Library as a Learning Resource Center: A Case Study of S.D. College Library, Ambala Cantt

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Introduction

The importance of an academic library in the process of higher learning and promotion of research has long been established and that is why it is considered as the heart of any academic institution whether it is a college or university. A college library is the hub of teaching learning activities of its parent institute and no academic activity i.e. teaching, learning and research can be completed without the ample support of its rich and resourceful central library. So it becomes imperative to the higher education institution to strengthen its library and its learning resources and infrastructure by providing the appropriate financial support to achieve the excellence and to deliver the quality education to the students who have joined it for the fulfillment of their academic pursuits.

A college library is termed as learning resource center as it hosts learning resources or knowledge and information resources and provides services and facilities to promote learning in the institute. A college library also acts as an information centre to fulfill their informational needs and quest for knowledge and learning of the learners. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) describes the library as learning resource in the following words: *"the library holdings in terms of titles books, journals and other learning materials and technology-aided learning mechanisms which enable students to acquire information, knowledge and skills required for their study programs. A recent development in the field due to availability of digital means, the functioning of the library has undergone a drastic change. Automation of library using the ILMS, use of e-journals and books, providing remote access to e-resources in the library have become a matter of necessity. Providing for these and such other developments as well as utilizing them well are important indicators of the quality of an academic institution"*.

The NAAC in its Assessment and Accreditation Manual for Self-study Report for Affiliated/ Constituent Colleges under criteria- IV i.e. Infrastructure and Learning Resources has listed four key indicators for the assessment of the quality and out of which one is for the library i.e. 4.2: Library as a Learning Resource and the total weight-age assigned to criteria IV is 100 out of which 20 is fixed for the Library. In the Quality Indicator Framework (QIF) there are four matrices for the library related activities. First is related to the library automation, second to e-resources, third to annual expenditure on e-resources and the fourth is usages of the library. The description is as follow:

4.2.1: Library is automated using Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) -4 Marks

4.2.2: Subscription to the following of e-resources- 6 marks

1. 1.   E-journals
2.   E-shodhsindhu
3.   Shodhganga membership
4.   E-books
5.   Databases
6.   Remote access to e-resources4.2.3: Average annual expenditure for purchase of books/e-books

and subscription to journals/e- journals during the last five years- 5 Marks

4.2.4: Percentage per day usage of library by teachers and students (foot falls and login data for online access) (Data for the latest completed academic year) – 5 Marks

These four metrics/questions carry a total weight-age of 20 marks / points out of total 1000 marks for an institution. If we see from this weightage point of view the importance of library is not so high but its importance is also reflected through other criteria also as listed by the NAAC and has direct or direct impact on them. This paper is limited and confined to these four key points/quality matrices only which are directly related to determine the quality or grading of a college library.

Sanatan Dharma College Library, Ambala Cantt

The college was established in 1916 at Lahore (now in Pakistan, erstwhile Punjab of joint India) by the efforts of visionary educationist Bharat Ratna Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya ji and later on rehabilitated at Ambala Cantt. in 1948 after the partition of the country with the tireless efforts of Tyagmuty Goswami Ganesh Dutt ji. And with this new beginning it started to develop its entire infrastructure at a new once again and so the library also, as it is an essential component of any educational institute. Now it has grown to the one of the richest academic library in all respect in its category in the northern region of the country. The library is spread over more than 9000 square feet area on first floor which has a peaceful ambience comprising different sections and reading rooms. It has provisions of air-conditioning and LED lights along-with the natural lights. It has a sound collection of books, periodicals and e-resources which are well organised and classified according to Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme. The library premises is also Wi-Fi enabled and also under CCTV surveillance through 16 high resolution IP cameras.

Library Automation

Automation is basically performing various activities with the help of machines i.e. computer or other technology based devices. In this era of ICT, library automation has become essential in handling information and performing library operations to provide services efficiently, effectively and expeditiously to its users. Earlier automation was limited to the libraries of university and research level organizations as it was a costly affair and not affordable for each and every type of library and in our country only a few commercial players were in this field and libraries were having limited options. But now the situation is different application of ICT has spread to all walks of our life and libraries are no exceptions. Technology both in terms of hardware and software has become much cheaper and affordable now as compare to it was two decades ago. Today no library can afford to work without automation either to partial level or full. A number of options are available now in terms of Library Automation Software or Library Management Software (LMS) in the category of free, government sponsored, commercial and open source software. INFLIBNET centre of University Grants Commission has also developed software named SOUL for university and college libraries which is provided on very subsidies rates and is an integrated library management system having different modules required for automation of an academic library. On the other hand Koha which is very popular open source software which developed in New Zealand and has been widely adopted in all types of libraries around the globe.

In Sanatan Dharma College Library the automation started almost two decades back. In its early stage it was partial automation with the help of in-house developed library automation software. Later on it was raised to a higher level by migration to a reputed commercial LMS LSEase developed by Libsys

Limited which had various integrated modules including OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue). The library automation was taken to a next level in the year 2017 with the implementation of web enabled LMS i.e. open source LMS Koha. It works on Linux platform. All the library operations are automated and now its server has been placed on cloud so it is accessible at remotely and beyond the walls of the library. Library users can access the Web-OPAC anywhere anytime and a link to this has been provided on the college website. The web-OPAC has also been installed on two e-Kiosks in the library to assist in searching and locating the books on shelves. The whole library collection is barcoded that helps in automated circulation and stock verification. Five dedicated computer systems have been placed for the purpose of automation of various activities beside the e-kiosks for web-opac. Two 6 KVA online UPS have been installed to support the power backup. An amount of approximate Rs. 18 lacs has been spent in the last three years on the up-gradation of library automation, development of IT infrastructure and surveillance through CCTV installation etc.

Subscription to E-Resources

In the last two decades e-resources have grown at an exponential growth and with the wide spread of Internet among the society these resources have gained more popularity. Now a day most of the publications have their e-versions and many of them don't have their print editions they have e-only editions which are comparatively cheaper. The e-resources have their own advantages over the print like and easy to search and brows, anytime anywhere accessibly, interactive multimedia contents etc. Further the pandemic Covid-19 has also necessitated the educational institutions to subscribe the e-resources so that students may have access to the knowledge resources from their home and as per their convenience and to continue their studies without any barrier in terms of space and time.

The Sanatan Dharma College Library has developed a sound collection of e-resources which includes online and offline, owned by purchase and subscription mode in addition to harvesting of the links to open educational e-resources. The library has more than 1000 CDS and DVDs of educational e-contents. The college library also has access to various reputed e-resources through the membership of N-LIST (National Library & Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Contents) program of INFLIBNET, now a component of E-Shodhsindhu Consortium. The N-LIST comprises subscription to more than 6000 e-journals and 16500 full texts of e-books published by national and international publishers. The library has also subscribed to the membership of DELNET, a major resource sharing library network in South Asia. DELNET also provides access to selected international full-text e-books and e-journals in various fields.

In addition to the above the college library has subscribed perpetual access to 113 e-books from Pearson E-Library and McGraw Hill Express Library. Most of these e-books are textbooks and are most relevant to the course contents of the students of various courses. ***These books are remotely accessible*** online as well as available offline also on android and window applications. The college also has subscribed 10 e-journals (with print) from Sage publishing in addition to the e-journals subscribed through N-LIST membership. The e-resources developed by the faculty of the college are also being provided to the students through the LMS-Moodle and college library. A repository of the e-resources is being created online/on cloud to accessible to the students at anytime and anywhere.

The college library has also provided links to access the various open educational e-resources like: National Digital Library of India, Directory of Open Access Books, e-PG Pathshala, NPTEL, SWAYAM and SWAYAM Courses.

The college has also become the member of Vidwan: Experts Database and National researchers' network maintained by INFLIBNET. The membership of Shodhganga is available to university level institutions only hence not applicable to our institute.

Annual Expenditure on Purchase of Books/eBooks, Journals/e-Journals

Collection is the most significant constituent of a library be it in printed or electronic format. The collection is main source and strength of the library. The varying and diverse information needs of the users can be fulfilled with the help of collection. It should be updated and strengthen and updated regularly that is why NAAC has considered it as key indicator of quality. It must be grown in quality as well as in quantity. A significant and reasonable portion of the college budget or income must be spent on this component. The library in whole has a great impact on teaching learning and research activities but availability of rich, relevant and diverse collection of learning resources directly affects these activities in a positive way. The library collection must include textbooks as well as reference books in addition to periodicals i.e. research journals and magazines and newspapers etc. in both formats print as well as electronic.

The details of the expenditure on development of collection in last three sessions (since the 4th NAAC accreditation cycle begins in our college) have been given below:

Table-1: Details of the Expenditure on Development of Collection

Year	*2017-18 (In Rupees)*	*2018-19 (In Rupees)*	*2019-20 (In Rupees)*
Expenditure on Books	583373.00	914665.00	698696.00
Expenditure on E-Books	00	250174.00	332461.00
Expenditure on Periodicals (Journals, Magazines & Newspapers)	110284.00	98450.00	103988.00
Total	*693657.00*	*1263289.00*	*1135145.00*

As shown by the above table that a significant amount i.e. **Rs. 30, 92,091.00** has been spent on the augmentation of the learning resources only in the library in the last three years. In addition to the above an amount of **Rs. 618251.00** was been spent for storage or shelving of the books in the library. Number of printed books added during this period was 7869 and e-textbooks 113. Twenty five printed newspapers and around 80 printed journals and magazines were also subscribed every year during this period. All the expenditure made on the books or other learning resources has to be supported and validated by the audited reports as a proof.

Usage of the Library by Teachers and Students

One of the ways to know the effectiveness of a library is the number of users visiting the library in routine. If the users find that the library resources and services useful and fulfill their informational

needs obliviously they visit it again and again. If it doesn't cater their informational needs and also their quests for learning they will refrain themselves to visit it and will look for the other ways and means to fulfill their requirements. That is why NAAC has considered it one of the four key indicators to quality of a college library and has assigned it a weight-age of 5 marks i.e. 25% of the total weight-age of assigned to this category of criteria- 4. The main focus of NAAC is on how many users are visiting the library regularly and frequently and its ratio to the total number users i.e. students and faculty of the college. The users visiting the library physically as well as virtually both are considerable within this parameter. Virtual visit means hits on OPAC, library website, e-resource portal or any other online electronic service provided by the library to the users. For the purpose of accreditation the data of visit of users of last one year has to be taken into record and for its validation.

Sanatan Dharma college library is centrally located and full of resources and it has a seating capacity of more than 250 readers at a time so a large number of students and teachers visit it regularly. Moreover the reading rooms of the library are air-conditioned to make it more comfortable to the readers it sit read over there. The reading rooms during the college working days and particularly examination days remain full. A large number of teachers and students access the e-resources and OPAC also. Total number of students and faculty visiting per day is around 500 users a day.

Conclusion

Library is a core component of higher education system that supports teaching and learning. It is not merely the store house of books and other documents rather an active partner of academic activities. The Sanatan Dharma College Library is all set to meet the norms and standards as fixed by the NAAC to award the highest grade i.e. excellence in its category. This practice of meeting the excellence is set since its last cycle of the NAAC accreditation which was held in the year 2017 where the college secured full marks in the criteria- IV i.e. Infrastructure and learning resources. Though the NAAC has been assigned library a direct weight-age of 20 marks only out of the total 1000 marks fixed for the assessment and accreditation of the institute yet its impact on overall accreditation of the institute is very high. It reflects overall academic culture and learning environment of the institute. It has a direct or indirect impact on teaching and learning, research and innovation, infrastructure and best practices etc. So resources spent on strengthening the library services helps in strengthening the other areas also. And in the last I would like to conclude with the words of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India "learning gives creativity, creativity leads to thinking, thinking provides knowledge, and knowledge makes you great".

References:

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