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ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA

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Academic libraries are the treasure house of knowledge which caters to the needs of scholars, scientists, technocrats, researchers, students and others who are in the mainstream of higher education. Education has ever been looked at Indian culture as a holistic effort since time immemorial. Today the Higher Education is controlled and maintained by the University Grants Commission in India. They keep the quality of education on par with the international standards, which is a heritage India acquired since the British occupation. India possesses a highly developed higher education system which offers facility of education and training in almost all aspects of human creative and intellectual endeavors: arts and humanities; natural, mathematical and social sciences, engineering; medicine; dentistry; agriculture; education; law; commerce and management; music and performing arts; national and foreign languages; culture; communications etc. In unit of this Block, you have been exposed to a general level understanding of what libraries are, why they are invaluable and important to society, in particular to institutions engaged in education, life-long learning, research, cultural, recreation and entertainment.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in India is seen as one of the ways to upward social mobility. Good education is seen as a stepping stone to a high flying career. Education System in India currently represents a great paradox. On the one hand we have IIMs & IITs that rank among the best institutes in the world and on the other hand there are number of schools in the country that don't even have the basic infrastructure. Academic libraries are considered to be the nerve centers of academic institutions, and must support teaching, research, and other academic programmes. The situation in academic libraries of India is the same as that of academic libraries the world over; however, Indian libraries must provide maximum information with limited resources. Higher Education in India has evolved in distinct and divergent streams with each stream monitored by an apex body, indirectly controlled by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

The engineering education and business schools are monitored and accredited by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) while medical education is monitored and accredited by the Medical Council of India(MCI). Like-wise, agriculture education and research is monitored by the Indian Council for Agriculture Research. Apart from these, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) controls all the teacher training institutions in the country. The country has some ace engineering, management and medical education institutions which are directly funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Union Government. Admission to all professional education colleges is done through all- India common admission tests of which the IIT-JEE, AIEEE, CAT and CPMT are the most popular ones. Most of the institutions reserve a small percentage of seats for foreign students.

The extent of higher education is generally measured by enrolment ratio in higher education. Three alternative methods are used to estimate the extend of access to

higher education namely Gross Enrolment ratio (GER),Net enrolment ratio (NER) and Enrolment of Eligible (EER) The GER measure the access level by taking the ratio of persons in all age group enrolled in various programs to total population in age group of 18 to 23. The NER measures the level of enrolment for age specific groups namely those in age group of 18 to 23. While the EER measure the level of enrolment of those who completed higher secondary level education. These three concepts thus look at the access to higher education from three different angles. Three alternative sources namely Selected Education Statistics, (SES) National sample Survey (NSS) and Population Census (PC) provides data on number of student enrolment.

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF INDIA

India has a large higher education system. The growth rate of educational institutions in India was very slow before independence in 1947. Today there are a total of 533 universities, including 41 general universities, 257 state universities,130 institutions deemed to be universities 5 institutions of national importance (by state legislation) , 39 institutions of national importance (by central legislation) ,61 private universities along with 25,951 colleges that provide education in all disciplines. The number of teachers is 588 (in thousands) and 13.6 million students are enrolled in higher education.

TYPES OF LIBRARIES:

1. Academic Libraries,
2. Public Libraries,
3. Other types of Libraries.
4. Academic Libraries:

Learning and education taking precedence over everything else, educational institutions started appearing first and libraries later. Schools, colleges and universities were set up for systematic learning at all levels of education, followed by institutions of higher education and research. The emerging scenario necessitated the creation of academic libraries at schools, colleges, Universities, as well as at professional and research institutions. The academic libraries assumed the responsibility to provide access to the sources of information from which teaching and learning could develop.

Public Libraries:

With the large-scale production of books, fast changing living conditions, widespread education and learning and increased levels of literacy have had a cumulative impact on society. As a result, we saw the rise of a reading public. The combined forces of neo-political thoughts, democratic aspirations of people in social, literary and cultural fields led to the creation of awareness in the public of the need to have free reading facilities.

With the demand for libraries as a place for reading and borrowing books, a public library movement had started, pursued mainly by an intellectual community. A public library system with central and branch libraries was designed and developed through the legislation route and financed by governments. Public libraries, thus created were distinct from other types of libraries having a clear responsibility and authority to serve the public needs generally supported by public funds.

Other Types of Libraries:

A very notable feature of the development of libraries, beginning from the middle of the twentieth century, has been the active growth of scientific and technological literature. Most of the new knowledge arising out of research efforts were published through learned periodicals. This shifted the needs of active research workers and others associated with them, to look for more and more articles and research papers appearing in the periodicals and other documents which are different from books. New types of institutions, branching off from libraries were created. These were known by different names based on their activities and services such as documentation centers, document delivery centers, information centers, information analysis centers, knowledge centers and so on. Commercial information services, like information brokers and other types of information business institutions also started coming up.

ROLE OF UGC IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARIES

After getting independence in 1947, the national government of India constituted the university education committee in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The committee proposed many suggestions for the development and progress of higher education in the country. One of the them was to give extension and empowerment to UGC as university grants commission, which was established in Delhi in 1953. Dr. C.D. Deshmukh was its first chairman. Since then UGC has been working as an autonomous institution and doing well for the development of colleges, universities and their libraries of the country.

They are following some functions and role of UGC:

1.   UGC and academic libraries.

2.   UGC and library committee
3.   UGC and scales of library staff
4.   UGC and library science training
5.   UGC and computers
6. UGC and reprographic service
7. Establishment of INFLIBNET.

INFORMATION AND LIBRARY NETWORK (INFLIBNET)

Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre [www.inflibnet.ac.in] is an Autonomous Inter-University Centre (IUC) of University Grants Commission (UGC) involved in creating infrastructure for sharing of library and information resources and services among Academic and Research Institutions. INFLIBNET works collaboratively with Indian university libraries to shape the future of the academic libraries in the evolving information environment. The INFLIBNET Centre has a small, specialized library consisting of 2000 documents on computer, communication, information and library science. The library is fully computerized using SOUL integrated library management software. The collection of the library is available online through the web OPAC facility of the SOUL.INFLIBNET is involved in modernizing university libraries in India and connecting them as well as information centers in the country through a nation-wide high speed data network using the state-of-art technologies for the optimum utilization of information. INFLIBNET is set out to be a major player in promoting scholarly communication among academicians and researchers in India.

In order to fulfill the broad objectives, INFLIBNET will do the following:

Provide reliable access to document collection of libraries by creating on-line union catalogue of serials, theses/dissertations, books, monographs and non-book materials (manuscripts, audio-visuals, computer data, multimedia, etc.) in various libraries in India.

Provide access to bibliographic information sources with citations, abstracts etc. through indigenously created databases of the Sect oral Information Centers of NISSAT, UGC Information Centers, City Networks and such others and by establishing gateways for on- line accessing of national and international databases held by national and international information networks and centers respectively.

Enable the users dispersed all over the country, irrespective of location and distance, to have access to information regarding serials, theses/dissertations, books, monographs and non-book materials by locating the sources wherefrom available and to obtain it through the facilities of INFLIBNET and union catalogue of documents.

TYPES OF LIBRARY MODELS:

Physical Library

A physical library (aka traditional library) is a viewed as a learning place that houses collections of books, periodicals, newspapers and other publications in print media and is used for education, learning and awareness. Physical libraries exist in various sizes ranging from single-room size libraries to multi-rooms, multi-floors, or multi-floors and multi-building libraries. The bulk of the libraries in the library landscape in India constitute small size physical libraries located largely in villages, towns and small cities.

Electronic Library

A library that comprises collections of 'born-digital' electronic resources is called an electronic library. As books evolved into the electronic world, libraries have emerged as electronic libraries, digital libraries and virtual libraries. The word 'electronic' connotes 'electronic media' - such as a computer disk, CD, DVD, magnetic tape. We use electronic media to store information in digital format. Collections/resources that are 'born-digital' are called electronic collections/resources. Born-digital resources are items created originally in digital form and not in print form. We make a distinction between the electronic, digital and virtual library in terms of mode used to store collections in the electronic media and the means by which technical services function. In an electronic library collection, resources are only of 'born-digital' electronic resources.

Digital Library

Collections that are the creation of digital versions of physical materials through the digitization process are called digital collections. In a digital library, collection development is not primarily concerned with book selection, but rather with the selection of both (i) physical items to digitize, and (ii) selection of 'born-digital' materials in any number of electronic formats. The term digital library is more inclusive; it covers mixed collections – collections of digitized materials which have physical counterparts plus electronic collections that are 'born-digital' – as well as digital services such as digitization and electronic reference service. Institutional repositories on the internet are digitized collections of institutions and illustrate as examples of digital libraries.

The major difference between physical and electronic/digital libraries is that the "space" in which digital collections are stored is virtual and not physical space as in a physical library.

Virtual Library:

The term virtual library was initially used interchangeably with digital library, but now it is used primarily for libraries that are virtual in other senses (such as libraries that aggregate distributed content from a variety of separate digital and electronic libraries in a virtual space using computers and computer networks). For example, subject gateways that search remote locations for information. Virtual library has no physical counterpart such as CD, DVD and computer disk.

Hybrid Library

These days, most libraries are hybrid type libraries since the resource that they hold in their collections are in print as well as in electronic and digital format. A hybrid library is also about creating a single user interface to access electronic resources and all other resources in a variety of formats.

LIBRARY CONSORTIA

Library Consortia: The basic premise of consortia is that its members can collectively achieve more than what they can achieve as individual institutions.

Definition: According to American Heritage Dictionary a consortium is "a cooperative arrangement among groups or institution," or "an association or society". According to Oxford English Dictionary, "Consortium means temporary cooperation of a number of powers, companies, etc. for a common purpose. It is an association of similar type of organization / institution who are engaged for producing and servicing the common things / providing services for a specific purpose of its users."

Library consortium is a "community (a cooperative) of two or more information agencies which have formally agreed to coordinate, cooperate or consolidate certain function" to achieve mutual objectives. It is an association of a group of libraries to achieve mutually the joint benefits. It provides a way for its members to conduct business in a comparative manner.

Library consortia is a network for buying and accessing e- information in a cooperative arrangement among a group of libraries in providing instant access to greater resources for the users of the individual libraries. One of the libraries or agencies of the consortia works as coordinator for identification of libraries for each publisher, negotiation,

legal matters, etc. Library consortia may vary from being decentralized to highly centralize in nature. The degree of centralization of consortium is the primary factor affecting not only how member institutions interact with one another, but also maintain relationship with

external party (publisher/vendor). More decentralized the consortium, the greater the degree of autonomy each member retains.

Precondition for Consortia: Technological developments, electronic publishing of scholarly journals, emergence of consortia, pricing models of publishers are some of the factors that create the condition for the development of the library consortia.

Emergence of Electronic Document: The whole world is moving towards electronic publishing and the cost of the electronic publishing is much less than that of the print version. The users also hope to have access to their learned journals article in electronic form.

Access to Electronic Resources is a Precondition for a Modern Library: Library materials have grown exponentially in many forms and formats like e-books, e-journals, etc. and all these are very essential for the survival of the library itself.

The limitation in finance, space and manpower also stresses upon the need for library consortia.

Benefit of Consortia: Library consortia increase the Cost Benefit per Subscription. The other advantages are:

Reduced Information Cost: Many libraries currently subscribe only to those journals that they can afford. Though interested in other journals yet they cannot afford to provide access to them. Consortia approach helps them to provide the access.

Access to More Resources Than the Capabilities: A number of publishers offer consortia. If the library's purchase power is big enough they provide access to their whole range of journals – that is, every member of the consortium gets electronic access not only to the journals currently subscribed to but also to all the journals published in the field.

INDEST CONSORTIUM

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has set up the "Indian National Digital Library in Science and Technology (INDEST) Consortium". The ministry provides funds required for the subscription to electronic resources for academic institutions, including the Indian Institute of Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Regional Engineering Colleges, Indian Institute of Managements. The INDEST consortium is the most ambitious initiative so far in the area of engineering and technology disciplines. The primary objective of libraries is to organize and provide access to information, and it remains the same although the format and methods have changed drastically. New technology has provided great opportunities for delivery of services within

consortia. More and more libraries must unite, which of course requires a change in the attitudes, practices, and policies to get the maximum benefit.

CONCLUSION

Education and libraries are the two joint sisters so one cannot be separated from the other. And libraries are the main base of academic system and today they are treated as the heart of educational organizations. The progress and development of a country is mostly depend only on the libraries specially on academic libraries. In our country there is no better arrangement and system of libraries in comparison with some other countries like USSR, USA, UK FRANCE, GERMANY, etc. Therefore efforts have been made since very beginning to constitute various committees and commissions at time to time for the betterment of academic libraries in India.

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