

## BEST PRACTICES AND INNOVATIONS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The role of the academic library is becoming very important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Society and government expect the progressive information from the academic libraries having an excellent potential of information with adopting best efforts or practices in generating and delivery of knowledge. NAAC has served the concept of best practices for academic libraries multiple angles and academic libraries have initiated handy programmes for users with an absolute clutch of information technology. Several innovations regarding the library resources, delivery services administrations have the changed the scenario of the academic libraries and today contributing national development to become the significant factor of change in the society.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Generating and Delivery of Knowledge, Impact on Organizations*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The present higher education system is changing rapidly under the pressure of information divide and a cascade of information flow. Academic institutions have responsibility on their shoulder to provide the fundamental and innovative intellectual data to their stakeholder for the individual and national development and within them, academic libraries carry huge expectations of fulfilling the quench of information demand of stakeholders at the earliest time with the quickest manner. Certainly, the development of information technology and information communication technology has supplied various tools to academic libraries for reaching towards the users with desired information or helped to insert some innovative and best ideas in academic libraries to survive in the throat cutting competition between information institutions or the internet-based databases. NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) has also realized that need of change in the traditional attitude of academic libraries and hope academic libraries would deliver something novel with innovative manner following some of the acceptable practices.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Best Practices**

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.”

## Academic Libraries

An academic library is a library that is attached to a higher education institution which serves two complementary purposes to support the school's curriculum and to support the research of the university/college faculty and students.

### Why Best Practices in Academic Libraries

- Meet the information needs of users.
- To publicize the library resources
- To promote for maximum use of library resources
- Marketing of library products and services
- To assist the library staff in the delivery of library services
- To connect the academic libraries with the society
- To hold the intellectual input of the institution.

### Best and Innovative Practices in Academic Libraries

#### Book Discount Scheme

Book exhibitions are arranged in the library to acknowledge the users the latest published literature on the specific subject. Several academic libraries announce discounts for purchasing books from the book exhibition arranged by the library.

#### Book Bank Scheme

Academic libraries provide textbooks to needy and deserving students of the institutions. In some academic libraries, books are provided on half payment of book price or on deposit method helps in availing the textbooks to every student.

#### Granthadan Yojana (Donation of Book/S Scheme)

In this Yojana, users are promoted to donate the book/s to the library on their special occasions like birthday, marriage or academic achievement. This concept fuels to users to buy read and to read and also promotes for reading.

#### Interactions with Author

This practice gives the opportunity to the users to meet the eminent authors or their favorite author and interact with them. This activity encourages the reading process and specific genre.

#### Readers Club

Academic libraries can form readers club including the outside users or form the club concerning the special subject or issue which will let happen handy discussion and make informative academic output for all.

**Library Staff and User Meet**

Academic Libraries have varied types of users and accounting these libraries can have library staff and user meeting in deliberate manner. Such meeting proves helpful for exchanging ideas about information sources, its handling, use of technology, bridging the gap of intellectual differences. Meeting defines merits and limitations of library and offers an opportunity to improve.

**Intellectual Property Rights/ Copy Right / Plagiarism**

There is unrest need of conduction of sessions or programmes about intellectual property right or copyright or plagiarism due to increased research and academic activities. Academic libraries can take the initiative in this regard and assists the users to relate the concept of intellectual property right, copyright, its aspects and latest development in this field. Academic libraries play a deciding role by adopting the plagiarism software or system. Academic libraries can aware nature and rules of plagiarism to the aspirant researcher users and can facilitate checking system of plagiarism of research output of users.

**Library Tour**

Physical connectivity with reading resources is expected in this concept. Librarian with a small group of users makes the tour of the library having physical connectivity of every section of the library. Library tour comprehends the users the assets of the library which make easy for users to locate desired information resources and use of it. It is especially useful for new entrants of the library.

**Library Short Term Course**

Library short-term course offers the information about the library mechanism- the process of acquisition of reading resources, information retrieval and its dissemination, patterns of library services, IT-based tools and machines and utilization method. The course should be conducted for one or two weeks for students for handson training or orientation of library organization. Such programmes acknowledge and attach to the users towards the academic libraries.

**Theses, Dissertations, Reports Availability and Preparation**

Research-based academic developments are a routine part of academic libraries. Libraries should acquire and preserve the theses, dissertations, and reports etc. on various issues calculating the research topic of research users. This activity may be extended by performing the thesis writing, scanning, correction, checking of plagiarism, binding, and delivery. Academic libraries should follow the professional level in this concern.

**Library Information Broacher**

Periodic reproduction of library broacher updates the users about the library. Library broacher provides information about library rules and regulation, library collection, library services, and facilities etc. Periodic circulation of library broacher informs the users added library resources and informative progress of library and forthcoming events of the library. This broacher is also useful for college administration for administrative purpose and for taking policy made decisions.

### **E-Newspaper Clippings and E-Question Papers**

Daily important events can be clipped in electronic format or digitized and preserved as an album or storage chronologically by date and event. This retrospective data supplies priceless information in future. Now academic libraries are absorbing the e- question paper format for avoiding the hindrance of storage, maintenance, and delivery of print question paper set. E-question paper set can be availed and delivered by 24x7, anywhere to myriads of users. Some of the academic libraries have availed question paper set on the library website or through the social media.

### **Library Portal**

Library portal is a gateway to e-resources and services. Portals deliver high-quality multiple information and its resources. The portal disseminates the information about library resources and services and links various authentic resources of the library. Portals should be developed accounting the user's perception of the use of e-resources.

### **Institutional Archive/ Digitization of Manuscripts**

Academic libraries can make a digital collection of institutional output or intellectual activities. The institutional output Research papers, proceeding, reports, rare books and manuscripts; yearbook should be collected in digital form or should be located at the separate place in the library. The thesis, dissertations also are saved in digital form and can be made available to anyone from the library website.

### **Counselling Centre for Competitive Exam**

The preparation of competitive exam starts form undergraduate level and academic libraries can provide the best platform to the students. Academic libraries can counsel the students by supplying the information about various competitive exams, their nature, question papers, reading resources, and referral about coaching centers. Libraries may invite the resources persons or experts for such counseling or guidance and also avail the benefit of online coaching and suggested online resources. Academic libraries may develop contents regarding issues of exams.

### **Mobile Online Public Access Catalogues (M-Opac)**

The Web--based OPAC facility through the mobile lesson the time and efforts of library users. Academic libraries have users number in more ratio and they cannot access resources at a time. Web OPAC provides access of resources from the remote places and others can access the library resources through M-OPAC.

### **E-Feedback or Suggestions**

Feedback is a very important part in academic libraries due to enhancement in quality of library resources and services. Feedback can be enrolled on the library website or through the google form. Such feedback method allows the user to register his feedback at anytime and anywhere. Academic libraries response to feedback quickly and accurately through this mediums. Online feedbacks are very essential for the academic purpose to calculate the response of users and its analysis.

### **Discussion Forums or Blogs**

Formation of blogs bestows the opportunity to gather the user community related to the specific issue or subject. Some academic libraries have blog having information about the library and its institution. The discussion forums give the benefit of the circulation of individual knowledge and aspects to others. These activities aggravate the quality intellectual output of the institution.

### **Online Table of Content (Toc) Service**

Online table of content service is useful for the faculty members and research students of the institutions. The abreast information regarding the research topic or interested area is provided by the libraries. Academic libraries can deliver this service on the professional level to other external users of library and institutions and generate the fund for the library.

### **Sms Service**

SMS service is a mobile based library where academic libraries can deliver alert services about additions of resources, book issued on accounts and due date of books and reminders. Libraries get the benefit of this service in home lending service and user gets update information about library resources and services. SMS service is a convenient medium to acknowledge the events of /in libraries. It also provides current contents to targeted groups of users and feedback from the users in the same way.

### **In Service Programme**

In this program, library staff is promoted for enhancing the additional skills and expertise in traditional library functions and functions concerning the e-resources. Library staff is staff is motivated for attending library training programmes in-house or remote places. Library staff is also encouraged for acquiring the higher professional degrees to aggravate professional competencies which will become beneficial for day today library functions.

### **Vendors Participation and Book Exhibition**

Active involvement of publishers and vendors can grow the interest of users in reading varied resources. Book publishers and vendors should be invited frequently for interactive sessions with the users. These interactive adds to the knowledge of the users about newly published books in the field or genre of publishing and its features. The very presence of vendors and publishers also fuels to library staff to interrogate and clear the doubts about the procedure of compilation and delivery of library products and library resources. Many vendors and publishers are eager to conduct the training sessions or practical sessions with users of library and this helps vendors to understand the needs of users and users can also establish the relations with vendors and publishers for further academic purpose. The interaction of users and vendors convey the library staff trends of publishing and reading and method of adoptions for the balance of both. Book exhibition is a gateway to attract the users or to attract the book in the library. Book exhibition conveys newly published literature and latest editions or it cultivates the reading habits intentionally. A yearly arrangement of book exhibition helps libraries in selection of books and to satisfy the demands of users. Now a new trend has emerged as the vendors of subject databases like EBESCO are arranging the training and demo programmes for the library and their users. The exhibition of e-resources is novel concept emerged in the academic libraries and it will virtually connect the users the cascade of academic information.

## CONCLUSIONS

Presently information communication technology is boosting the higher education rapidly and tremendous flow and use of information. The tools of information technology have uncalculated potential to carry cascade of information and it now huge responsibility on the shoulder of an academic institution to sum up this information and deliver the proper information to the proper person for national development. Academic libraries are fingered for accountability of management of information and repackaging and its delivery. Academic libraries are not expected to deliver the traditional library services but to extend these services with the help of information technology with innovative ways or putting some good programmes or practices. The emergence of search engines and databases have really created a threat to academic libraries in concern with resources and it now becomes the foremost need to sustain the users, their reading habit and their curiosity in an academic library. There is the only way that libraries have change – change by nature if library reading resources, library services, library infrastructure, library staff behavior, and library administration. At every corner, academic libraries have to become professional and skilled having innovative programmes or practices for users on regular basis. This would certainly change the concept and nature of academic libraries and the perception of users towards the library. The substantial contribution of society with a handy clutch of information communication technology will nourish the academic libraries or opens the pavements to the progress of the nation.

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