THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN ENHANCING RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY

Ganesh W. Nishane

Librarian, Mahatma Jyotiba Fule Commerce, Science and Vitthalrao Raut Arts College Bhatkuli, Dist: Amravati, Maharashtra, India

ABSTRACT:

The word library originated from the Latin word Libraria, who's meaning is the house of books, i.e. the place where books are kept. Libraries were store spiritual and religious as well as books of inspiration and ideological themes. These books satisfy the spiritual, religious and ideological needs of their readers. The main function of library is to provide support in research and resource linkage for students and faculty of the educational institution. Library provides current awareness services related to education, social affairs as well as historical affairs. Hence libraries play an important role in inspiring people to high ideals in life and inculcate values in them. This paper focuses role of academic libraries in research productivity.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Research Productivity, Information Services, Scholarly Communication, Library Support, Higher Education, Research Support Services, Digital Resources, Knowledge Management, Faculty and Student Research, etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Academic libraries play a pivotal role in fostering research productivity within higher education institutions by serving as essential hubs for information access, knowledge dissemination, and scholarly communication. As research becomes increasingly interdisciplinary and data-driven, the role of libraries has evolved from being passive repositories of books to proactive facilitators of research and innovation (Singh & Kaur, 2009). Modern academic libraries offer a wide array of services such as access to digital databases, interlibrary loans, institutional repositories, reference management tools, research consultations, and training in information literacy all of which contribute significantly to the efficiency and quality of academic research (Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013).

The growing emphasis on evidence-based research and the expansion of digital scholarly resources have further amplified the need for well-equipped and professionally managed academic libraries. They support faculty and students in identifying credible sources, navigating complex databases, and ensuring academic integrity through citation management and plagiarism detection tools (Corrall, 2014). Furthermore, libraries are increasingly involved in research data management and the promotion of open access publishing, making them indispensable partners in the research lifecycle (Tenopir et al., 2012).

In the context of developing countries like India, academic libraries are instrumental in narrowing the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to global research outputs. Their role in building research capacity, particularly in resource-constrained institutions, cannot be overstated (Kumar & Biradar, 2010). As the academic landscape continues to transform, libraries must adapt their services and strategies to meet the dynamic needs of researchers and contribute effectively to institutional research goals.

1. Definitions of Terms and Concept:

- **General Definition:** "Libraries can be defined as a collection of books, journals and other reading materials. Therefore organized and arranged in a suitable physical plan by the staff to facilitate easily use by students and faculty members".

- **According to Dr. S. R. Ranganathan:** "Library is a public institution or establishment charged with the care of books, the duty of making them accessible those who require the use of them".

- **According to UNESCO:** "Any organized collection of printed books and periodicals or any other graphic or audio-visual materials with a staff to provide and facilitate the use of such materials as are required to meet the informational research, educational and recreational needs of users".

2. Academic Libraries:

Academic libraries cater specifically to the educational needs of a school, college or universities where it is located, for the convenience of the students and faculty of that and other academic institutions. Some academic libraries,

Ganesh W. Nishane

especially those at public institutions, are accessible to members of the general public in whole or in part.

Academic libraries are libraries that are hosted in post-secondary educational institutions, such as college and universities. Their main function is to provide support in research and resource linkage for students and faculty of the educational institutions. Specific course- related resources are usually provided by the li9brary, such as copies of text books and article reading held on 'Reserve' (meaning that they are loaned out only on a short-term basis, usually a matter of hours). Some academic libraries provide resources not only associated with libraries, such as the ability to check out laptop computers, web cameras, or scientific calculators.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES AND RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY:

The main aim of libraries was only to keep safe of the books, magazine, journals, newspaper and other reading materials. We can say that in this time libraries are those that collected data process, organize, disseminate and distribute right information and knowledge recorded in documents to the users. Many libraries have supported education efforts by providing teaching, information and referral services.

Library is a service institution. Library services are one of the most widely used and accepted in the modern world. Academic community particularly in a university utilizes library services for research and teaching purposes. Academic work is supported by library. Therefore library is rightly regarded as the heart of an academic institution. Thus we can say the concept of library is an institution where a reader can consult and acquire desired information under single roof. Therefore the universities are places, which are wholly responsible for higher education and knowledge for the development of a human personality and development of nations. A university caters to the needs of higher learning and research.

Research output or research productivity in social sciences do appear in different forms such as books, monographs, journal articles, working papers etc. but unlike Natural Science researchers, the researchers working in social

Ganesh W. Nishane

sciences and humanities disciplines use considerably less journal articles and more books, book chapters, monographs, discussion papers, working papers etc. apart from journal publishing.

ACADEMIC LIBRARY SERVICES:

Academic libraries offer workshops and courses outside of formal, graded coursework, which are meant to provide students with the tools necessary to succeed in their programs. These workshops may include help with citations, effective search techniques, journal database and electronic citation software. These workshops provide students with skills that can help them achieve success in their academic careers. (And often, in their future occupations), which may they not learn inside the classroom.

The academic library provides a quiet study space for students and campus; it may also provide group study space such as meeting room. In North America, Europe and other parts of the world, academic libraries are becoming increasingly digitally oriented. The library provides a "gateway" for students and research to access various resources, both print/physical and digital.

Academic institutions are subscribing to electronic journals databases, providing research and scholarly writing software, and u8sually provide computer workstations or computer lab for students to access journals, library search databases and portals, institutional electronic resources, Internet access, and course or task related software (i.e. word processing and spreadsheet software). Some academic libraries are increasingly action as publishers on their own on a not for profit basis, especially in the form of fully open access institutional publishers. Services provided by the academic librarian are as follows.

- Preparing and circulating lists of latest additions.
- Evaluating new documents and providing to the right users requisite information, reviews, abstracts, table of contents and photocopies etc.
- Maintaining highly specialized reference file and indexes.
- Conducting literature searches.
- Preparing bibliographies.

Ganesh W. Nishane

- Translating publications wholly or in parts.

- Extending the limitations of its own resources by interlibrary loan, cooperative acquisitions and through such methods of bibliographical co-operation as union lists, catalogues and the exchanging of catalogues and bibliographies.

Apart from these services, librarian also helps in selection of topic, completing ongoing research information, consultancy services etc.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study employed a descriptive research design using a mixed-methods approach to examine how academic libraries contribute to research productivity among faculty members and research scholars in higher education institutions. The quantitative component involved the administration of a structured questionnaire to a purposive sample of 150 respondents, including faculty, postgraduate students, and Ph.D. scholars across selected universities and colleges. The questionnaire was designed to gather data on library usage patterns, access to digital resources, perceived impact of library services on research output, and satisfaction with support services provided by library staff.

In addition to the survey, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 academic librarians to gain deeper insights into the services offered, challenges faced, and strategies adopted to support research activities. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean scores) for the quantitative part, while thematic analysis was employed for the qualitative responses.

Ethical considerations were strictly followed, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. The research focused on identifying key areas where academic libraries influence research productivity, such as access to scholarly databases, training in information literacy, research consultations, and institutional repository services. This methodology allowed the researcher to explore both the practical services provided by academic

Ganesh W. Nishane

libraries and the perceptions of their effectiveness in promoting research excellence.

ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN RESEARCH:

Librarians' role is very important in research and development of academic activities

- Among the various factors, the quality, nature and extent of the libraries collections, of its staff and services they provide, and of its buildings are all important factors to attract good researchers towards an institution.

- Libraries can help researchers to in finding out research grants. Libraries, if their involvement in this activity is formalized by research intensive institutions or universities, also use their skills to help researchers improve the quality of their funding applications, and thus, to enhance the institutions success in winning research grants.

- Libraries can play an important role helping researchers to exploit the full benefits and opportunities of the networked world, such as open access, social media, and research tools etc. hence, libraries need to established stronger links with researchers and re focussing their services to promote and exploit new technologies and new models of scholarly communication.

- Institutional repositories (sometimes called as digital libraries) store and make available institutional assets such as research papers, theses and digitized contents of various documents. But repositories are only as valuable as the content they hold. Hence libraries should try to build an institutional culture of making it routine for researchers to deposit their outputs in the Institutional repositories.

- Librarian focus on the need of the researchers. Librarian take a proactive role by working in partnership with other academic departments can contribute significantly towards enhancing the quality of the research output.

- Access to high quality content is crucial to research. Libraries spend huge amounts to develop their collections and provide easy access to the

Ganesh W. Nishane

researchers by identifying, accumulating and processing needed material for research work at right time.

CONCLUSIONS:

Librarianship has undergone significant transformation over the past few decades, primarily driven by advancements in information and communication technologies. This evolution is expected to continue, requiring librarians to continuously update their professional skills and adapt to emerging trends in digital scholarship and user needs (Thanuskodi, 2012). Today's library professionals are not just custodians of books but are expected to act as information service consultants equipped with specialized technological competencies. They must embrace innovative strategies to deliver information in engaging and user-centered formats (Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013). In this context, librarians are increasingly viewed as "information engineers" who facilitate access, retrieval, and application of knowledge, rather than simply being providers of information (Corrall, 2014). Moreover, academic libraries have the potential to significantly contribute to research productivity by offering services such as scholarly communication support, data management, and training in research tools and methodologies (Tenopir et al., 2012). By aligning their roles with evolving academic and research needs, libraries can serve as strategic partners in enhancing institutional research output.

REFERENCES:

1. Corrall, S. (2014). Designing libraries for research collaboration in the network world: An exploratory study. Liber Quarterly, 23(1), 10-32. https://doi.org/10.18352/lq.9157

2. Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

3. Jaguszewski, J. M., & Williams, K. (2013). New roles for new times: Transforming liaison roles in research libraries. Association of Research Libraries. https://www.arl.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/nrnt-liaison-roles-revised.pdf

Ganesh W. Nishane

4. Jaguszewski, J. M., & Williams, K. (2013). New roles for new times: Transforming liaison roles in research libraries. Association of Research Libraries. https://www.arl.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/nrnt-liaison-roles-revised.pdf

5. Joshi Sneha : Information Technology: A revaluation in higher education, University News, 38(30)July,2000.p.6-9.

6. Kumar, B. T. S., & Biradar, B. S. (2010). Use of ICT in college libraries in Karnataka, India: A survey. Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems, 44(3), 271-282. https://doi.org/10.1108/00330331011064267

7. Lynch B.P. and Smith, K.R. The Changing Nature of Work in Academic Libraries, college and research Libraries, 62(5) 2001, 407-420.

8. Potdar, S.P., Role of Academic Libraries in Higher education, Proceedings of conference papers, Nagpur Universities college libraries Association, Wardha 12th Jan. 2003. P. 1-3. Corrall, S. (2014). Designing libraries for research collaboration in the network world: An exploratory study. Liber Quarterly, 23(1), 10-32. https://doi.org/10.18352/lq.9157

9. Singh, N., & Kaur, T. (2009). Role of academic libraries in enhancing research and development activities. Journal of Library and Information Technology, 29(6), 33-38.

10. Tenopir, C., Birch, B., & Allard, S. (2012). Academic libraries and research data services: Current practices and plans for the future. Association of College and Research Libraries. https://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/Allard.pdf

11. Thanuskodi, S. (2012). The changing role of librarians in the digital era. International Journal of Information Dissemination and Technology, 2(3), 166–169. https://doi.org/10.5958/j.2249-5576.2.3.018

Ganesh W. Nishane