

Illegal Practices in Engineering College Libraries

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Abstract

Libraries are considered venerable, quite peaceful and safe places for study, learning and research, libraries are soul of the educational institutes and play vital role by providing resources and services according to curriculum of the faculty and students. Library is a social institution preserving and disseminating knowledge in the form of documents so anything which defiles its sanctity, decorum, discipline, beauty concerning library is called as vandalism in library. The present paper is to highlight concept of library crime, vandalism in engineering college libraries, to specify objectives of the research, hypothesis, limitations, methodology and conclusion of the study.

KEYWORDS: Library Crime, Vandalism, Illegal Practices, Theft, Misplacement, Mutilation, Engineering College Library, Vandal, BAMU & SRTMU.

1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries are institutions set up to cater to the educational, cultural, research, recreational and information needs of their users. Libraries have the main objectives of being entrusted with the selection, acquisition, organisation, storage and dissemination of information to their patrons. As a working professional in library and information science, it is observed that there is noticeable growth in number of the students and faculty in the colleges, it has ultimately resulted in the growth in library users, hence college libraries are facing the problem to cope up with the rising needs of the users and relevant library facility. The infrastructure available in the library is resulting ultimately in the dissatisfaction among the young users, which sometimes leads the users to do vandalistic activities. The vandal purposely or ignorantly destruct the beautiful, valuable reading material, library building, furniture and equipment of the college libraries, as well as physical and verbal abuse with library staff and other users. All forms of library abuses and crimes in the library come under vandalism in the library.

Vandalism is recognized as crime, when a person willfully damage or deface the property of others or the commons, some vandalism qualifies as culture jamming on sniggling. It is artistic in nature as well as being carried out illegally or without the property owner's permission. An example of vandalism includes graffiti art, billboard liberation and possibly crop circles. Criminal vandalism has many forms, graffiti, salting lawns, cutting trees, egg throwing, breaking windows, arson, spraying paint on public property tagging placing glue into locks, tire slashing, scratching paint, engraving, ransacking a place and flooding someone's house by clogging a sink and leaving the water on is common in many inner cities as a part of gang culture. Other devastating forms such as rioting, involve the willful destruction of public and private property, vandalism is serious common crime.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A vandal is one who willfully destroys damages or defaces property belonging to others or to the public. Vandalism, therefore, is willful or malicious destruction of public or private property. Historically vandalism has been justified by painter Gustave Courbet as destruction of monuments symbolizing “war and conquest”. Therefore, it is often done as an expression of contempt, creativity, or both. Vandalism is only a meaningful concept in a culture that recognizes history and archaeology. Like other similar terms (Barbarian / barbary, and Philistine), Vandals like the Philistines, no longer exist as an identifiable ethnic group. The term in its modern acceptance was coined in January 1794 during the French Revolution by Henry Gregoire, constitutional bishop of Blois, in his report directed to the Republican Convention, where he used word Vandalism to describe some aspects of the behavior of the republican army. Gustave Courbet’s attempt, during the 1871 Paris Commune, to dismantle the Vendome column, a symbol of the past Napoleon III authoritarian empire, was one of the most celebrated events of vandalism (Wikipedia 2011).

Cohen (1973) outlined the categories of vandalism, such as acquisitive; tactical; ideological; vindictive; play or malicious; Gouke and Marjorie (1980), studied on periodicals mutilation following an anti vandalism educational campaign. They found that mutilation of the same periodicals studies before the campaign decreased by twenty three percent after the campaign; Hauge (1995), suggested several practical steps for preventing vandalism in school libraries; There were several studies conducted on different aspects of safety and health issues. Manley (1993) nonscientific survey on sexual harassment by library patrons; He found that seventy-eight percent of the females responding said they had been sexually harassed; also conducted a follow up survey to see if this high percentage was warranted; found that 83% of the respondents had been harassed and forty percent had been “physically harassed”.

The preventive measures, the guidelines contain several recommendations for a librarian reacting to theft. He or she should discreetly call for security, notify the library security officer, and engage the suspect in no threatening conversation.

2.1 Proposed Research

In the context of libraries crime & vandalism occurs in various forms which define its sanctity, decorum, discipline, beauty concerning library. The research problem vandalism in library is recognized by many information scientists, researchers, writers and information professional as a major problem facing library managers.

Library Crime & Vandalism is a serious and widespread problem in all types of libraries like academic, public, crime & vandalism in libraries can be damage to library material, crime & vandalism inside & outside building, vehicles, equipment, arson, furniture etc. apart from this theft, mutilation, loss of books, arson, non return of books, physical and verbal abuse, misuse of reading material, over borrowing, unauthorized borrowing, problem patron behavior, delinquent readership, misplacement, and illegal incidences inside and outside the library constitute vandalism.

Although researchers in developing countries have identified solutions to the problem of vandalism in library, in third world countries such as India, more needs to be done to solve the increasing wave of the vandalism like theft, mutilation, misplacement crime against property and people, over borrowing, book loss and so on from academic library specially college library.

3. EXPLANATION OF THE CONCEPTS

3.1 Illegal Practices

The illegal practices in relation to the college library are treated as theft of books and other materials mutilation or tearing out pages, book hiding and misplacement, Unauthorized borrowing, non return of books, physical and verbal abuse with staff and users, vandalism of library property and disruptive behavior by the users etc.

3.2 Theft

Theft from libraries is a prevalent practice in all types of libraries. Academic libraries are not exception for these practices. Book theft and pilfering is much greater problems.

3.3 Mutilation

The problem of book vandalism or mutilation is well known among the librarians. Library stock can be damaged due to the over use, careless usage, or accidental damage during the issue return process. There can be deliberate intention of the borrower to damage the books due to the poor library services.

3.4 Misplacement

Misplacement or book-hiding in the libraries is a purposeful removal of books and other reading material from the libraries or in the stacks of libraries is a experience of all working librarians and his staff the involvement of the library user in this act creates problem in rendering library services it is nothing but a kind of deliberate theft for selfish nature and to deprive the sincere users.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been undertaken with a view

1. To identify different types of illegal practices.

5. HYPOTHESIS

Following hypothesis was formulated for the study;

1. Unsatisfied users are root cause of crime & vandalism.
2. Open the access in libraries more the vandal activities.

6. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to library crime & vandalism in Engineering College libraries affiliated to Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University (BAMU) Aurangabad & Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University (SRTMU), Nanded which is in Marathwada region.

7. POPULATION SAMPLE

Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University and Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University both were one of the oldest University in the Marathwada region, according to university dairy and annual report of BAMU (2011), there were total 358 professional and non-professional affiliated colleges, of the total 358 affiliated colleges 168 are Arts, Commerce and Science colleges, which are known as non-professional, while 190 colleges are professional colleges, located in urban and rural areas of Aurangabad, Jalna, Beed and Osmanabad district, of the 168 colleges, 19 colleges were recognized during the year 2009-10 which have been omitted from the study, hence present study includes 23 Engineering colleges. Out of them one was Government college while other 19 colleges were private aided and unaided

The Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University (SRTMU), Nanded was established at Nanded by bi-furcating the Marathwada University, Aurangabad on 17th

September 1994, the day on which in 1948 Hyderabad State was liberated from rule of the Nizam. Nanded is a district headquarters as well as a holy city situated on the banks of Godavari River in southeastern part of Maharashtra state. The University is to cater for southern part of Marathwada Region of Maharashtra State, specifically to the districts of Nanded, Latur, Parbhani and Hingoli. The 12 Engineering colleges are from these four districts. Of the total population of 12 engineering college libraries the researcher has randomly selected the sample of 12 college libraries.

8. METHODOLOGY

The present study used survey method to collect the data from Engineering College Libraries affiliated to BAMU, Aurangabad & SRTMU, Nanded, to find out the prevailing situations.

“The survey method is one of the most effective and sensitive instrument of research survey research can produce much needed knowledge” (Kasyap 1969).

8.1 Data Collection

“Data are raw materials of reflection until by comparison, contrast an evaluation they are stepped up to successively higher levels of generation” (Das 1986).

For collecting the data for the present study, the researcher visited the following institutions for referring documentary sources on library crime & vandalism, viz.

The data was also collected from annual report of BAMU Aurangabad. The researcher also visited a number of relevant websites on internet. A structured questionnaire was designed separately for users and librarians.

Two separate questions included in the questionnaire on targeted material for vandalism and impact of vandalism on teaching learning and research. It was estimated that it would take about 10 to 15 minutes of user time for responding to the questionnaire.

8.2 Data Analysis & Interpretation

Collected data has been analyzed and presented in tabular as well as graphical form. In graphical form, bar charts, line graphs are used for presentation. For the purpose of analyzing the data collected, the fixed variables were user's place of residence, gender, age, and income group, the statistical software package (i.e. SPSS) has been used.

8.2.1 Illegal Practices

These practices in libraries can be different cause which can be made by the different factors, such as moral tendency of the borrowers, habitual, architectural, and reprographic and other miscellaneous factors, this anti-social behavior among user community are the major reasons for the loss of library material & vandalism to library property. For the prevention of such illegal practices in the library, librarians should understand the nature, significance and frequency of the illegal practices. This study is undertaken to expose the major hidden factors of illegal practices like book theft mutilation, book hiding, and unauthorized borrowing, non- return book. Vandalism to property and disruptive behaviors inside and exterior of library building are existed in the engineering college libraries affiliated to BAMU, Aurangabad & SRTMU, Nanded has been examined in this survey. Accordingly the respondents were asked to respond relating to the anti-social practices and information about the awareness of acceptance and participation with the problem vandalism in the library, the information obtained from the respondents analyzed and presented in the Table 8.2.1

Table No.8.2.1 Illegal Practices in the Library (N=845)

Illegal Practices	Respondents	Percentages
Theft of Books & Other Material	429	50.77
Mutilation or Tearing Out Pages, Marking Underlining on Pages	618	73.14
Book Hiding, Misplacement	211	24.97
Un-Authorized Borrowing	463	54.79
Non-Return of Books	318	37.63
Vandalism of Library Property	459	54.32
Disruptive Behavior by Users	296	35.03

Note- Cell frequencies indicate number of persons & (%) values

The seven illegal practices listed in the Table No.8.2.1 which are more prevalent in each type of engineering college libraries by the problem patron are considered as a base for the survey, the responses received by the respondents, shows the opinions towards the illegal practices that of the total 845, 618 (73.14%) respondents reported mutilation or tearing out pages, 459 (54.32%) respondents felt that it is vandalism of library property, and the 429 (50.77%) users were of the opinion that theft of books & other materials. The misplacement, un-authorized borrowing, non return of book and disruptive behavior constitute the responses were; 211 (24.97%), 463 (54.79%), 318 (37.63%) and 296 (35.03%) respectively.

Among all the illegal practices mutilation was in first rank than theft, misplacement, un-authorized borrowing, non-return of books, and vandalism to library property, which stands in second rank by their equal chi-square value.

The investigator has made an attempt to find out the users perceptions on each illegal activity which is known as library crime. The responses collected on each of the activity are presented under following headings one by one and the reasons of these activities.

Theft

Hence an attempt was made to find out the extent of such problem in engineering college libraries in BAMU & SRTMU, regarding theft problem the information collected from the respondents indicate that out of 845 users, 714 (68.07%) were of the opinion that theft of books and other reading material is prevalent in engineering college libraries, while 335 (31.93%) users, reported that they never think like this. The study of (Lincoln and Lincoln 1986; Burrows and Cooper 1992.) found that theft was the most common crime in British libraries, reflecting general crime rates. They also found that rates of loss were highest in the public library (5.3%, as compared to 2.1% for academic LIS, and 2.4% for special LIS).

Reasons for Theft

The delinquent reader intentionally creates many illegal activities in college libraries, including theft, mutilation, and misplacement, non- return of books, vandal activities and disruptive behavior inside and outside the libraries is the experience of the librarians. Hence the researcher has made an effort to find out the extent of the problem and common reasons of theft of books & other reading material from the libraries. As the literature reviewed there are number of reasons for theft problem in libraries. The investigator applied nine reasons in the survey according to the environment and library situation in this region & put forward to the respondents to know the perceived causes

and respondents them. Therefore they were asked to tick more than one option in yes/no columns in front of given reasons, The data collected from the respondents are analyzed and presented in Table 8.2.2

Table No.8.2.2 Respondents opinion on Reasons for Theft

Reasons for theft	No. of respondent	Percentage
Poverty	413	48.88
Low Income	329	38.93
Social Environment	152	17.99
Cultural Background	67	7.93
Library Environment	203	24.02
Over Due Fines	94	11.12
Slackness in the Counter Checking	28	3.31
No Guard at Exit Counter	61	7.22
Un-Circulated Volumes	9	1.07
Total	845	100.00

The Table No.8.2.2 reveals that of the total 845 respondents, 742 (87.81%) were feeling that poverty & low income of their parents was the major reason for theft. Another 614 (72.66%) respondents have indicated the reasons were; library environment, cultural background, social environment, overdue fines, attributed them towards theft, as well as no exit guard, slackness in counter checking and un-circulated volumes respectively. Hence it is concluded that among the nine reasons, poverty, library environment, and low income of the respondent may influence them towards the theft.

Mutilation

Mutilation from engineering college libraries generally considered as a serious problem hence an attempt was made to find out the extent of mutilation from the engineering college libraries by the mutilators. Of the 845 respondents, 573 (54.62%) were thinking that the library collection was more targeted for mutilation, while 476 (45.38%) respondents given their opinion that they never mutilated books by answering 'No' Response it means mutilation is more common in all types of libraries hence the collection of college libraries is more targeted for mutilation.

Reasons of Mutilation

There could be a number of reasons for book vandalism or mutilation from engineering college libraries. The researcher listed fifteen possible reasons in the questionnaire to find out which reasons perceived and respondents reacted to them. While reviewing the literature on mutilation problem it is observed that many reasons suggested by the delinquent reader for mistreating or book vandalism of the reading material from all types of libraries, the investigator applied some of the reasons according to the situation of engineering college libraries and the users of the BAMU & SRTMU. Hence an attempt was made to see the reasons which are in practice in engineering college libraries. The data collected from respondents were calculated and presented in Table No.8.2.3

Table No.8.2.3 Response indicating the Reasons for Mutilation

Reasons for Mutilation	Respondents	Percentage
Shortage of Time	76	8.99
Irresponsibility	129	15.27
Anger Towards Library	215	25.44
Laziness & Poverty	338	40.00
Vary Costly to Posses Personally	193	22.84
Hours Library Opened is not Adequate	69	8.17
Cheating in the Exam	13	1.54
Pressure of Good Marks & Grads	204	24.14
To Improve Self Chances	42	4.97
Lack of Reprographic Equipment	73	8.64
Out of Order Xerox Machines	92	10.89
Unqualified Xerox Operators	17	2.01
Non Concession Price	55	6.51
No Sincere Vigilance	34	4.02
Rare Information	109	12.90

Note- Cell frequencies indicate number of persons & percentages

It can be observed from the Table No.8.2.3 that out of the total 845 respondents, 757 (89.59%) were given the prominent reason for mutilation was laziness & poverty, anger towards library and pressure of good marks & grads, followed by very costly to posses personally, irresponsibility, rare information, non concession rate of photocopying, lack of reprographic equipment, cheating in exam, shortage of time, Library opening hours is not adequate, out of order reprographic machine and no sincere vigilance for book vandalism from the college libraries. All these reasons combine covered more than 70.54% responses with regards to the reasons of mutilation from the libraries.

As regards the preventive measures of tearing out pages the respondent's opinions were to charge fines. Punishment, exhibits the name of such patrons name on notice board who mutilates pages from books and journals, install CCTV cameras in the reading room and stack room to detect mutilators, Provision of page bowler machine at counter, quality photocopying equipments with quality operator in concession rate, staff commitment with his/her work, user orientation, regular rectification of stock, quality binding, more copies of required reading material, will reduce mutilation problem in some extent from their libraries suggested by the users.

Methods of Theft and Mutilating Library Material

Method of theft and mutilating library material are differing from library to library & user to user. The delinquent readers adopts various methods to steal or mutilate the reading material for example; by hiding in the clothes or dresses, by offering inducement, throwing the book through the library window, removing due date slip, tearing out pages. Hence an attempt was made by asking in questionnaire that 'Do you have any idea how the mutilated pages or stolen books are taken out of the library? And users were asked to tick more than one response. Whatever responses given by the users are calculated and presented in Table no 8.2.4

Table No.8.2.4 Methods of Theft and Mutilating Library Material (N=845)

Methods of Theft & Mutilation	Respondents *	Percentage
Hiding in the Clothes	316	37.40
By Offering Inducements	153	18.11
Throwing Book	275	32.54
Removal Due Date Slip	81	9.59
Tearing of Pages	372	44.02
Not Specified	12	01.14

***Multiple Responses**

It can be observed from the Table No.8.2.4 that of the total 845 respondents, 688 (81.42%) responded positively with the method for mutilating library material i.e. hiding in the cloth and tearing out pages, while 509 (60.24 %) respondents, were of the opinion that throwing books through windows, by offering inducements & removing due date slip is the common methods of theft and mutilation among the respondents.

Misplacement

Hence an attempt was made to find out the users perception toward theft and its possible reasons. It was observed that of the total 845 respondents, 493 (58.33%) felt that misplacement of books takes place in the libraries, while 352 (41.66%) respondents, never thought about the book hiding activities in the library.

Reasons of Misplacement

There are many reasons of misplacement like monopoly of information, exam pressure, selfish nature, high cost of books & habitual misplacement etc Hence an attempt was made to find out the basic reasons and percentage of misplacement of books in college libraries. Therefore the data collected was analyzed and calculated in Table no.8.2.5

Table No.8.2.5 Respondents attitude towards Reasons of Misplacement

Reasons of Misplacement	Respondents *	Percentage
Monopoly of Information	357	42.25
Exam Pressure	564	66.75
Selfish Nature	197	23.31
High Cost of Books	85	10.06
Habitual Misplacement	206	24.38

*** Multiple Response**

The Table No.8.2.5 indicate that out of the total 845 respondents, 649 (76.80%) claimed the reasons for misplacing the library materials were; exam pressure and high cost of books, 554 (65.56%) due to monopoly of information, and selfish nature. While 206 (24.38%) users were of the opinion that it is due to habit of misplacing reading material, In general the respondents are of the opinion that exam pressure was the main driving force among users in the practice of book hiding. The prominence next comes to the tendency of selfish nature and monopoly of information.

Hence it can be clear that misplacement or book hiding in library stack was not much familiar practice among the users due to the application of close access system in maximum number of college libraries, some college libraries users were allowed in some what extent to select the required book they may be a post graduate students or sincere users, so the percentage of misplacement in college libraries were found low. The other reasons suggested by the respondents were; the untrained staff in college libraries to

rectify and shelving the document on its proper place and the less vigilance from the librarian.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ 73.14% users thought illegal practices like theft, misplacement. Un-authorized borrowing, non return of books, vandalism to library property were prevalent & frequent phenomena, while 21.83% users thought that mutilation was prevalent and frequent phenomena in college libraries.
- ❖ The general view about theft of books and other documents, 59.29% users felt, it was prevalent practice in engineering college libraries.
- ❖ Among the reasons for theft 87.81% users suggested, low income and poverty, while 72.66% users thought library environment, cultural background, social environment, overdue fines, no exit guard, slackness in counter checking and un-circulated volumes, seems to be prominent reasons for stealing books in the library.
- ❖ Sixty Seven point Sixty Nine percent respondents thought mutilation of books and other documents were the prevalent activity in engineering college libraries.
- ❖ The prominent reasons for mutilation put forth by 89.59% users were, pressure of good marks, laziness & poverty and Anger towards library, followed by books were very costly to possess personally etc. were noticed.
- ❖ As regards method of theft and mutilation 81.42% users suggested hiding in the cloths and tearing out pages from books and periodicals, while 32.54% users suggested method of throwing books through window, by offering inducement 18.11%, and 9.59% respondents from removing due date slip.
- ❖ To reduce mutilation in libraries 62.84% respondents strongly agreed provision of photocopying equipment in engineering college libraries is essential. The same opinion was also noticed among rural- urban, male- female users and among various age and income group of users (Table No. 4.3.2.5).
- ❖ The 58.34% respondents thought that libraries are victims for deliberate hiding of books. The reasons indicated by 66.75% users were due to exam pressure, 42.25% monopoly of information, 24.38% were habitual users in misplacing the documents, while 23.31% respondents were selfish nature.
- ❖ Regarding un- authorized borrowing 64.73% users were misusing borrowers' card. The reasons suggested by 37.63% respondents were books issued without tickets, 30.89% long renewal method, while 25.33% users gave no strict checking at counter, and lack of commitment of staff in their work as well as the interference of management relatives.
- ❖ As regards the non- return of books 48.88% users who never returned books on given due date, among them of the total rural users 51.83% and of the total urban users' 55.25%, of the total male 60.47%, and of the total female 42.51% respondents have not returned the books on due date. The reasons indicated by 46.51% users were, laziness and shortage of time & Long Renewal Method. Further 53.49% users indicated reasons were to improve self chance, carelessness, being valuable document, to deprive sincere users etc.

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