



## ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

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### Abstract

The paper explores in academic libraries are information centre established in support of the mission are their parent institutions to generate knowledge, information, academic activities and source of knowledge etc. The academic institutions normally give emphasis on teaching, publications, research and extension programs which is supported by its library. School, College, university and other academic institutions the teaching community depend upon their library heavily to develop their quality of teaching. Some people called the academic libraries as the instructors of instructors. New developments in the information technologies have enhanced the education system to a right direction. The academic library should attempt to provide correct and accurate information to individuals or groups which may encourage intellectual energy, intuitive thinking and lifelong learning.

**Key Words:** Information, Knowledge, Academic Library, Library Automation, Library & Information Profession, Web 1.0, Web 2.0, Web 3.0 and Library 3.0.

### Introduction

Libraries are the repositories of knowledge and plays vital role in the field of education. People called it as the heart of higher education. Academic libraries are considered to be the nerves of the academic institutions which support the teaching, learning, research and development, generation, dissemination and conservation of new knowledge and other programmes. Academic libraries include School, College, University and research libraries. Conservation and preservation of knowledge, expansion of ideas and dissemination of knowledge are prime objectives of an Academic library. Faculty, students and staff members are the prime user of an academic library. With the advent of computers and new technology the nature of library collections and services has changed dramatically. Academic libraries no longer restrict themselves only with the print resources like books, magazines, journals, cataloguing, classification, circulation and reference services they have extended their collection development policy in the field of Audio Visuals, CDs, e-resources, Database and other on-line resources.

### Definitions

As per by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1949) former president of India and the chairman of University Grant Commission “The library is the heart of all 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 laboratories, while for humanities research library is both library and laboratory”.

As advocated by Campbell (2006) “ Numerous creative and useful services have evolved within academic libraries in the digital age: providing quality learning spaces, creating metadata, offering virtual reference services, teaching information literacy, choosing resources and managing resource licenses, collecting and digitizing archival materials, and maintaining digital repositories”.

### Aims and Objectives

The Academic library should support the institution for achieving its aim and objectives. The library service should cover the storage, retrieval and dissemination of information and ideas documented with them. It should identify the users need, and should provide right information services in right time. The library service should be simple and easy to use and should save the times of the users. Academic library should provide comfortable and well equipped study and reference facilities. Collections of materials, funds, manpower, building, furniture and equipments and goodwill are the major resources of an academic library. The collection should be valuable, update and relevance for the users community. There is a need of adequate funds for quality collection which should be provided by the parent organizations. Although some libraries also raise funds by the way of subscriptions, security from the members, overdue charges, sale of their publication and also through consultancy services. The staff members are the greatest and richest resources of the academic library. Quality collection of materials, its maintenance and services are only possible by its staff members. There is a need for qualified, experienced, dedicated staff members for an academic library. Without skilled manpower, the academic library will not function properly and may not able to help for the achievement of the aims and objective of the parent organization. Not only quality collection and dedicated staff members can only able to provide full phased services to the users, there is also a need for conducive atmosphere and other related facilities essentials for a good academic library. The building, furniture and equipment of a library should be considered to provide comfort for the users. The collection space, display racks, users



friendly furniture and equipment, spacious reading rooms, proper ventilation, lighted and air conditioning, seating arrangements are also essentials for a good academic library. If the above discussed issues can handle properly then the image of the library will go high. Not only the tangible possessions but the good will plays vital role for the success of an academic library.

Academic libraries are considered as non-profit organizations. Most of the services and facilities are normally provided free to the student community or in certain cases with nominal fees. By the adoption of new technology and development of IT has changed the whole philosophy. There is a need for more financial expenditure for setting any types of new technological facilities for the readers. Academic libraries are growing organizations. The collection, staff and other facilities shall keep growing. Academic libraries are the permanent features of an organization. This should be maintained properly and updated according to the requirements of the users. Thus library is a spending organization. There is a need for proper financial management and a balanced budget for academic libraries. There is a budget committee in an academic library which consists of the dean, financial controller, departmental heads and librarian and library committee members. However this committee normally appointed by the head of the institution from time to time. The proposal of the budget normally prepared by the librarian by the help of other library staff members and the same has been discussed by the library committee and other members and presented to the head of the organization for final approval. Line-item budget, Lump sum budget, Formula budget, Performance budget, program budget, planning programming budgetary systems (PPBS) and zero base budgets (ZBB) are some of the important types of library budget. A well-informed and competent financial management is required for a good academic library which will enable the library to avoid embarking situations on collection of products as well as the service delivery.

The collection development of Academic libraries are based on cooperative management methods. The role of subject expert is very important for selecting library reading materials. Periodic evaluation is highly essential. Now a days information sources are not restricted within print resources but also other forms like audio-visual materials, microforms, plans, manuscript, CDs, and World Wide Web etc. Much emphasis has been given to non-book materials. Modern libraries should enrich their collection as per the needs of the users community. The information available should be potential as well as real and latest. Collecting latest and required information within the constraints of funds is the great task in front of the library professionals. Same time effort should be taken to wedding the irrelevant and unusable document from the library which is only possible by the sound judgment and policy of the academic library and the people working in the library. As defined by Encyclopedia of library and information science “ Library collection is the sum total of Library materials – book, manuscripts, serials, government documents, pamphlets, catalogues, reports, recordings, microfilm reels, micro cards, and microfiche, punched cards, computer tapes etc- that make up the holdings of a particular library”. Harrod’s Librarian’s glossary defines collection development as “The process of planning a stock acquisition program not simply to cater for immediate needs but to build a coherent and reliable collection over a number of years, to meet the objectives of the services”. The purpose of collection development policy of the library should be based on the needs of the community. The information should be relevant and nascent for the user’s community. Judicious spending on document collection in a systematic way should be applied by the librarians. For an academic library the users are very important and proper services should be providing to them. Not only the regular users but library should also attract other similar new users for the maximum utilization of its collection. On the whole the collection development policy of an academic library should qualitative, systematic, sensible and judicious balance between the needs of different users at different level and different discipline.

Today, Academic libraries are struggling to provide quality service to the users in this emerging era of digital technology. The emergence of digital technology not only changes to method of information collection but also its retrieval process and the accessing of the information. As observed by Lombardi (2000) users will prefer more computer contents, more and more computer indices, digitalized finding aids, digital repositories of article, online access to newspapers and other resources. Libraries also struggle with, how, who. And where to begin digitalization efforts, while keeping in mind that hesitation in the digitalization of institutional archives will result in relinquishing the function to another institutional repository host. The consequence is repositioning of academic library resources, operations, services and skills. Library resources are available in the form of print and electronics and therefore service provided and development of skills of library professional should be updated as per the new trends. Now the information workers became the information creators. Users now need specific information rather than information in general. Collection management is now turned to knowledge management where besides information collection; there is a need for design the innovation product and process for delivering services by the effective technological methods. Due to the development of Computer and information technology the communication technology has been developed and the supply of knowledge to the users has been improved dramatically. Users get huge



variety of information through internet and other databases. All the leading universities, educational institutions and research institutions of the world changes their homepage from time to time as and when required. The function, service and collection development policy of academic libraries have goes parallel in accordance with the changing environment.

Staff recruitment and their developments are the two important aspects of academic library systems. Planning for staff requirement for an academic library is a difficult job. This is a very complex analysis which considers the job analysis and other indicators while selecting library professionals. Selection means take right decision while selecting library professionals. Numbers of people may apply for a particular post which is shortlisted by the selection committee. This is very crucial job, while selecting suitable professionals the committee should select the most suitable person for the job without any biasness. To get effective and efficient service there is a need for dynamic recruitment policy for library professionals. The future of the academic library would greatly depend on the hands of the library professionals. The challenge of the library authority is to select right persons for right job and also trained them from time to time so that they can adjust with the changing atmosphere of library and information revolution.

### **Role of a Librarian in Academic Library**

Education is a process of interaction between the learner and the sources of information about the requirements of the learner. A librarian is responsible for collecting, organizing, and disseminating the information in a systematic way which in turn save the time of the reader. Teachers while helps the students to develop lifelong learning at the same time library provides the sources of learning for them. Teachers and the librarians are the members of an academic team in higher educational set up.

#### **1.1 Library Automation**

Library automation basically refers to the use of computers by the members of a library. This will helps to provide reliable access to the resources available in a library. There are multiple benefits like save the time of the reader, cost savings, faster and reliable information through library automation. Due to information explosion, users demand for variety of information, advancement of computer and communication technology, wide range for the access of information and the demand for resource sharing factors there is a need for automation in academic libraries all over the world.

#### **1.2 Web 1.0, f Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 in Academic Library**

The information technology has changed the ways of information management for last three decades. The shift from web 1.0 to 1.3 has totally transform the library services to a new look. Information services plays vital role in the globalization process. Web services acts as a software system designed to support interoperable machine-to-machine interaction over a network.

#### **1.3 Web 1.0**

Web 1.0 was developed during 1991-2003 when more focus was given on one way communication through Hypertext Transfer protocol (HTML) frames. The major features of web 1.0 are websites, e-mail, guest book etc. The average speed on these technologies is around 56 K. search the information and to read was available during these period. Online presentation of information and its availability at any time to anyone was also possible by 1.0 ethnology.

#### **1.4 Web 2.0**

Web 2.0 was developed from 2004 onwards with Asynchronous (AJAX) technology through broadband telecommunication with a speed of 2.0 MB or faster. It is a two way communication process with a public access such as face book, MySpace, and other contact sharing social network system. It gives better values to the users. Some of the features of web 2.0 are blogs, Wikis, social networks, widgets, media sharing, iPod and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds etc. Stephen Fry describes web 2.0 as “an idea in people’s heads rather than a reality. It’s actually an idea that the reciprocity between the users and the provider is what’s emphasized. In other words, genuine interactivity, if you like, simple because people can upload as well as download”. Tim O’Reilly defines web 2.0 as a product of www. It makes use of latest technologies and concepts in order to make the user experience more interactive, useful and interconnecting. It has brought yet another way to interconnect the world by means of collecting information and allowing it to be shared affectively. It definitely has a bright future with so many web 2.0 based websites coming up. It is a revolution in the field of computers and will definitely achieve for greater success. Library 2.0 is a transformation in the way of library services, which are delivered to library users. It provides new tools to make virtual and physical library space which is more collaborative, interactive and cares the community needs. It is a two way collaborative social interaction between library staff members and the library users. Library 2.0 depends on the feedback of the users for the development and maintenance of library services.



### **1.5 Web 3.0**

Web 3.0 is a term that has been coined to describe the evolution of web usages and interaction that include transforming the web into a database. We may call web 3.0 as a read-write-execute web, content accessible by multiple non-browser applications, artificial intelligence technologies, the geographical web, semantic web as well as 3D web. Web 3.0 is a web where the concept of website or webpage disappears, where data is not owned but only shared, where services show different views for the same web or the same data. Those services can be called as applications like borrowers, virtual world etc, devices or other, and have to be focused on context and personalization, and both will be reached by using vertical search. Google and Microsystems alliance to create a web based operating system for applications of word processing and spreadsheets etc. Major features of web 3.0 technologies are artificial intelligence, automated reasoning, cognitive architecture, distributed computing, ontology, semantic web; semantic wiki etc. like web 2.0 it gives better values to the users and its speed is more than 10 MB.

### **1.6 Library 3.0**

Library 3.0 envelops lot of challenges to the librarians as well as new dimensions to the professional libraries which are forming a part of visible or invisible web would be brought together. Semantic web will provide the option to share, unite, search and organize the web information in easy manner. Sharing and organizing information available in every corner of the web, which is the main aim of this generation and expected to be achieved with the help of semantic web technology. In library 3.0 web OPACs of various libraries which are forming a part of visible and invisible web would be brought together. Contents of metadata would seamlessly accessible and searchable from single user friendly interface, just the way a portal provides one stop shop for various contents in this generation. Ontology techniques give richer semantic relationships between terms and thoughts of knowledge. It aims at how the information is organized rather than organizing the information. Library personnel can adopt various ontological techniques to define the web contents in more professional as well as personal manner. Ubiquitous computing provides different types of contents which can be used or reused frequently and will also not get absolute in near future. The content of this generation need to be created in various formats and can also be easily shared, transferred and accessible through all modes of communication. Ubiquitous contents are the personal contents of the people persistently stored on the web in form of movies, blogs, RSS feeds, wikis, stories, articles, music and games etc. Geo tagging helps the users to find specific information located at specific location. It is simply a marking of various media or digital contents like images, photographs, video, websites or RSS feed. Most of the cell phones and mobile devices have GPS (Global Positioning System) facilities, which allowing users to add metadata exactly where the data or image or video was created. Tagging helps users to make their information in which they are interested for. Through virtual Reference service the outside users of the libraries can get access to refer library resources. In virtual reference service library can develop the contents which can easily be transferable and readable in cell phone and mobile devices to help the users at any point of time. Library 3.0 not only provides quality services to the library users but also helps the librarians in various ways. They can also find alternative ways for gathering information as well as able to adopt more modes of communication system. When one system does not work they adopt alternative methods so that the users will not be affected. Library 3.0 can established a semantic relationship between all available web contents to ensure seamless accessibility, search-ability, availability and usability. It promises to organize the information in a systematic and logical way like Google and other sources with a balance with current information engine design.

### **Suggestions**

To sum up, the following are the major functions of an academic library.

- Conservation and preservation of knowledge.
- Dissemination of information.
- Sharing of information to a wider extent.
- Quality information products and services.
- Create atmosphere for self learning for the users community.
- Participate in the academic activities.

### **Conclusion**

The major trends of academic libraries enhance to accessibility of information and professional needs. Information and library science are interdisciplinary fields. The emerging digital technology and the acquisition policy of e-resources have changed the face of library and librarianship. Library professionals are facing major changes and obstacles with the introduction of new technologies in their workplace. In order to preserve these materials and to provide quality services to the user's library professionals need to develop their skills and abilities and competency in several fields. The role of management is very important for successful implementation of academic libraries.



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