
College and University Libraries

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College and university library perform an important function in the educational process. These educations provide a totally different environment for boys and girls who go for higher studies. Usually, the classes comprise a large number of students and unlike school education, the students of college and university get much less individual attention from the teachers. The students, therefore, have to depend much more on self-learning. Today, university libraries have a very large and difficult role to play in order to meet a variety of demands of information and knowledge by far larger number of people on far larger number of subjects at far higher prices and negligible grants.

Keywords: Teaching Material, University, Students, College and Library.

Objectives and functions of a college library

- Giving young men and women a wider and deeper understanding of the various disciplines.
- Preparing the more precocious students for advanced studies in various disciplines.
- Preparing of young men and women for shouldering the higher responsibilities of manning schools, government departments, civic organizations, commercial establishments, business and industry, etc.
- Providing adequate and comfortable physical facilities for study.
- Providing bibliographical information and special materials for the research students and faculty.

For translating into practice all these objectives and functions, the college library has a central role to play. College life also provides students ample opportunities to involve themselves in group activities that help them to develop organizational skills and leadership qualities. Individual talents in fine arts, music, dance, sports and games and such other extra-curricular activities get full support during college education. Thus, College education aims to develop students into citizens with intellectual inputs as well as other desirable qualities useful for the country's advancement and progress.

Library – Keystone in the College Arch

A good and efficient library will certainly help students to meet the new challenges they start facing at college. They can, within the four walls of the library, use their leisure more usefully and meaningfully, discover their own inherent potentialities, launch upon instructive and absorbing hobbies and generally lay the foundations of a good and more responsible life in the future. The libraries will therefore become equally, if not more, important than the classrooms. The libraries will become students' workshops. It is in this context that a college library has to play a very responsible role, *vis-à-vis*, the academic needs of young students.

Key Components of an ideal college library

We shall now acquaint ourselves with the ingredients that go towards making an efficient college library system. These ingredients are:

- Finance and budget
- The college management
- Professional staff of the library
- Physical facilities like building, furniture, equipment
- A collection of books and other learning and teaching material
- The user community, comprising students, teachers, the college management and others getting standard library services

Collection of books

- A good collection with multiple copies of text-books and other recommended books, at the rate of at least one copy for every ten users.
- Books of a more advanced nature for the benefit of the teachers and also for the more precocious students.
- A wide range of reference books such as general and subject encyclopedias, language and subject dictionaries, handbooks, manuals, biographical and geographical tools, carrier handbooks, Competition Success, General Knowledge, gazetteers, atlases.
- A browsing collection of light reading material like travelogues, humour books, art books, biographies, fiction etc.

On the size of the collection, educationists hold the view that a representative college library should have at least 50 books per student. Thus, a college library, with an enrolment of about a thousand students, should have at least 50,000 volumes. In addition, it has to have advanced books for the teachers, the management and other users.

Collection Policy

The collection could be live and active, only if there is a policy of weeding out older textbooks and other overused books or unused books. This is important because these books occupy precious and costly shelf space. Related to this is the policy regarding loss of books. In an active library, there is bound to be loss of books, a reasonable percentage of this loss, must be written

off. In modern times, when prices are going up each day, the libraries must go for resource sharing and networking. All needed material can no more be acquired by a single library. Therefore, various libraries shall have to pool up funds and rotate materials between them through the rules of sharing.

Processing and Organization

A College library should give sufficient attention and thought to the processing and organization of the collection for shelving and display. The classification scheme chosen should fulfill the following criteria:

- The system should have a general acceptance of users.
- The system should have a central organizational base with facilities for periodic updating of the schedules; and
- The system should also have an in-built mechanism for accommodating newly emerging subjects, without in anyway destroying the existing structure. In India, the Dewey Decimal Classification, the Colon Classification and the Universal Decimal Classification are the systems mostly used.

User Community and Library Services

The Second component of a college library constitutes its user. In addition to teachers, students and staff, the clientele may consist of other users such as author and writers, high school teachers, lawyers, medical practitioners etc. The library must extend facilities to these users, treating them as its honored guests, adhering, however, to the rules governing the use of library. Important college library services are:

- Text-book services
- Reading room services
- Information and references
- Lending and inter library loan service
- Display of current additions or production of lists of current accessions.
- Documentation services, only on specific request, should include current awareness to literature, special journals.
- Preparation of current lists of reference, Indexing/Abstracting services on projects, etc.

Physical Facilities

In order to be able to provide the amenities, referred to above, the college library will have to be housed in an independent building, functional and attractive. The University Grants Commission supports the independent buildings for college library. The college library should have central location with a commanding view and plenty of space around for future expansions. In addition, to the usual reading, stack and work areas; facilities for browsing, for arranging exhibition, seminars, film-shows, etc., should be provided. Special areas for teachers, researchers, need to be provided.

Professional Staff

A College library must be headed by a person with high academic and professional qualification and experience. It is necessary to give the college librarian the academic status in addition to the salary scale of teachers. The success of the library, entirely depends on the professional services offered by the library staff.

Finance and Budget

While the Radhakrishnan Commission recommended the setting apart of six per cent of the total college budget for the development of their respective libraries, the Kothari Commission raised it to about ten per cent. The Karnataka State Universities Review Committee went a step further and recommended the setting apart of 20 per cent of the college budget for the maintenance and development of the library. It is a genuine and necessary requirement. Allocation of an adequate funds, as recommended by the Raj Commission, is necessary for building a responsive service and for operating the library at the research and teaching level.

University Libraries

A library is more important in a University, because a university cannot function without a library. The number of universities in India has gone up from a mere twenty in 1947, to more than two hundred in the nineties.

Objectives of a university

- To conserve knowledge and ideas for posterity.
- To train a band of research workers in all the areas mentioned above so that the results of research could be harnessed to improve the quality of life of the people.
- To provide intellectual and managerial leadership to the various fields of government, industry, health, engineering, law, defense, education, agriculture, etc., and imbue them with a sense of social purpose.

Functions of university

- Learning and teaching
- Extension and services
- Conservation of knowledge and ideas
- Research and generation of new knowledge
- Dissemination and publication of research results

Objectives and functions of a university library

University libraries support and help the university in achieving each of the objectives of the University. The major functions that are derived from these objectives are:

- Development of a collection in a wide variety of subjects for learning, teaching, research, publication, etc.
- Getting the stock of knowledge materials organized and maintained for use.

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- Organize and provide a variety of library, documentation and information services, both responsive and anticipatory.

The User Community

The user community of university libraries include the following:

- Students at different levels of study in different subjects.
- Teachers, imparting instructions and guiding students at different levels and in different subjects.
- Research students working for M. Phil or Ph.D. degrees.
- Post – doctoral research scholars working on specific projects.
- Professors and experts guiding research projects and managing research activities of the university.
- Members of the various academic and executive bodies of the university.
- The university management involved in its major task of managing of a large-scale institution of higher learning and research.
- Scholars in general, who get special privileges of using the university library; and others.

Services

The university library should offer a number of libraries, documentation and information services. Among others, the services may include the following:

- Library Services
- Specialized Services
- Bibliographic Services
- Condensation Services
- Current Awareness Services

Professional Staff

The university professional staff must match the quality of the teaching and research community in terms of academic and professional qualifications, experience and expertise. The library, documentation and information services that are offered by the library system must reflect the professional competence of the library staff. Their constant interaction with students at different levels, faculty, research scholars, computer and communication experts, and management experts of the university should ensure credibility and appreciation from the user community. It is only through innovative approaches that the user communities would be attracted to the library and its services which in turn, would result in the best use of the library. It is for these reasons that the library staff should enjoy the status and salary of the teaching community and should be considered as part of the academic staff.

Finance and Budget

The university library operates on the allocation of funds by university. This has been based upon norms set and recommended by the different commissions on education, reference to which has already been made. The recommendations of Raj Committee states that 20% of the university budget should be available for the university library. But as has been said in the earlier section, the cost of a university library must be viewed in the context of changing educational and information technology. It is learnt that the University Grants Commission is reviewing the entire situation to design a library network of university libraries. It is hoped that due emphasis will be laid on local and regional networks, as has happened all over the world, instead of going for inverted pyramid of a national structure alone, in absence of regional and local efforts. No inverted pyramid can ever be able to stand, be it INFLIBNET or any other body.

Commission on Libraries

In the last hundred years, a number of commissions and committees have been appointed by the government to review the educational system in India and make appropriate recommendations to improve and strengthen it. Notable among them are, the Radhakrishnan Commission on higher education (1948), the Mudaliar Commission on secondary education (1952-53) and Kothari Commission on education (1964) and Karnataka State Universities Review Committee, headed by Professor K.N. Raj (1979). The establishment of the University Grants Commission is yet another landmark in the growth of library and university education in India. The University libraries have gained very substantially in terms of getting book funds, grants for library buildings, and other facilities.

Conclusion

The college and university libraries have a big responsibility and a very important role to play not only in shaping students for higher learning and research, but also in providing a variety of services to meet other demands.

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