



## BEST PRACTICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KES SHROFF COLLEGE LIBRARY

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Libraries and information centers are recognized as power house of information or knowledge and have long tradition of managing information collection for its best use. Different services are provided by the libraries to serve the user communities for their varied needs. But the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought tremendous change in library services. In this internet era, user centric services are expected from the libraries which help them to get pinpointed information within no time. To meet this need, different libraries are using their own tailor made best practices. The paper describes the best practices of KES Shroff College of Arts & Commerce, Mumbai.

**Keywords:** Best Practices, NAAC, Academic Libraries, Library, Quality

### **INTRODUCTION :**

University Grants Commission (UGC) is very much concerned about the quality in higher education. To improve quality, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of UGC was established in 1994 to assess and accredit institutions of higher education. It is now mandatory for all the universities and their affiliated colleges to get accredited by NAAC. Quality improvement without best practices and their accreditation is not possible. The concept 'Best practices' originates from management and is a feature of accredited management standards such as ISO 9000 and ISO 14001. Best practices are used to maintain quality. The concept is now used in education field also.





### **Definition**

ODLIS (Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science) defines best practices as follows: “In the application of theory to real-life situations, procedures that, when properly applied consistently yield superior results and are therefore used as reference points in evaluation of the effectiveness of alternative methods of accomplishing the same task. Best practices are empirical evidence of success”

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes best practices as “quality of high standard, excellence, highly improved, outstanding, par excellence service. It means way of doing something that is usual or expected way in a particular organization or situation, guidelines for good practices. In this process of developing best practices we take action rather than good ideas, and we improve our skills”

### **Best practices in libraries and NAAC**

Academic libraries are considered to be the nerve centers of academic institutions, and must support teaching, research, and other academic programmes. The academic library has been described as the ‘heart’ of the learning community, providing a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge. The librarians and library staff provide numerous services to these users, addressing their diverse needs, characteristics, and interests. Academic libraries include college and university libraries.

Document prepared by NAAC for ‘Best Practices in Academic Libraries’ says “Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solves a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations”

NAAC has identified following four broad areas in academic libraries where best practices can be followed:

- Management and Administration of Library
- Collection and Services





- Extent of User Services
- Use of Technology

### **Brief introduction of KES Shroff College Library**

The KES Shroff College of Arts & Commerce Library was established in the year 1991. Since then it has been gradually developed in terms of its infrastructure as well as the services provided by it. The library is situated on the second floor of the five storied building of the college. The college offers various courses – HSC (Arts), HSC (Commerce), and BA, BCom, BAF, BBI, BFM, BMM, BMS, BFTM, BIM, BES, BSc-IT, MCom (Accountancy), MCom (Management), MSc-IT, MFTM, MA (Business Economics) and about eight certificate courses. Total strength of the students is about 7000. The college has about 40 non teaching staff and about 110 teaching staff. The total area of the library is 3000 sq. feet and it has the sitting capacity of about 120 students at a time. The stack area is kept at the end of the library and is separated with a glass partition to maintain silence in fully Air conditioned Reading Room.

### **Best Practices of KES Shroff College Library, Mumbai**

#### Collection Development

The aim of the collection development of our library is to provide all types of resources to support teaching, learning and research pursuits of the readers of the college. Collection of KES Shroff College as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 is as follows:

Sr. No.	Type of Resources	Quantity
1	Books	33201
2	Book bank Scheme Books	225
3	Bound Volumes	162
4	Periodicals	78
5	Newspapers	15
6	CDs & DVDs	1605
7	Globe	2





8	Databases	2
9	N-List Journals	+2100
10	N-List Books	+71000

### **Newspapers :**

Newspapers are said to mirror the world. To keep students aware of what is happening in

the world around them; we subscribe fifteen newspapers in four languages, viz., English, Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati. Two news papers are displayed on the newspaper stand, kept at the entrance of the library. This saves the time of readers who only wish to read only news paper also avoids rush in the library.

### **Newspaper Clipping Files :**

The newspaper clippings displayed on the notice board are filed subject wise and are available for the users for their projects, assignments or preparing for elocution or debate competition.

### **Book Exhibition :**

The world of books is the most remarkable creation of man. To explore this world library organizes grand exhibition of books almost every year. About eight to ten book suppliers participate in the exhibition and nearly 3000 titles are exhibited. This exhibition gives our students and staff an opportunity of selecting the books of their interest.

Library also organizes the exhibition of books on birth anniversary of eminent personalities like Swami Vivekananda, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Shakespeare etc. on regular basis. On these occasions, short documentary on their life or the play of the writer are also screened in the library.

The goal of this activity is to create awareness among the readers about their life and work and display the available books and CDs/DVDs to increase their usage.







**Display :**

List of newly added books is displayed on the library notice board. Book jackets of books are also displayed on the library notice board. Important articles from the news papers related to the syllabus, career opportunities, self help, health, book review etc. are displayed regularly. This is the good way of marketing the library collection.

**Library Orientation :**

To acquaint freshers with the library collection, various services and also with the rules and regulations, library orientation sessions are held for the first year students of all the courses. This helps to motivate the students to visit the library.

**Book Bank :**

The book bank facility is provided to the students from socially and economically weaker sections. The college receives grant from Student Welfare Dept., University of Mumbai for providing book bank facility to socially weaker section of students. The specimen books are donated by the teachers to the library. These books are issued to economically weaker section. This year about forty three students received the benefit.

**Gold Card :**

An additional library card is given to meritorious students of all the classes. The goal of this practice is to encourage them academically.

**Internet Access & Printing Facility :**

The library has an Internet Hub having 14 PCs where internet facility is provided free of cost to the students for an hour. Printing facility is also provided at nominal cost. List of important educational websites, User ID and password of online journals and databases are displayed in the internet hub for easy access. This helps the students in preparing their assignments and projects.





**Membership :**

We have taken silver institutional membership of British Library. Through BCL we have an access to 38000 e-books along with issue of 10 books at a time. We also have the library membership of Insurance Institute of India (III). Through III we can access to 6000 books and 54 National and International periodicals along with database such as EBSCO publishing, Prowess & EIS Data and PDF database of CMIE. We have associated with N-list programme of INFLIBNET which provides access to more than 2100 E-journals and more than 71,000 E-books.

**Inter Library Loan (ILL) :**

Students and teachers from other colleges like Thakur, Nagindas Khandwala, Dalmia, Balbharati etc are also availing library services

**Library Services to external Readers :**

Library provides home lending facility to management members. Reading facility is provided to ex-students of the college appearing for competitive exams, pursuing professional course or further studies. Reading facility is also provided to the teachers from other colleges pursuing MPhil or PhD.

**Databases :**

Two databases of Taxmann.com and Indiatat.com are subscribed by the library. These databases give the required information to the users at a mouse click and save their time. Besides, many users can access them at a time. The goal of this practice is to avoid spending amount on multiple copies of tax related books as every year the tax law changes. It also solves the space problem and helps in withdrawal of outdated books. As the access to these databases is password based, the reads can have an access to them from anywhere and at any time.

**Training :**

Training of using the software as well as database is provided to staff members of the library. Introduction about how to use the databases is





given to the users by librarian. Hands on training of the database are arranged for users at regular interval by the library.

**Kindle Reader :**

To keep pace with advanced technology we have procured e-reader – Kindle reader. Every month we download free e-book and upload in the Kindle. About 270 books are uploaded in the Kindle.

**Computerization of Library :**

To avoid duplication of work and to provide fast and better services to the readers, computerization of library is done using the SMS Library Management System Software developed by MICM Net Solutions PVT. Ltd. Company, Mumbai. Automation of all in-house operations in the library with bar coding, user identity with member bar code is also a best practice of our library.

**OPAC :**

Circulation of books is fully computerised and OPAC is provided on intranet. The goal of this practice is easy retrieval of required resources even by using keywords.

**Fully Air conditioned Reading Room :**

Reading room of the library is fully air conditioned. The comfortable environment helps the readers to concentrate in their study.

**Electronic Surveillance System :**

Library provides open access to the readers. For security of the resources eleven CC camera are installed in the library.

**Specific Services for Faculty :**

Separate Reading Room for Teachers

Library has separate reading room for teachers with seating capacity of six. Computer with internet facility is provided in this room. This helps the teachers in preparing for their lectures as well as pursuing higher studies.





**E-mail based Information Service :**

Selective Dissemination of information is provided to the teaching staff by e-mail. User profile of the teachers is maintained. Book reviews, journal articles, newly arrived book in their area of interest are mailed to them on regular basis.

**CONCLUSION :**

Change is the law of nature. One has to adapt to this change to survive. In this internet era, every library has to identify and provide its own tailor made ICT based services. Today's best practice may not be best with passing time. Hence regular feedback from the users about the best practices of the library should be taken. It should be analyzed and revised as per the demand of the users and need of the hour.

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