THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN TODAY'S HIGHER EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS

Sachin P. Dhande[1], Monali A. Badade[1] and Dr.Shashikant G. Rokade[2]

[1]Department of Library, DBCOP, Nagpur-37
[2]Department of Library, Sevadal Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur-24
E-mail: librariansachin@gmail.com, monabadade123@gmail.com,
drshashikkantrokade@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

Library plays an important role in higher education. In today's time it is more significant because we are in a place of fastest technological innovation where each and every second new information is being created in our world, which cannot be preserved without a smart library. The present paper reflects the present depiction of government initiatives in the field of higher education and the role of libraries in promoting the utilization of these initiatives for teaching research and extension activities in higher educational institutions. Various movements of libraries for promoting higher education in the era of information communication technology like library networks, library portals, digital collection development, online reference services, digital repositories, online catalogues, and information literacy programs have been described in the paper. A few major key roles played by a library as educator, as communicator, as supervisor, as a knowledge manager etc. is also explained through this article. Also this article discusses the role of the library in helping students in higher education with the challenges faced by the users.

Key words: - *The role of libraries, higher education, Information literacy, E-Resources..*

INTRODUCTION :

The last two decades, India has remarkably transformed its higher education landscape. It has created widespread access to low cost high quality university education for students of all levels. The Indian higher education system is one of the largest education systems in the world just after the US and China. Higher Education is generally considered the synonymous of university education but it also includes various colleges, research centers, training centers and art etc. Thus providing a higher level of teaching is one of the facets of higher education. Higher Education is providing world class opportunities of higher education and research to the Indian academic community so that they could be strengthened for competitions on international platforms.

The role of a library in the education process at any level, especially at the college level for the overall development of students such as personality, communication, career, and creativity is very significant etc. So a well-organized library is essential for the teaching-learning process done in a college, especially when the emphasis is shifted from classroom teaching-centered process. The quality of education is greatly linked with libraries. The information collected and disseminated by libraries decides the quality of the teaching and learning process in a college. In the words of S.R. Dongerkery, "A well-stocked and up-to-date library is a sine qua non for every modern educational institution". The libraries of modern educational institutions have to plan, to develop and organize their library resources and services in such a way that it should facilitate retrieval of the desired information as quickly as possible and save the time of the users. The purpose of a library is to provide the right information to the right user at the right time in the right form.

Definition :

• **Library:** Ranganathan says "a library is a public institution or establishment charged with the care of collection of books and the duty of making them accessible to those who require using them". Here, the term 'book' symbolizes the library collection which may be book, periodicals, or any other material kept in a library.

• **Higher Education**: Higher education is tertiary education leading to the award of an academic degree. Higher education, also called post-secondary education, third-level or tertiary education, is an optional final stage of formal learning that occurs after completion of secondary education.

• **Information Literacy :** The Association of College and Research Libraries defines information literacy as a "set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning"

• **E-Resource**: Electronic resource management is the practices and techniques used by librarians and library staff to track the selection, acquisition, licensing, access, maintenance, usage, evaluation, retention, and de-selection of a library's electronic information resources.

1.Objectives of the study:

• To know importance and Functions of Academic Library in Higher Education

• To know the role of library in higher education

• To know the ways how libraries fulfil the information needs of students in higher education.

• Study the impact of IT on library resources.

Need of the Study:

In the present ever changing information environment, libraries are encountering both opportunities and challenges. Information technology has introduced many changes in the way information is identified, procured, processed and disseminated to library clientele. Libraries and information centers are witnessing new paradigm shifts. These shifts include: Furthermore, information technology has created a sense of urgency among library users and librarians themselves. The healthy competition among librarians in developing their library in terms of size, collection and technology and their interest in serving the users affect the information seeking of students. This aspect needs a study on the role of libraries in today's higher education.

Role of Libraries in Higher Education:

Education is primarily at the hub of a country's economic, social and cultural development as much as it is science and technology. The evaluation in education can be seen as the increased awareness of the ever-increasing access to the wealth of information or knowledge. The library is an integrated part of any academic institution, so also of any college. Education becomes student-centered and encourages students to play a dynamic and creative role in pursuing learning and reading and making him/her a perfect citizen. It should provide maximum information and services support to faculty, research scholars and students in a professional institution. The library is a multi-functional information provider. As such modernization of libraries is essential for research and development activities in any field and library facilities should be developed as a part of the total programme of a college.

It has been described that the education, particularly at higher levels, is a process of learning rather than teaching, signifying the efforts to be put in by the students. They have to be provided with the facilities necessary for mastering the subject matter, techniques, skills, and habits of thinking and methods of work in

their chosen field. It is more so in the present day of information explosion, technological revolution and the days of a dramatic shift in socio-economic and political spheres. The enormous growth of information and its proliferation, on the one hand, access to information through various communication media with the advancement of technology on the other; and awareness among the public of egalitarian opportunities and social justice on yet another hand have exerted greater stress on the total educational system. The shift on these stresses calls for a change in teaching skills and techniques, learning habits, curricula design, and implementation, etc. This change in the educational system has further increased the need for supplementary reading resources. The classroom lectures cannot suffice the student to prepare for facing societal challenges. The teacher cannot be an effective teacher unless he draws extensively from a variety of information sources and keeps himself up-to-date in his field of specialization. So also the information needs of the research scholars vary in quantity and quality. It is here that the libraries being reservoirs of knowledge hidden in a variety of forms have a vital role to play. The library played a vital role in the development of higher education. It is not merely a storehouse of books and other reading material collected for preservation, but it also functions as a dynamic instrument of education, to feed the intellect of the student, to encourage the researchers of the faculty and to invite all who enter its house to partake fully of its intellectual and cultural contexts. It would not be an exaggeration if it were said that a library is an essential pre-requisite for the successful implementation of the higher education programme.

In the words of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, "Libraries are not mere storehouses; they are rich springs from which knowledge flows out to irrigate the side field of education and culture."

Documents are a medium for knowing the latest information, with the help and cooperation of a library no formal educational programme can fructify.

Dr S. R Ranganathan who is considered father of Library Science framed "five laws of library science" regarding best utilization of libraries may be differently used in present scenario as:

1. Information is for use
2. Every bit of Information has its consumer
3. Every consumer has its information.
4. Save the time of the user.
5. Information is increasing vastly.

In Ranganathan's first four Laws were contacting the word 'books' in place of 'Information' and the fifth law was 'library is a growing organism'.

Problems and Opportunities Facing Libraries in India

Library and information services are fundamental to the goals of creating, disseminating, optimally utilizing and preserving knowledge. They are instrumental in transforming an unequal society into an egalitarian, progressive knowledge-based society. It is well known that in India most of the libraries function in the government sector. These are in academic and research institutions and under the public library system, which is again under the state and central governments. At present, education being a state subject and coming under the purview of different apex agencies, there is no common direction or coordination among them. It is imperative that all libraries (public, academic, research and special) change gear and develop at an accelerated pace. Developments in information communication technology (ICT) have enabled libraries to provide access to all, and also bridge the gap between the local, the national and the global. Yet the Library and Information Services (LIS) sector in India has not kept pace with the paradigmatic changes taking place in society.

There are a few libraries which are using state of art technologies to disseminate knowledge to their respective user community. There is lack of cooperation among the libraries of different organizations and which cause the lack of union catalogues at national level. The national library failed even to do this immense task. One of the major problems faced by the LIS sector in India is lack of bibliographic control at national level which causes duplication in research. A considerable number of libraries had not developed bibliographic databases of their documents for putting them on network.

College libraries, which are the largest group of libraries in the country, have also been facing the problem of poor services, outdated collection of reading materials, financial constraints and inadequate professional staff.

Impact of Information Technology on Information Services:

It is established fact that IT has brought the revolution in the field of library and information science, as we have already mentioned that all library housekeeping activities like procurement, processing, organization and dissemination of information services are based on computer, communication and reprographic technologies, which has facilitated the following services being provided to the users more effectively wizards. references services, Bibliographic Services, Referral Services, OPAC, Current Awareness Services, Document Delivery Services, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Barcode Base/ Services, User orientation program, in-house personal training, Resources sharing and other services. Such facilities being extended to the academicians, researchers and library users to find their required information without any barriers are possible only because of I.T. application in library and Information centers.

Open Educational Resources for Higher Education:

• E-kalavya

• E-Gyan Kosh

• E-PG Pathshala

• VLE (Virtual learning Environment of Delhi University)

• CEC (Consortium of Educational Communication)

• National Science Digital Library

• National Repository of Open Educational Resources

• E-BIDYA

• Flexi Learn Open Course Portal

• A-VIEW

• SWAYAM

• SWAYAM PRABHA

• UGC- MOOC

• KRISHIKOSH

• NDL (National Digital Library)

• Shodhganga

• NPTEL

• INFLIBNET

• Vidya Mitra

• CEDT e-Courses

• MIT Open Courseware

• Shodhgangotri

CONCLUSION:

Education and libraries are called the two facets of one coin. They are very much interdependent on each other as education without libraries and libraries without education are paralyzed. Libraries cannot be separated from education. The provision of libraries is crucial and essential to education around the globe. In the ICT era, when informational sources emerged in online publishing and digital mode and available on web, the role and responsibilities of libraries have increased in terms of managing information, assessing quality, ensuring access, storage and preservations, and such other activities. For users, resources are now not limited to in-house collection only but libraries through different library networks, consortia, e-reference services, social media, repositories, national and international collaborations have

expanded collection for them. Documents at your doors services like document delivery and inter library loan have been initiated by libraries. The future of the automated libraries in the developed/ developing countries seems to be very promising and it can be hoped that more and more libraries will adopt automation techniques/systems in the very near future, sooner rather than later. The new generation of computers and its use in libraries is not only modernization but it has become a necessity. Library staff must be capable of working effectively in partnership with faculty members to enhance the strength of teaching and research. In the present scenario the quote "Think like a User, Act like an Administrator" is very important for any library.

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