



ROLE OF COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

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Abstract

*College libraries play a crucial role in the higher education system in India by serving as vital hubs of learning, research, and academic support. In the dynamic landscape of higher education, these libraries fulfill essential functions that contribute significantly to the overall educational experience and academic excellence. Key roles of college libraries include **Information Access and Management, Supporting Teaching and Learning, Research Support, Information Literacy, Digital Initiatives, Cultural and Community Engagement and Collaboration and Networking** college libraries in India are integral to the higher education ecosystem, playing multifaceted roles in supporting education, research, and community engagement. Their adaptation to digital advancements and proactive approach in meeting the evolving needs of stakeholders underscore their significance in the modern educational landscape.*

Introduction

A few government agencies of India are formulated for the improvement of higher education in India namely University Grants Commission (UGC); Association of Indian Universities (AIU); All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE); Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR); Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR); and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), etc. On September 26, 1985, Government of India established 'Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)' with prime objective to provide basic education and assure overall development to people of the country so that everyone can live a better quality of life. It works through two departments viz. "Department of School Education & Literacy" and "Department of Higher Education". The second department works for Higher Education, which is providing world class opportunities of higher education and research to Indian academic community so that they could be strengthened for competitions on international platform.

In the present era of ICT, education in most of the universities and colleges is being driven by technology and innovations. The educational Institutions have responded to those changes and embraced the digital mode of education involving both teaching and learning. As technology taking a leap ahead with smart phones, tablets and internet influencing the younger generation, education has started redefining itself. The interactive features and non linear system of content are very interesting to the students than the conventional class rooms. Thus, professional and online education is on the rise and the digital spaces have opened the entire new scope for education system. Digital media is transforming the system of education to a great extent.

2. OPEN KNOWLEDGE MOVEMENT

High cost of scholarly contents in form of text books, journals and other documents has been a major issue for scholar community therefore Open Educational Resources (OERs) came into scene. Knowledge is open if anyone is free to access, use, modify and share it. Open Educational Resources (OERs) are educational contents available in public domain with open licence. Due to open licence policy of these OERs any person is legally eligible to copy, use, modify and share among academic community. These Resources include textbooks to curricula, course notes, lecture material, assignments, online course videos, audios and animations. Some very useful scholarly contents are available in Open Access mode by different academic 3 agencies and institutions and publishers which provides free access to peer reviewed journals, books, and other research oriented material. Online repositories are another medium benefitting scholar community by providing rich pedagogical material.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) INITIATIVES IN INDIA

- NPTEL (National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning)
- Ekalavya
- E-Grid
- eGyan Kosh
- Sakshat
- e-PGPathshala
- VLE (Virtual learning Environment of Delhi University)
- CEC(Consortium of Educational Communication)
- National Science Digital Library
- National Repository of Open Educational Resources
- E-BIDYA
- FlexiLearn Open Course Portal
- A-VIEW
- SWAYAM
- SWAYAM PRABHA
- UGC- MOOC:
- NDL (National Digital Library)
- NMEICT (National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology)
- Shodhganga

2.2 OERs IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Krishikosh
- CeRA
- E- krishiShiksh

In the realm of agricultural education, several initiatives are promoting Open Educational Resources (OERs) to enhance learning and accessibility. Key platforms include Krishikosh, CeRA, and E-krishiShiksha, which cater specifically to agricultural knowledge dissemination. These resources aim to alleviate the high costs associated with scholarly materials by providing open access to textbooks, journals, and other educational content. Through these efforts, the

agricultural education sector in India is leveraging digital advancements to support broader learning and research opportunities

Information can be accessed via clouds now. Libraries are always been the mediators of knowledge and knowledge seekers. There are service providers to the scholar community of its parent organization. So there is no doubt in saying that an academic institution cannot survive without a library. And also if any academic institution do not give top priority to its library or neglect it, it will not take much time for its damage or destruction. "The Kothari Education Commission (1964- 65) was found very much serious about importance of library in higher educational institution stating that, "nothing could be more damaging to a- pawing department than to neglect its library, give to it a low priority." So role of a library is considered much more important for higher educational institutions. All educational programmes are successfully implemented with the help and coordination of the library. University Education Commission during 1948-49 under the headship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan described clearly that "teachers must have the necessary tools for teaching purpose in the shape of libraries and laboratories as also the right type of students." According to him "The library is the heart of the University's work; directly so as regards its research work and indirectly as regards its educational work, which derives its life from research work. Scientific research needs a library as well as its laboratories, while for humanistic research. The library is both library and laboratory in one. The training in higher branches of learning and research is mainly a question of learning how to use the tools, and if the libraries tools are not there how can the students learn to use them." In 1957 when SR Ranganathan participated in UGC agenda regarding 'Role of library in academic development' following observations were made: • "The library is the heart of education; • Methods & fashion in education change from generation to generation, but each generation uses the library as a means of realizing its items; hence the library remains the great conservator of learning; • A quality education is impossible without a quality library; • A library is vital organ for proper exploitation of our intellectual resources; • A library is essential for maintenance of free access to ideas, and to the functioning of the untrammelled mind." Considerable developments were made in higher education during 1980s and in present scenario these become faster with more advancements of ICT in education sector and constant support from MHRD. Keeping in view the importance of libraries in progress of higher educational academic institutes, govt agencies like UGC and ICAR have been providing consistent support to the libraries of these institutes so that informational resources available in any mode could be optimized properly by the scholar community

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, considered the father of Library Science, formulated "Five Laws of Library Science" to guide the optimal utilization of libraries. These laws, originally framed with a focus on books, can be adapted to the present context as follows:

Information is for use.

Every piece of information has its user.

Every user has their information.

Save the time of the user.

The scope of information is expanding exponentially.

Ranganathan's initial laws replaced "Information" with "Books," and the fifth law emphasized that "a library is a growing organism." These principles underscore the enduring importance of libraries in facilitating access to knowledge and supporting scholarly endeavors in higher education.

information can be accessed via clouds now. Libraries are always been the mediators of knowledge and knowledge seekers. There are service providers to the scholar community of its parent organization. So there is no doubt in saying that an academic institution cannot survive without a library. And also if any academic institution do not give top priority to its library or neglect it, it will not Libraries within parent organizations of higher education play a crucial role in fostering excellence through the provision of high-quality information resources. They act as collectors and providers of valuable content essential for academic communities, directly contributing to educational and research endeavors.

In India, institutional libraries are actively enhancing their services through dedicated websites. These platforms host online catalogues, subscribed resources, open access materials, and other e-content, while also facilitating real-time chat services to create a virtual learning environment. Libraries function as indispensable research guides, offering comprehensive research assistance via their webpages or portals. They support scholars throughout their research processes by providing subject-specific documents, directories, quick start guides, and resources for reference management, including tools for creating references and managing citations.

Moreover, libraries are expanding their collections to include digital and online resources alongside traditional print materials. This digital collection encompasses e-books, e-journals, proceedings, databases, citation management tools, plagiarism detection software, statistical resources, and various reference tools, thereby meeting the evolving needs of academic research and learning in the digital age.

In the realm of higher educational institutes, achieving excellence hinges on quality teachers, students, and informational resources. Libraries within these institutions play a pivotal role as both collectors and providers of high-quality content, directly contributing to academic success. They are instrumental in fostering a robust educational environment by offering access to a wealth of knowledge and information.

Libraries in Indian higher education are actively engaged in several initiatives:

Library Websites and Research Help: Almost all institutional libraries maintain dedicated websites. These platforms provide access to online catalogues, subscribed resources, free and open access materials, and various e-contents. Additionally, they offer real-time chat services, creating a virtual environment conducive to learning and research.

Research Support: Libraries serve as crucial hubs for research assistance. They function as guides for scholars, offering support throughout the research process. This includes providing subject-specific documents, directories, research guides, and tools for managing citations and references. These resources are invaluable in facilitating rigorous academic inquiry.

Online Reference Services: Many libraries offer internet-based reference services through channels such as email, real-time chat, instant messaging, online submission forms, and even teleconferencing. Popular services like "Ask a librarian" enable users to receive prompt assistance and guidance via email replies or direct interaction through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. These digital reference services significantly save time for scholars by providing quick access to information and support.

Online Catalogues: Libraries maximize the use of their informational resources through online catalogues. These catalogues allow users to check the availability and bibliographic details of documents anytime, from anywhere. Nearly all libraries have made their catalogues accessible online, some of which also include lists of open access resources for broader accessibility.

Digital Repositories: Libraries often manage and maintain digital repositories for their institutions or organizations. These repositories categorize materials into specific communities or folders, making related documents easily accessible to all users. They serve as archives for scholarly and academic materials, including research outputs from faculty and research scholars.

Information Literacy Programmes: Recognizing the abundance of Open Educational Resources (OERs), Open Access documents, portals, consortia, and various other academic resources available online, libraries conduct Information Literacy Programmes. These programmes are integrated into course curricula, workshops, seminars, and lectures to educate users about efficiently navigating and utilizing these resources. Library training sessions cater to students and faculty across all levels to ensure optimal use of electronic and web-based resources for academic purposes.

Display of Latest Collections: Libraries promote awareness among their users about newly acquired informational resources in various formats. By showcasing their latest collections through displays and announcements, libraries ensure that users are informed and can benefit from the latest additions to their collections.

Libraries in academic institutions are increasingly adopting software solutions to facilitate access to multiple subscribed e-resources and digital content. These software platforms, such as Ezproxy, Refread, and Fedgate, enable users from the parent institution to access resources remotely from any location using their assigned ID and password. This remote access capability enhances convenience and expands the reach of library resources to users worldwide.

Additionally, libraries are participating in and benefitting from library networks. These networks serve as collaborative platforms where member libraries can share their information resources and services under mutual agreements. This cooperative approach addresses various challenges faced by academic institutions, including the costliness of documents, budget constraints, and duplication of resources across libraries.

The concept of library networks gained prominence in India following recommendations from the Planning Commission's working group on the National Policy on Library and Information Systems during the seventh five-year plan in 1985. Several library networks were established between 1988 and 1998 in India to promote the optimal utilization of informational resources. Some notable examples include:

Ahmadabad Library Network (ADINET) - Established in 1994

Bangalore Academic Library Network (BALNET) - Established in 1995

Bombay Library Network (BONET) - Established in 1992

Calcutta Library Network (CALIBNET) - Established in 1993

Developing Library Network (DELNET) - Established in 1988

Indore Library Network (INDOLIBNET)

Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) - Established in 1991

Madras Library Network (MALIBNET) - Established in 1993

Mysore Library Network (MYLIBNET) - Established in 1995

These networks facilitate resource sharing on-demand among member libraries, promoting efficient use of resources and enhancing access to a broader range of materials for academic research and learning.

In India, library consortia play a pivotal role in enhancing resource sharing and collaboration among member libraries. These consortia are formed through agreements that enable libraries to share their resources and services, thereby expanding access to a wider range of materials for academic and research purposes. Here are some major library consortia in India:

- CSIR E-Journal Consortium: Facilitates access to electronic journals for Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) institutions.
- Consortium for E-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA): Provides access to electronic resources and journals in the field of agriculture.
- Department of Bio-Technology e-Library Consortium (DeLCON): Offers electronic library resources and journals in biotechnology.
- Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy (FORSA): Focuses on resource sharing in astronomy and related fields.
- Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Consortium: Supports resource sharing among Indian Institutes of Management.
- Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) Knowledge Park: Provides resources and support for knowledge sharing in the financial sector.
- Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST-AICTE Consortium): Supports digital library initiatives in engineering sciences and technology.
- Health Science Library and Information Network (HELINET): Facilitates access to health science resources and information.
- MCIT Library Consortium: Promotes resource sharing in the field of information technology and communication.
- UGC-DAE- Consortium for Scientific Research: Supports scientific research by providing access to resources in collaboration with the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).
- UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium: Enables access to a wide range of scholarly resources across various disciplines for universities and colleges.

These consortia enhance the efficiency of resource utilization, reduce costs, and provide broader access to scholarly information, benefiting academic and research communities across India.

Key roles of libraries in higher education. Here's a concise breakdown of these roles:

Leads in Bringing Institutional Effectiveness:

Libraries identify outcomes aligned with institutional missions and accreditation standards. They promote continuous improvement across all facets of the institution. Libraries uphold professional values such as intellectual freedom, privacy, and integrity, and combat plagiarism through policies and education.

Enhances Professional Values in Users:

Libraries educate users in effective information retrieval, scientific searching, and internet use. They provide self-instructional materials and support the design of online tutorials. One-on-one assistance is offered to help users find information across various formats.

Educator Role:

Libraries serve as spaces for intellectual interaction and idea sharing, both physically and virtually. They provide conducive physical environments with network connectivity, equipment, and resources for study and collaboration.

As Space:

Libraries manage diverse, high-quality resources in print, digital, and electronic formats. They ensure long-term availability and access to intellectual records for teaching, research, and institutional needs. Libraries collaborate with other institutions through consortia to enhance cost-effectiveness and access to collections.

As Knowledge Manager:

Skilled library staff provide continuous support to academic staff for teaching and research needs. Libraries contribute to the overall pedagogical development of the institution by enhancing professional skills and knowledge. These roles collectively contribute to the enrichment of academic environments, supporting teaching, research, and learning initiatives in higher education institutions.

Strengthen External Relations:

Libraries engage with the campus and broader community through advocacy, education, and promotion. They develop external relations through communications, events, donor cultivation, and stewardship. Libraries communicate consistently and effectively with the campus community to raise awareness about resources, services, and expertise.

Delivery Satisfaction / Satisfaction Relationship:

Libraries prioritize user-oriented services based on user expectations and feedback. They manage user expectations and continuously assess and adapt services to meet evolving needs. Libraries employ new mechanisms and technologies to provide quick and consistent services that align with user expectations in a changing environment. These roles highlight how libraries not only support academic missions but also engage with diverse stakeholders to enhance their impact and relevance within higher education institutions.

Conclusion

Traditional boundaries, becoming dynamic centers of knowledge management and dissemination. In the modern era, where information is increasingly digital and accessible

online, libraries play a critical role in education and academia. Here are some key points that elaborate on this interdependence and the evolving role of libraries:

1. **Crucial Role in Education:** Libraries are essential for education worldwide, serving as repositories of knowledge that support learning, research, and academic development. They provide access to a wide range of resources that enhance the educational experience for students and faculty alike.
2. **Impact of ICT:** In the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) era, libraries have adapted by managing digital resources, ensuring their quality, accessibility, preservation, and storage. Digital resources enable libraries to operate beyond traditional hours, offering 24/7 access to information.
3. **Dynamic Centers of Knowledge Management:** Libraries have evolved from mere book repositories to dynamic centers of knowledge management. They curate and provide access to diverse information sources, including digital publications, databases, and multimedia content.
4. **Attracting and Retaining Faculty:** A library with high-quality resources enhances the institution's prestige and attracts ambitious faculty. Faculty members rely on libraries for research support, access to scholarly journals, and collaboration opportunities.
5. **Expanded Roles:** Libraries now engage in activities such as information literacy programs, digital repository management, online reference services, and participation in consortia and networks for resource sharing. These activities ensure that libraries remain integral to the educational ecosystem.

In essence, libraries and education are symbiotic, with libraries playing a pivotal role in supporting and enriching educational endeavors through their evolving functions in the digital age.

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