
UNIT 14 MARKETING OF INFORMATION SERVICES

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14.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of marketing and its need for a library and information centre;
- discuss how marketing strategies can be applied in a library and information centre;
- describe the concept of marketing mix as applicable to library and information services; and
- elaborate customer focus approach and issues related with implementation of marketing in a library set-up.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

By now you must have accustomed with the concept of information services. Generally, it refers to libraries and information services. Libraries essentially are social institutions and have contributed significantly towards the betterment of society by offering variety of resources and services. They, as information service provider, are under pressure due to various reasons such as: they have to mobilise resources, compete with the Internet and Internet support services, meet the rising user' expectations, improvise the professional image, etc. Therefore, library and

information centers need to evaluate their activities with respect to the external environment, get in touch with the users' needs and integrate them into day-to-day working of the library as well as offer / adapt services as per users' needs to integrate the concept of marketing in libraries. The first requirement for effective and successful implementation of marketing in library and information service is that the librarian should have a clear appreciation for what marketing is all about and how it can enhance the value of library and information services.

People usually relate marketing with increase of sales, profit, market share, etc. As you know that library and information services are non-profit services, therefore, there is a general perception that libraries do not need marketing. But the fact is that marketing is all around us and it is essential for all kind of organisations and individuals. Professionals like lawyers, accountants and doctors also need to use marketing skills so as to create and manage the demand for their services. Therefore, the libraries and information service providers should make efforts to:

- inform users about their role as an information service provider;
- attract users, understand users and their needs;
- motivate users to use the resources and services in different formats; and
- educate users with the help of latest tools and techniques in managing information in libraries and information centres.

If a librarian is performing all the above stated functions, one can say without any doubt that s/he is thoroughly involved in the marketing of information services.

14.2 NEED FOR MARKETING OF INFORMATION SERVICES

Presently, the need for marketing of information services is being felt by all types of libraries. Libraries are facing competition from other information service providers. They need to make daily decisions on the form and formats for acquiring and archiving information. Librarians are striving to provide free access to information. They are struggling with space constraints, shrinking budgets and rising cost of materials. At the same time, users' expectations are going high with the emergence of online access to information. In response to these factors, management philosophies and administrative operations of libraries have changed. Librarians are embracing marketing techniques to be more efficient managers and effective information service providers.

Thus, libraries are facing the greatest challenge that is as the financial provisions for libraries are being continuously curtailed and they are pressurised to be self-sustained. Librarians are hard pressed to mobilise financial resources. This requires an increased emphasis on marketing. Good marketing efforts can take care of all resources and how best these can be channelised in an efficient way.

Library services are valuable services but are undervalued because of lack of visibility among the users. Marketing efforts can help in improve the image of library and information (LIS) professionals by establishing cordial relations with the users and other patrons, good facilities, high standard of service, good discipline and well-behaved staff.

For a long time, LIS professionals had engaged primarily with suppliers and thus lost interest in working for the users/customers. But it must be kept in mind that only satisfied users come back and there are greater chances that dissatisfied users will find some other suppliers of information to meet their information needs.

The reasons for applying marketing techniques in any organisation, particularly in library and information centre, is not to achieve profit in financial terms, but to achieve high level of users' satisfaction and to enhance the perceived value of their services and products. The increased users' satisfaction will result in the increased willingness to use and pay for the services offered. Enhanced perception of the value of the organisation will translate into increased level of support to the organisation. As such, user satisfaction has direct impact with the support they get from the library. However, some efforts could be made to get such funding through dealing with funding bodies directly.

To meet users needs satisfactorily, the first thing the LIS professionals need to understand that: Whom are they trying to serve? What are user's interests? What can the librarians provide to serve these interests? Under what conditions can the librarians offer services and products? How do the librarians communicate with the users? How users communicate their needs to the LIS professionals? Librarian knows well about the library in terms of its resources, facilities, services, products, etc. There is nothing wrong if librarians tell their users about how well they can help them in achieving their desired objectives. However, librarians must capitalise their expertise in meeting users needs through the resources available. Marketing puts such concept into work. Particularly, in the information era, marketing's role in library and information centre is finding information/products for the users/customers and not users/customers for the information/product. It is to remember that no library "owns" its users to the extent that it determines their likes and dislikes. Librarians must pay attention to users' requirements and preferences.

Libraries want the user to come again and use their resources and services. Traditionally, libraries have very positive and favourable relationship with its users. Users are formally attached with the library as members of the library. Librarians have a great potential to transfer this positive, favourable relationship to attract users time and again. But users will come again only if their present needs are well met and in meeting the information needs of users, marketing attitude plays a vital role.

The world in which libraries exist has changed dramatically. It moves faster, relies on technology and competes more intensely. Fearful that change may threaten the existence of libraries, we must look to marketing to help us manage better.

Despite interest in marketing, there has been resistance due to a misunderstanding of marketing concept and its application in library environment; failure to recognise and understand a marketing orientation and its process even when they are present; and a disagreement with the basic tenets of marketing that places the emphasis upon the customer rather than product, the profit or the organisation itself. Many myths prevail in the minds of library professionals, such as marketing equates selling; promotion or advertising; marketing focus on customers;

marketing is about products and information is not a product; marketing requires good marketing persons; marketing is extra work to be done; marketing requires huge budgets; marketing is about making profits; library services are still free, etc. Many a times, these myths act as barriers to the development of the concept of marketing in libraries.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

1) Describe the need for marketing in library and information centres.

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14.3 DEFINING MARKETING

Marketing is a term which has different meanings for different people. Many a times, people see marketing only as selling, advertising or promotion. However, real marketing does not involve the art of selling what you make, as much as knowing what to make! Marketing is concerned with gaining market leadership, understanding customers and their needs, creating customer values and satisfying customers. Some popular definitions of marketing are mentioned below:

“Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably” (The UK’s Chartered Institute of Marketing).

“Marketing consists of individual and organizational activities that facilitate and expedite satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment through the creation, servicing, distribution, promotion and pricing of goods, services and ideas” (The American Marketing Association).

“Marketing is a social and managerial process whereby individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others” (Philip Kotler).

The true essence of above definitions of marketing is that:

- There is demand for information products and services on offer;
- These products and services have ability to satisfy customer needs;
- The exchange of product or service is the primary consideration for payment;
- There is always a need to create an edge over competitors;
- The identification of favourable marketing opportunities;
- The resources are utilised to maximise a business’s market position; and
- The aim to increase market share in priority target markets.

The new definition of marketing by American Marketing Association released in 2004 addresses such concern:

“Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders”.

This definition sets many new dimensions to the concept of marketing. The emphasis is on that:

- Marketing serves as the overriding philosophy in conducting marketing task in the organisation as a whole.
- It is a set of processes which involves interactions among people, technology, methods, procedure, environment and material (information or information sources in case of libraries), by which any offer comes to the customer.
- Value is the basket of benefits or utilities which a user or customer gets by using a product or service. Thus, value is clearly communicated to customers so that it can be understood easily.
- A long-term relationship is developed among customers and marketers through deep understanding, reciprocal dependency and mutual trust (users and LIS professionals in case of libraries).
- Relationship is substantially beneficial to both the parties. From the organisation’s point of view, relationship is a tactical issue, but for customers, it is just a communication process.

Thus, it is clear that marketing is a wider concept and marketing techniques keep on changing. In the next section of this Unit we will be discussing the concept of marketing and its application in library and information services and products.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit

2) Explain the recent definition of marketing given by American Marketing Association.

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14.4 LINKING MARKETING WITH LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

At first sight it may appear that ‘marketing’ and ‘libraries’ belong to different worlds. Thus, much of the debate surrounds just how marketing fits into library and information services. Many a times, marketing is considered an additional burden by LIS professionals. Many feel that marketing is not a natural activity for LIS professionals. If marketing is not seen as a natural consequence of what librarians do everyday, everytime, then marketing is misunderstood and misplaced. Most libraries take decisions about the location of the library, opening hours, planning a new facility or service, offering services according to users/ user groups, making free or priced services, etc. From the above discussion it is clear that marketing decisions are taken in libraries in day-to-day functioning.

The philosophy of libraries revolves around the Five Laws of Library Science. Many authors find these laws closer to modern marketing principles. The following Table 14.1 demonstrates the laws with their thrust areas and simplistic marketing implications.

Table 14.1: Five Laws of Library Science and Marketing Implications

The Law	Thrust Area	Marketing Implications
Books are for use	Optimum use of resources, facilities and services.	Acquiring appropriate information material and ensuring sufficient resources and services are available for the use of users. Convenient location, effective signage and longer opening hours, human resource for using resources and services.
Every reader his/ her book	Meeting users need satisfactorily.	Collecting and interpreting information, understanding the needs of users and matching them with the organisational resources.
Every book its reader	Reaching out to users.	Publicising value and benefits, promotional campaign, advocacy, public relations, personal communication, etc.
Save the time of user	User benefits and preferences.	Repackaging information into appropriate form, availability of information when they need. Ensuring quality of services and products.
Library is a growing organism	Adapting to future user needs.	Mobilising resources, dealing with uncertainty about future user needs, new services, new customer groups, etc.

Libraries have found various marketing functions essential and they have used them. Librarians, like all other business people, are into marketing, consciously or sub consciously. When it is done- the focus of the work, the outlook and service mindedness are derived to manage in entrepreneurial way.

The following are some basic questions which are often asked about the purpose of the library, its users and services. If you look at the answers, you will find that everything is dealt with marketing in some way or the other.

What is the purpose of the library?

Libraries are essentially service institutions but at the same time, there is no disagreement among library and information professionals about the ‘information’ as the *core* to the business of library and information centres. ‘Right information to the right user at the right time’ is the basic motto of the library profession.

What is the place of users in library service?

User is the central focus of library services. Users are the most important part of the trinity, i.e. users, staff and the information resources. The success or failure of any library and information services is gauged from the extent of the user’s satisfaction from person, process or product.

How do libraries serve their users?

Which service a library should provide and which not, has always been an issue of discussion in the professional circle. This is basically because a library needs to work for organisation as well as to provide user services. Therefore, users must be motivated, educated and empowered for the self- services.

How the nature of library service is changing?

The real challenge for the library is not to manage the collections, staff and technology but to turn these resources into services. Even the notion of service has changed from basic to value-added, from staff assisted to self-service, from in-house to out-reach, from free to priced, from reactive to pro-active and from mass-customisation to individualised service. In this context there is always a need for LIS professionals to develop a more responsible attitude towards users and serve them rightly to ensure credibility and a positive attitude to face new challenges and opportunities.

Self Check Exercise

- Note:** i) Write your answer in the space given below.
- ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.
- 3) Describe thrust areas of Five Laws of Library Science with marketing implications.

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14.5 ANALYSING MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Analysing the environment for marketing opportunities is commonly done keeping in view many aspects. The tool often used to gather information about external forces and internal capabilities is SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, which involves capturing the strength and weaknesses of an organisation or service and the opportunities and threats represented by environment trends.

All organisations, public or private, small or large, profit making or non-profit making, manufacturing or service, exist within an environment that affect the work they do and how they do it. Assessing the organisational environment is necessary to offer customised information services to users. This emphasises the importance of gathering information from a wide range of sources so as to make informed decisions. The past decade has witnessed significant changes and advancements in the various aspects of human life. The directions, restrictions and constraints that are imposed by the environment in which a library operates are not different from those in other organisations. Even a library operates in a wider context or environment forming a dynamic relationship with other organisations. This phenomenon determines the conditions, which have a direct impact on library management.

The Figure 14.1 gives an idea that library management interacts with the environment and is also influenced by it. Library management gets input, energy and materials from the environment. LIS managers need to be constantly active to be effective and efficient in the changing environment.

The overall environment, in which a library works, can be divided into two categories namely external and internal.

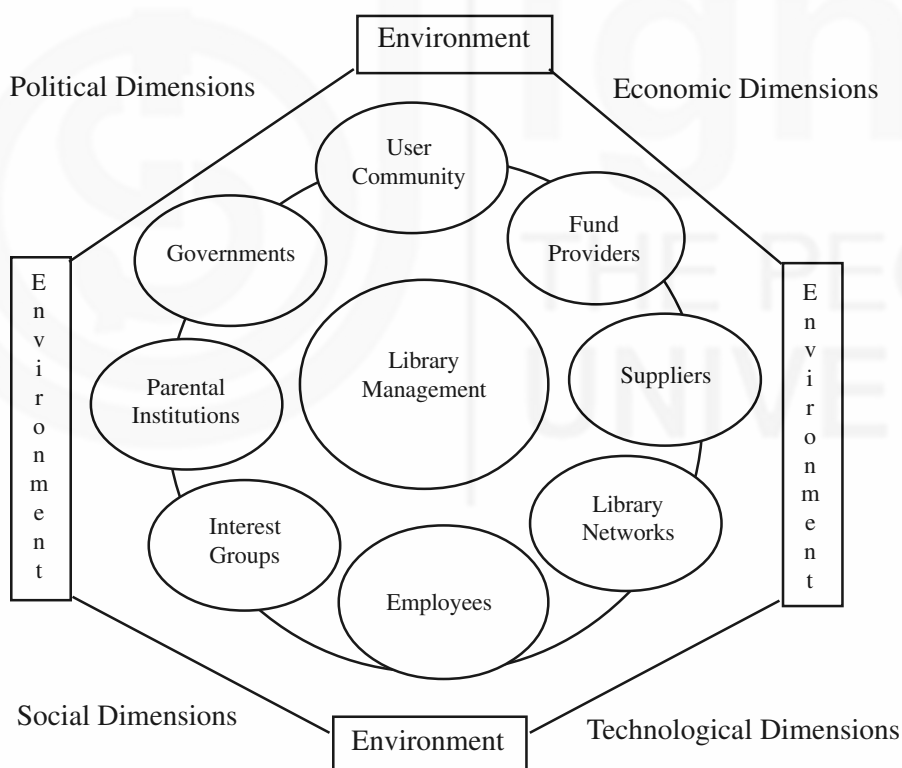


Fig. 14.1: External Environment

14.5.1 External Environment

External pressures on libraries come from the changes taking place outside the library world. It may be seen in context of local, regional and international impact on libraries and information centres. The different dimensions (see Figure 14.1) for example, economic, technological and socio-political dimensions embody conditions and events that have the potential to influence the organisation in many ways.

Technological Dimensions: Technology is the key to business of every organisation. Technologies offer better-featured products, needs less space but more capital and skills. The most noticeable developments are in the fields of information communication and networking technologies. They are used for processing, storage, retrieval and transmission of large volume of information across geographical zones within no time. New technologies offer new and improved services in a variety of ways, such as:

- Creation of new or improved services.
- More involvement of users/customers in operational tasks by offering self-service system.
- Bridging the gap between small and large libraries as IT provides an opportunity to use the resources, services, products from remote locations through resource sharing and networking.
- Accessible data bank, which would be helpful in recognising the users' information needs in a better way. Need recognition helps in strengthening relations with the users.
- Personalised direct mail communication and machine interaction is also possible.

Globalisation has resulted in ease of access to information around the world, round the clock. Many national and international information networks exist for free flow of information. The globalisation of information has created the quality consciousness among users and has also increased the expectations of the user groups to a great extent.

Technology is dramatically influencing service strategies such as:

- Modern communication infrastructures make possible service delivery at global level;
- The increasing reliance on IT in offering services not only globalises but also provides opportunities to know the services offered globally; and
- The changing nature of services due to advancement in technologies, which are radically altering the methods by which library and information centres can globalise their services.

Economic Dimensions: New economic thinking has resulted in numerous changes. Public sector enterprises involved in health, insurance, banking, telecommunications, public transport, universities and libraries are under threat and the governments of most of the countries now prefer as a matter of social as well as economic policies allows privatisation. Present day library and information centres are unable to maintain their acquisition and services at previous level with the finances made available by the state agencies, which has been cut down or have remained static for the last many years. A major portion of the library budget goes for the staff salary and it has become very difficult for libraries and information centres to cope up with the rising cost of literature with limited budget for acquisition. Similarly, there has been a great necessity of funds for acquisition of newer technologies to enhance service capabilities and output of products. There is also a threat from competitors to maintain quality services, as in market economy public and private sectors would co exist for free flow of information. Commercial firms engaged in production of information and its

organisation and retrieval would also charge for such services. Thus, the main challenges before libraries and information centres managers are to:

- utilise resources properly and efficiently;
- mobilise resources to meet financial needs; and
- make services and products qualitative and competitive through accountability.

This has put libraries to market their services and products and charge for value-added services, to enter into joint ventures and alliances and to bring operational efficiency and effectiveness, etc.

Socio-political Dimensions: The process of democratisation at the grass root level in the form of local bodies at village, block and district level, policies of up-liftment of weaker sections of the society, concept of social justice, total literacy campaign, etc. are leading to the change in people's attitude, habits, value and belief. At the same time, disinvestment policies of the governments affect ownership share of the enterprise and their libraries are to take the initiatives in tune with the organisation they serve. Such initiatives are needed with regards to goal-setting, developing vision, building cooperation, responding and reacting to the new situations in the new environment.

Many of the library and information centres have taken serious initiatives and have attempted to serve in such an environment. Many are yet to formulate their response to the changing environment. They need to think through their vision, goals and objectives, organisational culture, organisational and functional strategies, etc.

14.5.2 Internal Environment

Alongside external dimensions of environmental changes, there are also internal dimensions which library and information managers need to take into account. The internal dimensions include physical resources, systems and people. The whole spectrum is shown in the following Figure 14.2.



Fig. 14.2: Internal Environment

All the internal resources, for example, human, finance, information systems and procedures, rules, technology, facilities, etc. are there to serve users better. Thus, the important elements of the internal environment may broadly be grouped into three, namely physical resources, systems and people. These are influenced greatly by user's choices, preferences and needs.

Customers: User is considered the king around whom all activities of the library revolve, library and information centres exist to meet the needs of all its users, user is the focal point of all information activities and library and information centres are incomplete without users. It is mainly because of central position of user in all components of the library. User is "the most important entity in all kinds of libraries- public, academic and special. User may be a reader, patron, customer, client or anyone who makes the use of services in a library set-up."

Physical Resources: The most important dimension of the service quality that represents evaluative criteria being used by users are physical facilities, information sources, equipment, communication material, etc. These are required for the comfort of users to sit and study in the library and for producing value-based services /products for them. All aspects of physical facilities must be planned and maintained to ensure convenience, safety, cleanliness and comfort. Information resources must be exhaustive, up-to-date, and balanced in order to provide pin-pointed and timely delivery of information and services with the help of modern equipment. Cozy and inviting atmosphere of the library will attract users to come again and again and value-based services will ensure increased satisfaction among them. The concept of library is changing to the extent of library without walls. Library services offered online must also address the requirements of the users and geared towards meeting them efficiently.

Systems: In a library, systems comprise of the service operations, where inputs are processed and the elements of the service products are created and service is delivered. Activities include classification, cataloguing, indexing, charging and discharging, rules and regulations. Every system and procedure must be designed and operated to meet the needs of users, aiming at making simplicity in use, accuracy, reliability, timeliness, completeness, etc. so that some trust about the services is developed among users.

People: People, include library and information professionals working in various sections of the library working at different levels, i.e. lower, middle and top, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, professional, semi-professionals and non-professional. It is the value, belief and approach of employees that will reflect in the organisation they work. The management structure and style must support each employee to give some intangible value to its users – internal and external. People involved in library and information services require good knowledge of both systems and physical resources and must be competent to use their knowledge to create customised offerings to users and an ability to communicate about the value of services to them.

In formulating a marketing strategy, the library management has to adapt to its environment as understanding the environment would help the library in not only altering its existing marketing mix but in identifying new opportunities by selecting an appropriate market to serve.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

4) List out factors that affect external environment of an organisation.

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14.6 SELECTING TARGET MARKET

Selection of an appropriate market is important for the success of marketing efforts. A market includes all the people who have some stated interest in a particular product or service or who could be expected to have one in future. The process of market segmentation is fundamental to the whole idea of marketing as it focuses on the user, i.e. a library’s present or prospective user, rather than the product, i.e. the library’s collection and services. A basic tenet underlying marketing strategy is that there are distinct market segments each with its own needs, wants desires and interests. Market segmentation is the division of market into distinctive groups of buyers who may require different products or marketing mixes. It is the division of market into homogenous groups, which will respond differently to marketing mix variables i.e. the 4Ps of product, price, promotion and place. It is the division of heterogeneous market into homogenous groups. Segmentation is important from the point of view of marketing as different buyers have different needs. Each group or segment can be targeted by using different marketing mix to reach potential buyers with most customised offering as possible. Very often, a librarian builds up library collection by assuming the needs of the users. Library market segmentation takes into account the fact that library users who request a product or service are all individuals who are unique in some way.

Market segmentation is done on the basis of the two market variables: classification variable and the descriptive variable.

I) Classification variable is used to divide the market into following segments:

Geographical segment – This involves division of the market into different geographical units e.g. states, regions, countries, etc. It consists of users who live in a particular geographical locality. These markets determine the type, size and site of the library and information centres as well as opening hours and services offered. The managers of public libraries should look out for geographic location requiring library services and serve the user community accordingly. Rural area which is remote and isolated can be best served by mobile library services. Special libraries serving industries and R&D organisations having branches located in different regions will have to consider specific needs of each location and develop services accordingly.

Demographic segmentation – In this case the market is divided on the basis of demographic variables like age, sex, occupation, income, race, etc. Demographic market segmentation is one of the most popular methods of

distinguishing market segments in libraries. They are often associated with clear market needs and information relating to these markets is readily available. Demographic markets may be identified by age, sex, nationality, income, occupation, religion, social needs (like hobbies, sports, some form of entertainment, etc.) and physical needs (for physically handicapped).

Psychographic segmentation – Dividing the buyers on the basis of socio-economic status, lifestyle, hobbies or personality traits is psychographic segmentation. This type of market segmentation examines attitudes, living styles, personality and social classes, people who have a past history of using libraries have to be reminded of the library services and their use.

Behavioural segmentation – Buyers are divided on the basis of their product knowledge, usage, brand loyalty, attitude, response to marketing factors, etc.

- II) Descriptive variables are used to describe each segment and distinguish one segment from the other. Descriptive variables must be easily available measures and it can be linked to easily obtainable measures that exist in the secondary sources.

The strength of market segmentation lies in the fact that it is based upon the end user rather than on products or services. The end user is assured of a service which satisfies her/ his individual needs rather than a mass market general offering.

Once the library identifies the potential market to serve, it needs to select those for which it will provide a product or service. This process is known as ‘targeting’ which involves strategies for appropriate market segmentation, for example:

- bringing all users at one place who have similar or identical needs and the organisation goes after the whole market with single offering;
- dividing the mass market into smaller groups or segmenting and designing separate services and programmes for each group; and
- concentrating upon a small number of users or specific areas of services and providing in-depth services in a few areas or serving a small percentage of the users.

Once it is decided about the target group and the service (new or existing) to offer to the target group, it is required to put all efforts to make it qualitative. Everything done by the librarians about the library and its services must support and reinforce it.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

- 5) Define market segmentation.

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14.7 DEVELOPING MARKETING MIX

Marketing mix is one of the most important and fundamental development in the area of marketing. Marketing mix is a set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that the firm (organisation) blends to produce the response it wants in the target market. It consists of everything the firm can do to influence the demand for its product. Marketing mix is commonly referred to the four P's of marketing – product, price, place and promotion. This is a simple, yet effective means of considering the key elements necessary and the emphasis to be placed on each, in order to ensure effective implementation of marketing strategy.

Marketing mix is an important tool for creating and maintaining an offering that is of value to customers. Successful marketing depends on 'the right mix'. In other words, a product that lacks visibility among the potential customer group will fail and a marketing message that evidently does not reflect the product, will suffer the same fate. All elements of marketing mix are interdependent and must be consistent with one another. The most appropriate marketing mix depends upon the customer and is influenced by the marketing environment. An organisation needs to design and combine elements of marketing mix so as to create an offering that differentiates it from its competitors or to create a competitive advantage.

A strategy that is based on an excellent product supplied at an unsatisfactory price is a failure even if the other elements in marketing mix are properly calculated. The ingredients must produce a smooth mix working together to create an effective strategy. Each element in the mix is composed of sub-elements which form a mix such as: a 'product mix' a 'distribution mix' a 'communication mix', etc.

14.7.1 Marketing Mix in Services

In context of the service, product refers to the service and pricing of services can be different from pricing of goods due to the difference in tangibility, industry tradition, etc. Promotion partly occurs during the service creation and delivery process, partly through traditional promotion channels such as personal selling and advertising. Place represents the distribution and availability of the service. For many services, for example, telecom services and certain financial services, it is a matter of applying information technology in the distribution for others, the physical proximity of a service-producing unit to the local market is an absolute necessity.

With the growing interest in services marketing, around 1980s it was felt that an important element with respect to services was missing the people "P". This then became the fifth "P" of the marketing mix. Recognising the importance of packaging in the marketing of branded packaged products, practitioners and researchers recommended that packaging be treated as separate variable. Packaging was considered to be treated as separate variable and was removed from 'product' and this gave birth to the sixth "P" of marketing mix. Soon this sixth "P" was modified to "physical evidence" in the case of services marketing. The six "Ps" however, appeared inadequate when researchers discovered that consistency in services couldn't be ensured without the support of "process". This brought in the seventh "P". The extension from 4Ps to 7Ps has been displayed in the Figure 14.3.

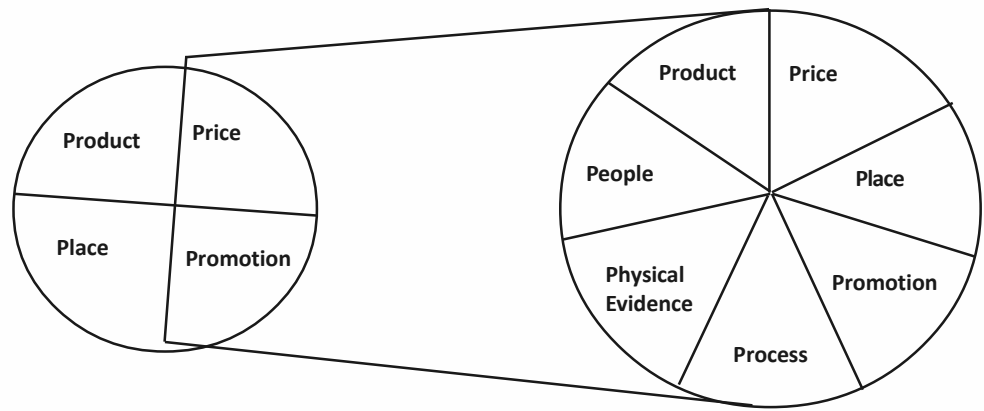


Fig.14.3: Extension from 4Ps to 7Ps

In this way, four Ps have been expanded into seven Ps, adding the following three 'service Ps': **people** (the service provider's employees and customers who participate in the service delivery and thus influence its quality and present future purchases): **physical evidence** (the environment of the service organisation and all the physical products and symbols used in the communication and production process): **process** (procedures, mechanisms, flows of activities and interaction that form the service production and contact with customer).

14.7.2 Marketing Mix Concept in Library and Information Centres

Libraries take decisions about the location of the library, opening hours, planning new facility or service, offering services according to users/ user groups, making free or priced services, etc. These are simple examples, but, are **marketing decisions** and may be well covered in the elements of marketing mix if thought from marketing perspective. Libraries have found various parts of marketing functions so essential that they have used them.

Library and information centres are required to choose appropriate programmes relating to marketing mix so as to avail opportunities for optimum use of resources and to increase user satisfaction. The marketing mix in library and information services may be:

Product: All products or services or offers, present and potential, aimed at meeting the needs of the users.

Price: All costs put in by the user to find relevant information or service or product, may be money, time, efforts.

Place: The way in which information product/ service is made available to users, on campus or remote location, online or virtual.

Promotion: All methods of communicating with users one-way, two way and both.

People: People who are involved in the delivery of service.

Physical Evidence: Surroundings of the library, within and outside, through which users make use of it.

Process: Interaction of various activities by which services are created, performed and delivered.

Marketing mix approach has been criticised for being incomplete and manipulative and for not properly considering the needs of the user/customer. The marketing concept postulates that once you know your customers, through market research or otherwise, you can design, price, promote and distribute a product that matches their needs and become a success in the market place. The seller is considered the active party and the customer has to be persuaded to buy. The empirical base of marketing mix theory is mass manufacturing of standardised consumer goods. It has never become particularly successful for services as it disregards their unique features.

Four or seven 'P syndrome' is also criticised on the ground that it has more focus on the product or the producer and not on the customer. Interestingly, Kotler has attempted an update of 4Ps concepts to reflect this into 4Cs:

Four Ps	Four Cs
Product	Customer value
Price	Cost to the customer
Place	Convenience
Promotion	Communication

At first glance, some of these concepts in the marketing mix, whether they start with a P or a C, are only applicable to a commercial environment. However, they can also be useful tools for a library service to meet the needs of its users/customers. Many libraries are already using these techniques in an intelligent and focused way.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

6) Describe marketing mix as applicable to services.

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14.8 DEVELOPING A USER/CUSTOMER FOCUSED APPROACH

Every library has its main drive, the principal reason for its existence, from which all aspects of its policy, procedures and activities, which determines its culture and the attitude of its staff at every level. Many libraries either are collection centered or technology centered and some are organisation centered. Those libraries that will succeed in the future seem likely to be are user-driven and with a focus towards user satisfaction. User satisfaction has to be the focus of all thinking and activity for the survival of such a library. Excellent user service is

the key to user-driven service strategies. There is a continual discussion on making libraries user-centered and building a successful user-service culture while managing libraries. The satisfaction that a user or customer gets in a library will help in building loyalty that is the key to promoting a library. No one can afford to lose users. Excellent user service is the basis for effective managing library services.

LIS professionals must always remember that:

- Customers/users are the most important people to be served in a library and information centre.
- They are not dependent on the library rather the library depends on them.
- They are not just outsiders but part of the library.
- They are not just statistics, but also they are human beings.
- They are the people who come with certain needs and libraries and information centres are there to meet such needs.

Present day users want individuality, responsiveness and relationship that will last long.

Individuality: The new generation of user is a global citizen who is more individualistic, change seeking and value conscious.

Responsiveness: It is the willingness to help users and to provide prompt service. This dimension emphasises attentiveness and promptness in dealing with users' request, complaints and queries. Responsiveness is demonstrated in terms of access to employees, least waiting time and attention to problems. It also captures the notion of flexibility and ability to customise the service to users needs.

Relationship: To measure user satisfaction, the relationship between user and the library must be understood. A user relationship comprises a series of encounters through facilities, resources, services and service providers.

Therefore, the question to be answered is how can libraries become user/customer focused? Library and information service managers should begin with the identification of users and their needs. Identifying and understanding of needs require prior knowledge about the characteristics of users. This difference is borne out by the extensive surveys that many libraries carry out on their users, in order to establish their distribution by different characteristics. Unfortunately this kind of data reveals nothing about the individual users. Most of the time individual user remains invisible. Is it a right way to understand the users and their needs or could there be any alternative to such system, which help us in recognising, their needs properly in order to meet them. Libraries and information centres must start by providing quality services, because users *do not know what good service is -until they get it.*

User/customer satisfaction is the current day approach in library and information centre. The success or failure of any library and information centre is gauged from the extent of the user is satisfied from person, process or product. User satisfaction has a close linkage with the expectations of the users and their perceptions. Every user has some image of the service even before it is offered. Non-users are also aware that such service exists. However, they have never

crossed the threshold of a particular library nor have used resources somewhere else. Marketing promises may affect the image and the interaction with the services will redefine the image, every user expects some benefits from the service s/he uses or purchases and expectations are not static but have a direct relation with the image a user holds. To measure user satisfaction, the 'relationship' between user and the library is important. The sustainable relationship with user provides library managers to understand user's needs and expectations in a better way and make it possible to offer customised services and commitment to user's satisfaction.

14.9 IMPLEMENTING MARKETING IN LIBRARIES

Peter F. Drucker rightly said 'Sooner or later all thinking and planning has to degenerate into work' and all marketing thinking and planning accordingly has to be put into work. Effective implementation of marketing largely relies upon the following aspects:

- Developing a marketing culture throughout the library; everyone must realise this and work for the marketing success.
- Promoting service culture.
- Developing growth oriented, services oriented staff, as the staff makes marketing success in any service unit.
- Developing a clear statement of the expenditure to achieve the desired level of marketing success.
- Developing and implementing the marketing plan and actions associated with it.
- Asking for feedback, reviews and insights to help achieve the targets more efficiently.
- Putting marketing efforts consistently over a period of time.
- Monitoring marketing efforts as to know how the outcome of marketing activities has been effective.

14.10 SUMMARY

In this Unit, you have studied that marketing is an important activity in libraries. Marketing helps librarians prove their worth, mobilise resources, building a positive image and to become efficient managers. Marketing is no longer confined to mean promotional effort but is built on interaction with users, whether they are actual users or potential and are in the library or outside. The purpose of the marketing information services is to make such services more responsive to user needs and to increase user satisfaction. The information managers must employ well-integrated marketing approach to make full use of information products and services.

Marketing involves analysing marketing opportunities, selecting target markets, developing marketing mix, bringing out customer focus and implementation of marketing efforts. Marketing offers flexibility, responsiveness, market focus, service orientation and optimises decision making.

14.11 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

- 1) Marketing is necessity for libraries these days. Libraries are facing competition from other information service providers, their financial support is being curtailed. Libraries are under pressure to make optimum use of resources and they are also supposed to offer user-oriented services. There is a need to improve the image and develop confidence among users about the service so that they can make use of them.
- 2) American Marketing Association offered definition of marketing, recently, as 'Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders'.
- 3) The thrust area of five laws include: optimum use of resources, facilities and services, meeting users need satisfactorily, reaching out to users, reaching out to user benefits and preferences, and adapting to future user needs.
- 4) An organisation is affected with the changes in the external environment caused by technological, social, economic and political factors.
- 5) Marketing segmentation is the process of dividing market into meaningful smaller groups or parts or segments.
- 6) Marketing mix is popularly known as 4Ps, i.e. product, price, promotion and place which has been extended to 7Ps adding three more Ps, as people, process and physical evidence.

14.12 KEYWORDS

Customised	:	To make or change information products/ services according to users' preferences.
Demands	:	Human wants that are backed by buying power or resources.
Exchange	:	The act of obtaining a desired product or service by offering something in return.
Markets	:	The processes by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want by creating and exchanging products and value with others.
Marketing Mix	:	It is the combination of product, price, place and promotion.
Market Segmentation	:	It is the act of dividing market into meaningful parts or segments.
Needs	:	Represent a state of felt deprivation; there are two ways of responding to it. One is by satisfying the need, the other is by reducing the need.

- Products** : Anything that can be offered to satisfy a need or want. It can be a service.
- Quality** : Quality is the totality of features or attributes a product or service has to offer.
- Transactions** : The trade of values between two parties. It is the unit of measurement of marketing.
- Value** : Value is the bundle of the benefits from a service or product a user is looking for.
- Wants** : Human needs that are shaped by experience, culture, peer group, etc. Wants are satisfied through appropriate products or services.

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