



NATIONAL NETWORK FOR VETERINARY COLLEGES IN INDIA: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO VETERINARY COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to propose National Network of Veterinary colleges in India based on the research study to evaluate the veterinary college libraries in the country. To achieve this, standards of the Academic Veterinary Medical Library, USA have been applied to the results of this study for inference and discussion. 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: Veterinary Libraries, India, Veterinary Standards, Library Standards

1.1 Veterinary Education in India

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).

The Veterinary Council of India is a statutory body of the Government of India framed under an Act of Parliament i.e. Indian Veterinary Council Act, 1984 (52 of 1984). This is an Act to regulate Veterinary practice and Veterinary education. The Act stands extended to all the States of India. Only those who possess recognized veterinary qualification and registered can practice in the country. Since its inception the VCI has been taking active steps in revising the curriculum in collaboration with the ICAR and its adoption by the universities. This council advises the Central and State Government on all the matters related to veterinary education and practice.

1.2 Role of Libraries and Veterinary Education

Agricultural research, the backbone of agricultural growth in the country, demands timely dissemination of knowledge being generated and updated across the globe from time to time. With the advent of internet facilities and advancement of web technology, almost all reputed international journals are available on-line and can easily be accessed by researchers over the network. Since ICAR is having network connectivity across the institutes and state agricultural universities, select journals could be made available over the network for the use of scientific community. Keeping this broad objective in mind, the NAIP has established the Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA) at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI).

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.

CeRA is consortium of e-journals being subscribed by NAIP, ICAR and access is provided to 123 libraries of Agriculture (NARS) for the years 2008-10 (3 years). Through this service the user can access the following three major on-line Portals and Bouquet of Journals from Publishers with full text like Springer link; Annual Reviews,

CSIRO (Australia): Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) and JCCC (J-Gate Custom Content for Consortia).

1.3 Research Question, Design and Methodology

Research in question 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

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% using survey method. 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).

1.4 Veterinary College Libraries in India: Results and Discussion

Table 1 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 – 1
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

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*. 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.

Table – 2
Sources of Income of Veterinary College Libraries (N=39)

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

Majority of veterinary college libraries 84.62 percentage are getting financial support from their respective state government, followed by 82.06 percentage 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 percentages 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 3).

Table – 3
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

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 percentage 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. An overall analysis of Table 4 brings to the fore the fact that amount spent on subscription of periodicals is more than the amount spent on any other services.

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'. Hence, library requires discretion to allocate financial resources independently to satisfy user needs and provide balanced collections and services.

• Qualified Library Professionals

Possessing requisite and higher qualification in LIS will definitely help the Veterinary College Libraries to organize and serve the user community to their satisfaction and hence, LIS qualification occupies a significant role in moulding the image of LIS profession.

Table – 4
Status of Professional Staff in Veterinary College Libraries

Sl. No.	Types Personnel	No of Libraries	Percentage
01	Librarian (Full Time)	04	10.3
02	Deputy Librarian	02	5.1
03	Assistant Librarian	16	41
04	Library Assistant	03	7.7
05	Non Library professional heading the Library	14	35.9
	Total	39	100

Table – 5
Professional Qualifications of Library Staff

Qualifications	No of Libraries	Percentage
B. L. I. Sc.	05	12.82
M. L. I. Sc.	20	51.2
M.L.I.Sc, M. Phil	05	12.82
M.L.I.Sc, Ph.D.	04	10.26
Non professional	14	35.9

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.

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

percentages of libraries provide CD-ROM database services to its users.

Table – 6
Information Services offered at Veterinary College Libraries

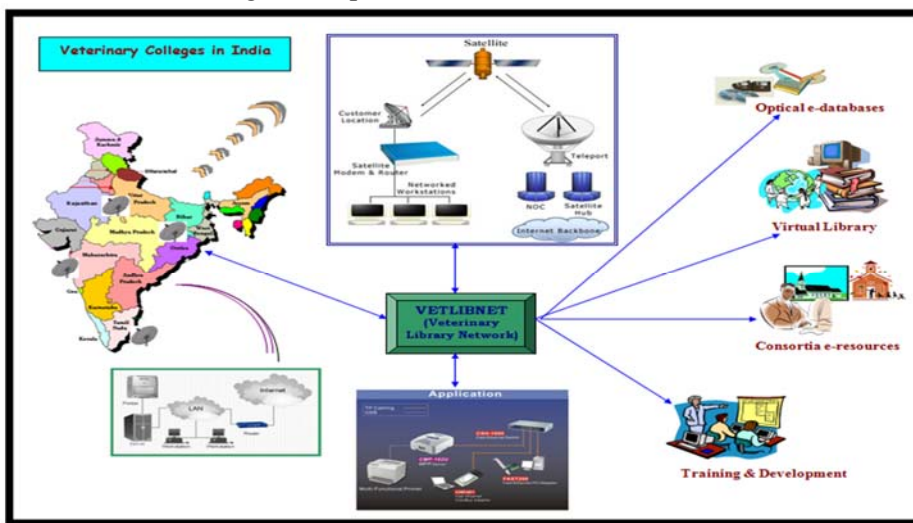
Sl. No.	Services	No of Libraries	Percentage
01	Reference Service	39	100
02	Bibliographic service	27	69.24
03	Reprographic Service	39	100
04	C A S	20	51.28
05	S D I	20	51.28
06	On-line database services	11	28.2
07	E- Journal Services	11	28.2
08	Inter Library Loan	17	43.58
09	CD-ROM services	26	66.66

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.

1.5 National Network of Veterinary colleges in India

Today consortium purpose is shifted from mere sharing of resources to sharing of expertise

between libraries and also explores the need for libraries to make the most effective use of their funds collectively. This proposed model focuses on establishing strong networks for Veterinary Colleges in the country with a view to modernize and setup Veterinary Learning Resource Centers as the most logical site to integrate and distribute a wide variety of both electronic and human information resources for learning, teaching and research. This national network provides information service to veterinary and animal scientists, and allied animal health professionals, with a focus on access to high quality information and lifelong learning in the 21st Century knowledge economy providing various e-Services on the web.



VETLIBNET (Veterinary Library Network) is a proposed network of libraries (Figure) under the purview of Veterinary Council of India covering 43 Veterinary Colleges in India, whose main

mission is to create a virtual network of Library information sources and services to provide effective and efficient access to knowledge through perseverance, innovation and

collaboration. In this direction, Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), being one of the premier research institutions with deemed university status can take lead in establishing Library network for all the Veterinary institutes in the country. By establishing campus network in all the Veterinary College Libraries as proposed earlier, cost on establishing Veterinary Library Network at national level would be easier. By establishing national network, individual libraries will be benefited by the resources available in the veterinary libraries at national level. The proposed model of service delivery needs to be implemented with sound ICT infrastructure with innovative library services to manage electronic resources and develop opportunities using technology for the desktop delivery of services and continuing to manage efficiently and effectively the print collections in the knowledge age.

Conclusion

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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