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## Role of College Libraries in Higher Education: An Indian Perspective

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### Abstract

*Library is a service institution. Library services are one of the most widely used and accepted in the modern world. Academic community particularly in a college utilizes library services for research and teaching purposes. Academic work is supported by library. Therefore, library is rightly regarded as the heart of an academic institution. We cannot deny the role and importance of college libraries in higher education. A quality education is impossible without a quality library. To improve the quality and infrastructure of college libraries in India national organizations like Govt. of India, MHRD,UGC,NAAC, NKC and various educational commissions provides important guidelines for the academic libraries in India to measure the quality of higher education.*

**KEYWORDS:** College Libraries, Academic Libraries, UGC, NAAC, Higher Education

### INTRODUCTION

Library is the products of our cultural maturation. Libraries are recognized as the carrier of information, resources, culture, civilization etc. from one generation to another. Earlier libraries are graded as a storehouse of books, which were more meant for preservation than the utilization of those collections of books, manuscripts, but now the concept of library is totally changed as the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) has involves in the library and its services. Now library becomes a resource center where user meets their needs without any bindings. E-books, e-resources are gaining popularity between users and it is made possible by the ICT impact on libraries.

In India, Higher education as a sector usually stands with undergraduate programmes and moves laterally forward. The higher education system in India quantitatively grown, to become one of the largest systems, of its kind in the world. The present society is transforming itself into a knowledge society. Knowledge is power and therefore has remained one of the most important driving force of the sustaining human existence. Information and Communication Technology has brought a transformational change in teaching learning process in all levels of education. ICT is an important factor in strengthening the role of the teacher and the quality of the teaching system as much as teachers get increased knowledge about access to ICT.

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Library serves as the agency for collection, processing, managing and disseminating the information needs for education, socio-economic and cultural development, etc. libraries are the repositories of the wisdom of ages stored in the form of recorded information for use of present and future generation.

### **COLLEGE LIBRARIES**

The library is the nerve center of academic activities in college and is a depository of knowledge. In India college libraries have a significant role to play in higher education. When India attained independence, many affiliated colleges did not have their own libraries. There were no qualified librarians and staff. But at present every college has its own library with qualified librarian and staff. Majority of college librarians did not have proper facilities to meet the needs of their users. Their collections were not up-to-date. Due to constraints of funds it was unable to provide facilities to the users. In many colleges there is a hall or big room for library till today. But now University Grants Commission gives more importance to the college libraries.

The UGC has played a significant role in the growth and development of college libraries since 1953 by giving grants for books, journals, equipment, staff and library building. It has done a remarkable job in salary improvement of the college librarians. The UGC is providing financial help to organize seminars, conferences to keep the college librarians aware of the new developments in the field. But these have made only a limited effect on the progress of the college libraries. There should be an interest for the development of higher education in the country, it is important to make detailed study of the library resources and facilities by the students and teachers. The college library has to be made the intellectual hub of the institutions, serving equally, both the students and teachers. Now days, UGC is releasing sufficient funds for the development of the college libraries under the different schemes. Many colleges have taken advantage of the UGC schemes for the development of libraries. Digital technology has made more easy and comfortable to use the collected information for research and overall development of the society.

### **LIBRARY COLLECTION AND ITS IMPORTANCE**

The heart of the library is its collection. Collection development is a dynamic and continuous process. It involves the users, the library staff and the subject experts on selection team. Library collection has witnessed the ages of clay tables to papyrus sheets, paper documents and silicon chips, optical and magnetic disc and so on collection development is not an end in itself, but a means to develop a need based, up-to-date and balanced collection and fit to meet the document and information needs of the users. The major indicator of a good library is the quality and quantity of its collections.

In the digital era, libraries have used the latest technology to keep the library up-to-date. The adequate collections of the library help to achieve the academic goals of the institutions. College libraries are having the collection of-

- Text books
- Reference books
- Encyclopedias
- Dictionaries
- Year books
- Competitive Examination books
- Career Development books
- Language improvement books
- Research Reports/Thesis/Dissertations
- National/International Journals
- News Papers, Magazines
- Audio, Video cassettes
- CD/DVD
- University question papers

Few college libraries are having special collections like Repositories, Braille material, Manuscripts and some college libraries are having books as donation Majority of Colleges are the members of INFLIBNET N-LIST programme for e-books and e-journals.

### **COLLEGE LIBRARY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Automation:** In majority of college libraries multi-lingual software, OPAC are installed. All most all libraries are fully automated and bar coded.

**Attendance of Daily Visit:** Majority of libraries maintained manual attendance register and new libraries have installed biometrics for the attendance of teachers/students.

**Internet:** Majority of libraries are having more computers with internet facility. Inter Library Loan: Many colleges are having MoU with other colleges to borrow books and non-book materials to meet the demands of the users. Reprography and book-bank facilities are available in many colleges.

**Services:** College Library provides Circulation, Reference Services, CAS, PSL, issue of previous question papers and syllabus, on line search and few colleges provided OPAC services.

### **PROBLEMS IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES**

**Human Resource:** Majority of college librarians are facing the trained human resource problem. All most all the subordinate staff members of the library are working in the college office or other works on the direction of the Principal or Management. Because of this it is very difficult to maintain and provide services and facilities to the users.

Principal should know the sufficient staffs are required to provide better and efficient service to the users. He should convey the Govt./Management to appoint sufficient staff including computer technician for maintaining and monitoring activities of the library. Principal should always allow the library staff members to attend the various training/orientation programmes.

**Library Committee:** In colleges, Library Committee has the teachers and one student of the college as members. They are not involving in the activity including placing the order for books, equipments, digital materials etc. But Library Committee should scrutinize every requirement before placing the order to meet the needs of the stake holders and to have better facilities in the library.

**Open Access:** In many colleges, library staffs are not working in the library. They are involving in other office works on the direction of the Principal. Due to this problem it is very difficult to provide Open Access facility. Principal should take initiation to solve this problem on the request of the librarian. He should explain the library service condition to the higher authorities to solve the problems.

**Opening Hours:** Usually college libraries are working daily eight hours. Due to the unavailability of the staff members it is not possible to increase the opening hours of the library. Librarians should discuss with the Principal and try of provide more facilities to the users.

**Space:** In many colleges, there is a hall or big room for the library, but not to think of a separate building for the library. Now a day's UGC has done remarkable job by giving grants for books, journals, Digital materials and equipments. Also it is giving separate grants for the library building. College librarians should be interested to take the advantage of the UGC schemes in consultation with the Principals. Sufficient space is needed to provide all the facilities and efficient service to the users.

**Funds:** Management or Government role is very important in the development of the library in providing better and efficient service to the stake holders according to the needs of the time. They should provide sufficient fund provision to develop, maintain and monitor the library activities. There should be freedom to the Principal and the librarians for using the funds to bring up the library services up to the mark.

## **ROLE OF THE LIBRARIAN**

Earlier, the main task of the librarian was just the material selection but now the same has been extended to the creation and maintenance of websites, teaching specific reference fund raising and other tasks.

- Librarians himself must be trained to serve the needs of the stake holders for their satisfaction. He should have some extra talent for better services.

- The library professionals should practice leadership qualities along with technical skills. The curriculum should be set in a way to enhance and enrich the leadership qualities, which plays a major role in the contemporary society.
- Librarian should plan for new collections and purchase the materials by implementing the selection policy.
- Library authority should arrange the user's education training orientation programmes for teachers and students in order to know the resources, services and the facilities available in the library and search the electronic resources.
- To enhance the confidence among students for facing the challenges in the modern world. Librarian should improve the collection of Biographies, Autobiographies, books on personality development, career and employment etc.
- Library authority should preserve and conserve the rich and glorious documents to the present and future generations.
- Librarian should improve the accessibility of e-resources. UGC –info net consortium is one of the popular source, through these, users are getting information for fulfilling their information needs.
- Librarian should be aware of UGC schemes and funds. With consultation of the Principal, he should take the advantage of the UGC funds to develop the Library facilities and the services.
- Library professionals should organize programmes like information lime library Book Talk, Books exhibitions, and competitions for cultivation the reading habits in students.

## CONCLUSIONS

The college librarian has to be made the intellectual hub of the institutions serving equally both the students and faculty members, with the help of UGC; College librarians are able to develop the collections and e-resources to meet the needs of the users.

Supporting library staff with sincerity and hard work is essential to implement the open access system because effective supervision and control only leads to success for open access system. Popular source like UGC Infonet consortium is essential for getting information and fulfilling the needs of the users. Library staff should practice leadership quality and technical skills to prove efficient service to the users.

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