

Role and Services of College Library with Special Reference to Nagaon District of Assam (India): A Study

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Abstract – *The college library has been undergoing a great change in its role, though slowly, and is now on the threshold of being transformed into an academic unit of the college. To accelerate this transformation, there is need to educate the masters. The introduction of the academic library system, under which the library will become a “department of library services”, will enable the college library to undertake the task of reorganizing and managing the library by providing better facilities and services. The objectives should be that a college library should become an instrument of instruction. In order to determine, how far it has succeeded in achieving the objective, one should determine the extent to which the users (students and faculty) use the resources of the library as an integral part of the curriculum. In other words it means that teaching in the classroom must depend more on library than the text books. The library must become an integral part of teaching programme.*

Keywords: College Library, Role, Services, Academic Library Type

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INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the century, college libraries entered upon a period of growth and after World War expanded rapidly, but their major concern in most cases was to acquire and to preserve materials rather than to encourage and facilitate their use, for at that time, the text book was the chief method of instructions. As more knowledge both general and specialized became available, dissatisfaction with the text book as the core of the teaching process became wide spread, and increasingly the college library was given the requirement and the opportunity to concern itself with selecting and evaluating learning materials to support the instructional programme and with aiding students in their use. Some college libraries emphasizes as education for democratic living; education for world affairs; specialization; the teaching of science, mathematics, and foreign languages; and the importance of using a variety of materials called for new courses and new methods of instruction. The library endeavor to support the new curricular and instructional programmes by longer hours of service, larger collections, open stacks, flexible circulation policies, new attention to instruction in library use, acquisition of various kinds of print and non-print materials, and the provision of carrels for listening and viewing facilities.

The Indian system of higher education, during the last thirty years or so, has been expanding primarily for social and political reasons rather than on economic

and manpower consideration. Nearly one third of the total outlay on education in India is spent on higher education, which reaches about ten percent of the appropriate age group.

The UGC brought about reforms in college education by freeing several colleges from the rigid regimentation of traditional course structure. The UGC provided generous funds for purchase of reference books and text books as well as building grants and sponsored the colleges with the result of that the classroom teaching is now supplemented by library usage, through purchase of books on latest teaching methods and techniques and books which provide exhaustive knowledge of the subject to the students.

OBJECTIVES OF A COLLEGE LIBRARY SYSTEM:

The objectives should be that a college library should become an instrument of instruction. In order to determine, how far it has succeeded in achieving the objective, one should determine the extent to which the users (students and faculty) use the resources of the library as an integral part of the curriculum. In other words it means that teaching in the classroom must depend more on library than the text books. The library must become an integral part of teaching programme.

In the college, the aim of book selection is the mirror of academic work of the institution. The material which would serve the objectives of the college, i.e. fulfill the instructional and research needs of the students and the faculty would form the core of the working collection. The acquisition policy of a college library should be set down with reference to the actual and potential requirements of the library and institution of which the library is a part. Every library should have a "statement of book selection policy" as a basis for selecting materials and for use in explaining the library's policy as well as the inclusion or exclusion of specific items. Such a policy statement strengthens the hand of the librarian and provides him with additional stimulus and encouragement to select suitable materials for implementing the objectives of the library.

A college library must fulfill the following basic needs to support the teaching, research and study requirements of the college community, if it is to be an intellectual workshop:

- (i) A clearly formulated code of policy or governance in an official documents issued by the university to which the college is affiliated.
- (ii) A clear statement which governs the relationship of the librarian and the other components of the college, like the faculty community, and provides appropriately shared responsibility and activity among them.
- (iii) Accordingly academic status to library personnel in accordance with the nature of their work.
- (iv) Recognition of library as an academic department of the college imparting library-centered education to students as well as an academic information centre with academic activities including library based teaching.
- (v) Nature and composition of the library committees and their functions.
- (vi) Prescription of minimum qualifications for each category of library staff.
- (vii) Provision of adequate funds (certain percentage of college's general budget) to secure minimum expenditure on books on the basis of some recognized optimum per capita standard.
- (viii) Doing away with the tradition of having a member of the teaching staff as professor in-charge of the library and making the librarian directly responsible to the principal.
- (ix) Recognition of the librarian and his deputies as members of the teaching staff and their

obligation to impart library use for instruction to students in the library class.

- (x) Library forms and stationery, staff strength, book budget, book collection, technical processing and library services.
- (xi) Introduction of inter-library loan system.

To fulfill the above objectives of a college library system, there is need for educating the administrator and the principal of the college and making them aware of the academic functions of a college library. To achieve the objectives of a good college library system, specially qualified and trained librarians and college teachers should join hands to help improve the conditions of college libraries as far as practicable within the limited resources and other heavy odds.

ACADEMIC FUNCTIONS OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY:

A college library is expected to support the objectives of the college. Thus the basic function of a college library is to assist its parent body to carry out its programme. This means that it must adequately serve the needs and requirements of the teachers and students towards reading, study and research. This can be achieved, if facilities and services are made available towards this end.

The academic function of the college library in India is aptly described by Prof. D.S. Kothari in the Education Commission Report (1964-66) as follows:

"The library should provide library facilities and services necessary for success of all formal programmes of instruction, open the door to the wide world of books that lies beyond the boundaries of one's own field of qualification and bring books, students and scholars together under conditions which encourage reading for pleasure, self-discovery, personal growth and the sharpening of intellectual curiosity. The staff should be able to convert the library into an intellectual workshop and should along with teachers be in a position to teach with books."

Keeping in view this ideal, the college administrators should think of recognizing college libraries in such a way that librarians and teachers are in a position to perform the academic functions of the library and play an important role in the instructional programme.

BASIC POLICIES FOR A COLLEGE LIBRARY SYSTEM:

The academic council of the affiliating or constituent university should lay down the basic policies for introducing a college library system in respect of the significant matters as follows:

- i) Recognition of library as an academic department of the college.
- ii) Assigning universally accepted designation to library personnel in accordance with the nature of work.
- iii) Prescription of minimum academic and professional qualifications for each category of library staff.
- iv) Nature of composition of the library committee and its functions.
- v) Relation between the library committee and the librarian.
- vi) Recognition of the librarian and certain other categories of library staff as members of the teaching staff and according the membership of college teachers association.
- vii) Library finance.

Besides, laying down the above policies, provision for library space, staff strength, book budget, etc. must also be prescribed on sound principles.

BASIC NEEDS OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY SYSTEM:

The plan for reorganization of the college library under a college library system should cover certain basic needs which are universally appropriate as follows:

- i) Library government
- ii) Library building
- iii) Open access system
- iv) Library organization & administration
- v) Library personnel
- vi) Library finance
- vii) Library collection
- viii) Library services
- ix) Teaching functions of the library
- x) Instruction for Library use and user education
- xi) Library classes for seminars or group study works
- xii) Library cooperation
- xiii) Library publicity

- xiv) Reprographic and photocopying service
- xv) Extension service to neighboring non-members

ROLE OF COLLEGE LIBRARY:

Recent changes in educational philosophy, widening curricula, reform in examination systems, knowledge explosion and the developments in information technology have given an increase awareness of the role of libraries in higher education. College libraries are now to be considered an important resource existing to support teaching-learning process. Library is the largest and most expensive educational resource of the college. Such a complex network of sophisticated system maintained at huge cost should provide full information support to the teaching-learning process in the college as an adequate return on the capital invested. But a college library for its effectiveness requires its due position in the overall structure of the college. It also needs adequate staff; need based collections and sufficient funds.

The recent developments in the higher education scene necessitate a review and reform of the system for provision of library and information services in colleges which an important factor is determining the quality of teaching learning process. Teaching techniques should minimize readymade notes and should give assignments that will make it essential for the students to prepare their own notes seeking by themselves information from books, periodicals and other reference sources. The major roles of college library are enumerated below:

- i) General improvement of college libraries with sufficient collections, inviting atmosphere and efficient services to inculcate and maintain wide reading habit and love of books among students.
- ii) Procedural improvement which should suggest measures to ensure planned development of college libraries to modernize membership procedures, issue of books, purchase of books, library equipments, etc.
- iii) Improvement of technical aspects' suggesting ways and means to ensure need based organization of college libraries, to make them dependable for the information support required for teaching learning process in colleges.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY:

To achieve the goals of the college library, the following services are considered essential for an effective college library:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) It must build up a well-balanced collection of books, periodicals, pamphlets and audio-visual aids appropriate to the objectives and needs of the college. ii) It must make available its resources and those of other libraries to students and members of the teaching faculty for self-study and research work. iii) It must recognize student's interests and help them to realize these interests through reading. iv) It must help students to broaden their fields of knowledge through the use of books. v) It must reach and encourage the use of library tools and materials. vi) It must provide assistance in finding instructional materials and share with teachers the guidance and stimulation at students reading. vii) It must relate itself to the public library in the region and encourage students to build personal libraries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) To find out the awareness and uses of resources. iii) To identify the types of services offer the students, faculty and employee staff members of College by these College libraries. iv) To explore the impact of e-resource services. v) To find out the problems faced by the readers and discuss suggestions on improvement measures based on the inferences drawn from the study. |
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AREA OF THE STUDY:

The study covers college libraries of Nagaon district of Assam (India).

METHODOLOGY:

Three basic methods were employed to gather data for the above purpose.

- a) Interview Method: Some direct interviews were made with some of the students and faculty members of these colleges to know about the concept of e-resources their uses in the libraries.
- b) Questionnaire Method: Questionnaires were distributed to the some of the students to get the data about services.
- c) Literature Search: Another important method 'literature search' was made for accumulating knowledge and information regarding role and their services. Right from tertiary sources like books to primary sources like seminar papers were searched for availing information.

More over general discussion with librarians of respective colleges were also importantly beneficial for gathering data.

College Library Scenario in Nagaon District:

There are 25 numbers of provincialised colleges in Nagaon district out of which 15 were accredited by NAAC. 10 colleges have been newly provincialised by government on 5.3.2013. All the colleges are affiliated to Gauhati University. The basic information of the colleges are given in the table below:

ROLE OF COLLEGE LIBRARIAN:

Professionally qualified librarians are managing all the college libraries under study. But in some libraries he is not considered as the head of the library. A Professor-in-charge is appointed as the Head of the library in these libraries. He represents the library in purchase committee, advisory committee, etc and take important decisions which require professional knowledge and experience of managing a library, As a result the library works and serves in some of the college libraries are poor and inadequate. The collection becomes idle and useless.

The librarian is a member of book selection committee, library advisory committee, college council etc. of the college. He selects both general and subject textbooks and reference books for its users. The librarians do not get much role to play in the overall development of a government college library. He does not get any role in book selection, allocation of book fund etc. None of the libraries under study has a library advisory committee with well defined objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study was conducted to achieve the following specific objectives:

- i) To identify the available services in the selected college libraries under the study.

College	Est. Year	Stream	No. of Books	No. of Periodicals	No. of E-Journals	E-Journal	Library Name	Automation Status	Permanent Librarian Post
A.D.P. College	1979	Sc./Ar	49726	27	9	N-LIST	Central Library	Completed	Yes
Nowgong College	1944	Sc./Ar	59373	18	—	N-LIST	—	—	Yes
Nowgong Girls College	1962	Arts	41895	26	7	N-LIST	M.D. DevGangani Library	Progressing	Yes
GNDO Commerce College	1984	Com	13823	8	8	NO	Ratanakanta Bora Library	Progressing	Yes
Khaspuri College	1972	Arts	15264	18	4	NO	Khaspuri College Library	Not started	No
Raha College	1964	Arts	21839	10	4	NO	Central Library	Progressing	Yes
Rupali College	1981	Arts	16286	6	6	N-LIST	Rupali College Library	Progressing	Yes
Dr. BKB College	1993	Arts	15243	16	13	N-LIST	—	Completed	Yes
Dirang College	1985	Sc./Arts	19956	18	5	NO	—	Progressing	Yes
Kaliabor College	1969	Sc./Arts	32880	23	14	NO	—	Progressing	Yes
Hajia College	1964	Sc./Arts	34286	16	10	NO	Hajia College Library	Progressing	Yes
Haji Anwar College	1986	Arts	12448	7	4	NO	Burman Sahar Begum Library	Progressing	Yes
Lama Mahabubulay	1979	Arts	13606	45	13	NO	—	Not Started	Yes
Lumding College	1959	Arts	20086	7	7	N-LIST	—	Completed	Yes
Leopold College	—	Arts	16882	8	3	—	—	Progressing	Yes
Santhakrishna College	1989	Arts	5000	6	4	NO	—	Not Started	Yes
Shree College	1983	Arts	3000	2	1	NO	Thamara Bora Library	No Comp.	Yes
Arin College	1989	Arts	2306	2	2	NO	—	—	No
Arinamandhi College	1995	Arts	3000	3	3	—	—	—	—
Samaguri College	1990	Arts	3000	2	2	—	—	—	—
Mamam College	1989	—	3000	3	1	—	—	—	—
Udali College	1995	—	3206	2	1	—	—	—	—
Hajia Girls College	1995	—	16152	3	3	—	—	—	—
Adarsha Jyoti B. College	1993	—	3206	1	1	—	—	—	—
Hatibung College	1988	—	8400	8	2	—	—	—	—

Table 1: List of College Libraries in Nagaon District

The table shows that Nowgong college Library has the highest number of books followed by A.D.P. College library. Six college libraries have more than 20000 books; four libraries have more than 20 journals/Periodicals, six number of college libraries have the facility of accessing E-journals. The newly provincialised college libraries are yet to develop their library holdings in comparison to the older colleges. This is because of various factors. There are only two permanent librarians out of ten numbers of newly provincialised colleges. Absence of permanent librarian is one of the most important factors for their underperformance.

Services offered by the College Libraries of Nagaon:

Various types of services offered by college libraries of Nagaon District are given in the table below:

Services	Name of the College										
	Nowgong College	ADP College	Nowgong Girls College	Dr. BKB College	Rupali College	Hajia College	Lumding College	Haji Anwar College	Dirang College	Kaliabor College	Raha College
OPAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ILL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reference	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CAS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SDI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Translation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Database	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Searching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Subject Bibliography	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multimedia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Educational CD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Photocopy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2: types of services offered by college libraries

The table shows that all college libraries offered internet, Photocopy, Reference service and current awareness service. Only three libraries provide scan facility i.e. Nowgong College, ADP College and Dr. BKB College. Inter library loan facility is available in two libraries. All college libraries except Kaliabor College and Raha College have the membership of INFLIBNET N-LIST E journals.

E-Resource collection by Libraries:

There are various types of e-resources available in college libraries are shown in the table below:

Types of E-resources	Name of the College										
	Nowgong College	ADP College	Nowgong Girls College	Dr. BKB College	Rupali College	Hajia College	Lumding College	Haji Anwar College	Dirang College	Kaliabor College	Raha College
E-Book	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E-Journal (Print)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E-Journal (Paid)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N-LIST	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E-Thesis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Online Database	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CD-ROM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3: E-resource collection by Libraries

The table shows that out of 11 college libraries 7 nos have the facility to access E-books and E-journals, 2 nos have the collections of E-thesis and dissertations. All the libraries have CD-ROM collection.

Value of collection development policy is universally accepted for developing e-resources for libraries. During the survey it has been found that almost all libraries have their own collection development policy to develop their e-resource collection. For this out of eleven libraries, seven libraries have registered themselves as members of N-LIST facility under INFLIBNET and one library has subscribed paid E-journals.

The colleges situated in urban areas uses e-resources more frequently than colleges situated in rural areas of the district.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION:

Academic libraries particularly college libraries play a great role to the development of educational, social and cultural activities of a nation. The library is integral part of the academic mission of a college. The present study reveals that there is increased services and acceptance of e-resources by the college community in the present environment.

But lack of proper infrastructure, shortage of man power, slow internet connectivity, insufficient power

backup facility, non involvement of librarians in decision making, lack of computer knowledge, negative attitude towards e- resources, absence of library orient curriculum etc. are some of the factor that not to offered maximum services to readers in libraries of the district. So the librarian and College authority should take good initiative for the development of services of these Colleges. There is need for continuous monitoring of modernization activities and services of libraries for improvement of the situation and for meeting future needs. The college libraries can enhance its reputation by providing maximum services to a great extent.

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