



A REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES IN LIBRARY RESOURCES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Abstract

Library is the main support of all the academic activities of any education institutions. In this paper highlights the best practices followed by the academic libraries for enhancing the quality of teaching learning process and also suggests the new initiatives and practices. The paper review of best practices academic Libraries. It covers its definition & meaning, Book exhibition, Orientation plan, Book display programme, Library hours, Staff-user meet, Library information broucher, Training to use E-resources, Review of book, Book talk programme, Readers club, Granthdan Yojana, Best library user award, counseling center regarding competitive examinations, Interaction with author etc. The present paper also highlights NAAC best practices. Paper also mention IT based best practices like Web page, Blogs, Wikis Virtual library tour, E-alert services, etc. This paper will be useful guide to other libraries to get an idea about various ways and practices in their libraries for creating an effective library management.

Keywords: *Best Practices, academic Libraries, E-resource, higher education*

Introduction:

Best practices are an activity that leads to a superior performance. Successfully identifying & applying best practices can reduce cost and improve quality.¹ these practices will help to inculcate good environment among the user community. Joseph M. Jaran, says² that 21st Century is devoted to 'Quality' whereas 20th Centaury was for 'Production.' We have to discuss the issue of quality to improve library customer satisfaction. Higher education's experts are much concerned about quality of education provided by the universities and colleges in India. There is apprehension that education received in these institution is not commensurate with the fees charged

from the students. Education experts feel that this is cheating with the people. It is because of this reason Government of India, UGC and NAAC are seriously concerned as how to improve standards of education and establish best practices in the universities and colleges and their libraries.²

Challenges of academic Libraries:

The College libraries are today facing various challenges which are as follows.

- Information Literacy about new technology
- Information explosion
- Information sharing in electronic formats.

- Challenging role of the Librarian
- Time management
- Increased cost of the library documents
- Database creation and maintenance
- Marketing of library and information products.
- Increased requirements of the users.
- Staff development.

Best Practice: - Definition & Meaning:

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary Best practices as a quality of high standard, excellence, highly improved outstanding par excellence service. It means way of doing something that is usual or expected way in particular organization or situation, guidelines for good practices. In this process of developing best practices we taken action rather than good ideas and we improve our skills.”According to Wikipedia “Best practices are guidelines which are used to obtain the most efficient & effective way of completing a task using repeatable & proven procedures.”According to National Board of Accreditation and Assessment (NAAC). “Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solve a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations. Institutional excellence is the aggregate of the best practices followed in different areas of institutional activities.”From above definition, best practice means, it is a method or technique used to improve the current workflow of an organization to obtain its objectives effectively andwith predetermined standards.In simple works the practice that is giving best results in terms of its usefulness and appreciation feedback from its user group.

NAAC - Best Practices for academic Libraries:

While assessing the quality of Higher Education in the country, NAAC has providing the useful guidelines to improve the overall quality of Library & Information Center and services offered by these centers. In order to effectively meet the challenges posed by the global changes of technology, and to satisfy the multidimensional information needs of the library end users, NAAC has developed the set of forty eight best practices for the library and information centers. The data on best practices have been collected from the libraries across the country on a specific format developed by NAAC. The best practices are proudly divided into four categories such as

1. Management and Administration of Library.
2. Collection and Services.
3. Use of Information Technology in Libraries.
4. Extent of the user of services.

Best Practices in academic Libraries:

- Computerization of Library with standard Software.
- Inclusion of Sufficient information about the library in the college prospectus.
- Compiling user statistics.
- Displaying newspaper clipping on the notice board periodically.
- Career/ Employment information services.
- Internet facilities to different user groups.
- Information Literacy programs.
- Suggestion box and timely response.

- Displaying new arrivals and circulating a list of those to academic departments.
- Conducting book exhibitions on different occasions.
- Organizing book talks.
- Instituting Annual Best User Award for students.
- Organizing competitions annually.
- Conducting user surveys periodically.

Why Best Practices in College Libraries?

Best practices are developed in the library for following purpose.

- To execute the five laws of library science.
- To magnetize & meet the user demand.
- To maximize the utilization of library.
- To identify the needs of the users.
- To market library services and products.

Best Practices in College Libraries:

With the increasing impact of ICT on Higher Education, Academic Libraries on the ways of radical changes. The traditional role of libraries as custodian of recorded knowledge is convened into the gateways of the knowledge. In the era of IT, due to information explosion the information needs of the library users are drastically changed and the nature of information needs became multidimensional. It has great impact on the overall management of library activities and services. In order to cope with this changing environment and to meet the user's expectation effectively, it became necessary for the college library to adopt some best practices in their overall management and service areas. Here

following are the best practices which is to be adopted in College libraries are in briefly. For convenience we can group best practices in to five categories.

- A) Traditional Best practices
- B) IT based Best Practices
- C) Other Best practices
- D) Library Extension services
- E) General Best Practices

A) Traditional Best Practices:

Book Exhibition:

Arrange book exhibition on different occasion display rare books, newly added books or books of particular subject which are available in the library. This will lead to increased awareness among readers about knowledge wealth the library possess they can demand the books accordingly.¹¹

Orientation Plan:

Orientation is one of the best practices to create awareness among the students about the library resources, services good reading habits and activities for maximum utilization of the library. The orientation helps & useful to the fresh students at the beginning of each academic year about the importance of the library, exposing the students to its various library services.¹² Librarian should highlight his collection & services.

Book Display Programme:

Book display programme is the best activity of library which helps & provide an opportunity for users to know the various types of information resources available on a particular aspect in library.

Library Halls:

Library should start Library hour for students, It made compulsory for all the students by adding it in their daily class schedule. In Library hour students should. Visit the library for spending an hour in the library for reading materials.

By keeping an hour in their time table students spend an hour in the library which brings them closer to the reading Materials, indirectly it helps to increase reading habits to of students.

Putting the list of newly available books on notice board:

Putting the list of newly available books on notice board will make the reader aware about the new reading material so that accordingly he could demand for those new booksget it.

Staff User Meet:

The libraries may organize activities to staff users, which involving to work andshare their ideas with each other relating to the new information services andtheir requirements. This helps to keep abreast the staff & the users about the latest developments and trends in library principles and practices, there by bridging the gap between the staff andusers for this arrange various activities such as guest lectures, movie show etc. '

Library Information Broachers:

It is one of important sources for creating accurateness about the faculties, services & collection of the library students can be provided the information broacher at the time of Admission. The information brochures include information about the library facilities, like Xerox, internet etc, latest publications, late additions to the library, CD / DVD list, book bank facilities, library rules and regulations, electronic resources and online information services etc.

Library short Term course:

The aim of this practice is to create understanding about library, use of ICT in library to know the mechanics of library. For this library should organize a two to three months duration course for the benefit of student community. In this course, feeding of data entry for books,

creating reader books, generating barcode & scanning the broilers, generating barcode & scanning the photo of reducer's etc training should be given.¹⁶

Training to use E-Resources:

Training programmes should be conduct for student, teacher every year for two to three day as per their need. In this programme, how to find out library books by using Library OPAC, use of N- list database, free online journals (such as DOAJ), link to various useful websites etc. training should be given so that library resources, services use more effectively & efficiently.

Review of Book:

User should asked to read all the book and give his review on book. At the end Librarian should collect it & displays it on notice board under the name of reviewer.¹⁷

Book Talk program:

Student should discuss on a specific book or writer which they have selected. Script reading sessions are also arranged on a specific book users also comment about books they have read.

Readers Club:

Library should give its facility to outside reader campus. Library also establish areader club. This club maintains good relation between library & outside users.¹⁷

GranthadanYojana:

In this scheme user can donate any number of books which he likes more on his birthday.

Interaction with Author:

This is practical base programme which should organized by Library once in a year; for this program, Library should invites a author to interact with student. Author share his experience how to get inspiration to write a good book.

Best Library user Award:

This practice should encourage students to make maximum use of library resources & services.

Counseling Center Regarding Competitive Examination:

All of us very well know that library is soul of every educational institutes, users are also main part of library. User comes to library for searching information regarding their carrier or educational development. Today competition is going on top level, students must aware of this situation. In this context Library and Librarian should play a important role to solve their problems. Library should have very rich collection of competitive examination. Library should invites to gets lecturer for guiding to students for preparing the competitive exam.

B) IT based Best Practices:

- 1) Computerized Library with some software.
- 2) Develop Dynamic Library Webpage
- 3) Virtual Library Tour should be developed and linked to Library website.
- 4) Develop Web OPAC to know the status of library collection with 24 x 7 accesses.
- 5) Digital Reference Service:

This is new form of traditional reference service. In this type service users may get the answers of their queries online. Users can submit their queries through online or may directly chat with concerned Library staff.

6) Develop Virtual presence: Librarian can use web 2.0 applications likesocialmedia such as Blogs RSS, Wikis, Web forms etc.

7) E-Alerting services: With the help of E-mail or SMS.

8) E-Resources: Make available facility of free E-Books, E-Databases, and Newspapers for students & indexed them properly, it will help the users in searching information.

9) Institutional Repository: Library should develop institutional repository of Question paper, Syllabus, Research papers, Notes etc can be made available for students.

Following IT based practices should be provided to the users.

- On line Assistance
- Information Download.
- Printing facility
- Remote Access to e-resources
- Wi-Fi Access can be given, so that users can use the e-resources anywhere from the institute.

C) Other Best Practices:

Book Bank Facility:

Under this scheme the students who are from very weak economical back ground and promising can be granted two books free of cost for the complete academic years, so that it will result in increased performance in academic, by them.²¹

Special Facility Scheme:

In this scheme Librarian may provide special concession to students like for the students getting more than 75% marks in the previous examination he can allow to take 5 books for the whole semester to study, accordingly 3 books for students getting 60 to 75% of marks and 2 books for students with 50 to 60% marks. This will lead to the increased merit and students environment.

Reading Room Facility:

Reading Room can be kept open for 24 x 7 or else at least late hours in night during examination time. Librarian

also make an arrangement to keep the question papers of previous examination of every class in the reading hall so that it will be beneficial for the students to study properly, reflecting into increased result of the college, because of which every element of college becomes happy & satisfied.

Compilation of Bibliography for students & staff for reference.

Apart from regular study book, additional book such as Fiction, Novel etc. can be issued to students to motivate their extracurricular reading habits.

D) Library Extension Services:

Following are the Library extension services which should be provided by Library.²²

- External Membership Facility :- To provide service to the society, this facility is useful, in which membership facility for general users can be given for some nominal fees.
- Inter Library loan
- Document Delivery Service
- Earn and learn Scheme
- Reprography.
- Provision separate desk for Discussion.
- Suggestion Box
- Newspaper clipping services
- Career Notification
- Feedback register
- Departmental Library
- Journal Alert
- Current Awareness service Specially for research students & staff.
- Library Help Desk : To Guide the users about Library resources.
- Library security: CCTV camera, 3M technology at entry gate, separate property counter.

- Special Facility for Differently able persons.

E) General Best Practices:

Following are additional practices to be conducted in library as a routine practice.

- Regular Library Advisory Committee Meeting.
- Binding of books & periodical Volumes.
- Inclusive of Library Information in prospects & College Websites.
- Intercom facility for easy communication among various departments.
- Pasting of barcode, spine label and stamping in a definite place on the books.
- Question sets of previous examinations.
- Library Calendar of Activity & Events.
- Use of pesticides for keeping away book worm & damage of books.
- Display of various library chart.
- Keeping the library premises neat & clean.

Conclusion:

Best practice in simple term known as the practices which enhances the existing function and activities of any system. Use of technology in the marketing of information products and services is always made good results. All higher education institutions are now in the process of digitization in all their services and sections like admission of students, examination etc. Disseminating information through library website in a networked environment is made possible due to technology and this has to be adopted in our academic libraries. The best practices will help for improving quality of

library services. The best practices adopted should bridge the gap between library & user for maximum utilization of the resources. The web based services are essential for providing up-to-date information to all users. The development of any new research is based on the timely and accurate information given to the users, so the libraries must follow best practices. Thus undertaking all above best practices by every college Library creates its own image in the mind of students & society. The nature of the students to look Librarian became as not only the Teacher but as Information finder.

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