation involving different activities to satisfy the information needs of user groups. Hence, LIS professionals have to explore, create and deliver value to satisfy the needs of target group i.e. the user community of the library.

Of course the present day university libraries have their own inherited problems like lack of minimum required staff to maintain routine operations and financial cuts. In spite of this challenging situation, university libraries must realize the benefits of marketing. It can create competitive advantages. Development of new services and products will increase user base, improves status and image of the organization, and helps in getting better scores in accreditation process. Indeed it is time for the university libraries to initiate the development of products based on market analysis suitable for different user groups. Though a separate unit is required with required staff as proposed by Saracevic and Seetharama, one can start with the existing staff using emerging technology.

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#### APPENDIX -1

List of Universities/ institutions of higher learning whose websites were visited

1. Central University of Karnataka, Kalaburagi ([www.cuk.ac.in](http://www.cuk.ac.in))
2. Bangalore University, Bengaluru ([www.bangaloreuniversity.ac.in](http://www.bangaloreuniversity.ac.in))
3. Davangere University Davangere ([www.davangereuniversity.ac.in](http://www.davangereuniversity.ac.in))
4. Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi ([www.gug.ac.in](http://www.gug.ac.in))
5. Kannada University, Hampi ([www.kannadauniversity.org](http://www.kannadauniversity.org))
6. Karnatak University, Dharwad ([www.kud.ac.in](http://www.kud.ac.in))
7. Karnataka Flokore University, Shiggaon ([www.janapadauniversity.ac.in](http://www.janapadauniversity.ac.in))
8. Karnataka State Law University, Hubballi ([www.kslu.ac.in](http://www.kslu.ac.in))
9. Karnataka State Dr. Gangubhai Hangal Music and Performing Arts, Mysuru ([www.musicuniversity.ac.in](http://www.musicuniversity.ac.in))
10. Karnataka State Open University, Mysuru ([www.ksoumysuru.ac.in](http://www.ksoumysuru.ac.in))
11. Karnataka State Women's University, Vijayapura ([www.kswu.ac.in](http://www.kswu.ac.in))
12. Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Science University, Bidar ([www.kvafsu.edu.in](http://www.kvafsu.edu.in))
13. Kuvempu University, Shivamogga ([www.kuvempu.ac.in](http://www.kuvempu.ac.in))
14. Mangalore University, Mangalagangothri ([www.mangaloreuniversity.ac.in](http://www.mangaloreuniversity.ac.in))
15. National Law School of India University, Bengaluru ([www.nls.ac.in](http://www.nls.ac.in))
16. Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bengaluru ([www.rguhs.ac.in](http://www.rguhs.ac.in))
17. Rani Channamma University, Belagaum ([www.rcub.ac.in](http://www.rcub.ac.in))
18. Tumkur University, Tumkuru ([www.tumkuruniversity.ac.in](http://www.tumkuruniversity.ac.in))
19. University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore ([www.uasbangalore.edu.in](http://www.uasbangalore.edu.in))
20. University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad ([www.uasd.edu](http://www.uasd.edu))
21. University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur ([www.uasraichur.edu.in](http://www.uasraichur.edu.in))
22. University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot ([www.uhsbagalkot.edu.in](http://www.uhsbagalkot.edu.in))
23. University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shivamogga ([www.uahs.edu.in](http://www.uahs.edu.in))
24. University of Mysore, Mysore ([www.uni-mysore.ac.in](http://www.uni-mysore.ac.in))



25. Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ballari ([www.vskub.ac.in](http://www.vskub.ac.in))
26. Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belagavi ([www.vtu.ac.in](http://www.vtu.ac.in))
27. BLDE University, Vijayapura ([www.bldeu.ac.in](http://www.bldeu.ac.in))
28. PES University, Bengaluru ([www.pes.edu](http://www.pes.edu))
29. Christ University, Bengaluru ([www.christuniversity.in](http://www.christuniversity.in))
30. Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru ([www.library.iisc.ac.in](http://www.library.iisc.ac.in))
31. International Institute of Information Technology, Bengaluru ([www.iiitb.ac.in](http://www.iiitb.ac.in))
32. JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research, Mysuru ([www.jssuni.edu.in](http://www.jssuni.edu.in))
33. Jain University, Bengaluru ([www.jainuniversity.ac.in](http://www.jainuniversity.ac.in))
34. Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bengaluru ([www.jncasr.ac.in](http://www.jncasr.ac.in))
35. KLE Academy of Higher Education and Research, Belgavi ([www.kledeemeduniversity.edu.in](http://www.kledeemeduniversity.edu.in))
36. Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal ([www.manipal.edu](http://www.manipal.edu))
37. NITTE University, Mangalore ([www.nmamit.nitte.edu.in](http://www.nmamit.nitte.edu.in))
38. Sri Devraj Urs Academy of Higher Education and Research, Kolar ([www.sduu.ac.in](http://www.sduu.ac.in))
39. Sri Siddhartha Academy of Higher Education, Tumakur ([www.sahc.in](http://www.sahc.in))
40. Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, Bengaluru ([www.svyas.edu.in](http://www.svyas.edu.in))
41. Yenepoya University, Mangaluru ([www.yenepoya.edu.in](http://www.yenepoya.edu.in))
42. Alliance University, Bengaluru ([www.alliance.edu.in](http://www.alliance.edu.in))
43. Azim Premji University, Bengaluru ([www.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in](http://www.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in))
44. CMR University, Bengaluru ([www.cmr.edu.in](http://www.cmr.edu.in))
45. Dayanand Sagar University, Bengaluru ([www.dsu.edu.in](http://www.dsu.edu.in))
46. Garden City University, Bengaluru ([www.gardencity.university](http://www.gardencity.university))
47. M S Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Bengaluru ([www.msruas.ac.in](http://www.msruas.ac.in))
48. Presidency University, Bengaluru ([www.presidencyuniversity.in](http://www.presidencyuniversity.in))
49. Rai Technology University, Bengaluru ([www.raitechuniversity.in](http://www.raitechuniversity.in))
50. REVA University, Bengaluru ([www.reva.edu.in](http://www.reva.edu.in))
51. KLE Technological University, Hubballi ([www.kletech.ac.in](http://www.kletech.ac.in))

