

Library building and space utilization: A study of Mangalore University

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the new library building of Mangalore University, occupied in 1993. A brief history of the existing library is given. The paper highlights the location of the building, its accessibility to all the end users and features of the building. It discusses the benefits of the new library building in organizing the entire collection under a single roof. The constraints in the space utilization of the building have been mentioned. It is hoped that the present paper will be of some help to librarians involved in planning new buildings for their libraries. It concludes that the library building partly meets the present requirements of the university. There is a need for making provision for independent acquisition and technical processing sections, and also for the establishment of learning resource centre and internal binding sections within the library. Further, use of closed circuit cameras and RFID systems has been suggested from the security point of view of the reading materials.

Keywords: Library building; Library building infrastructure; Space utilization

INTRODUCTION

The library has been considered the heart of an academic institution. The successful functioning of the academic activities of the university largely depends on the effective and timely services of the library. The historical literature on library building reveals that any building unsuitable for any other purpose was used to store the books in the olden days. It was because the focus was on just collecting the reading materials rather than their use. Over the years the concept of the library has changed. Today libraries are called as 'information dissemination centres', knowledge dissemination centres', and 'learning resource centres'. They are acting as catalysts between the

users and the sources of information. They have become service centres. In order to collect, organize, maintain variety of information and provide services to the users the library needs a well structured functional building.

According to McDonald¹

Ten important qualities of an ideal library space are: functional, adaptable, accessible, varied, interactive, conducive, environmentally suitable, safe and secure, efficient, suitable for information technology. The layout of the building has to meet users' demands and facilitates the flow of users, books and staff. The library is not only a place to borrow and read books, but also a space for academic and cultural activities. Khanna² states that the university library is a common utility service centre for faculty members, researchers, students and other supporting administrative staff along with industrialists, businessmen and others of the locality. Further, the university library buildings are a ware house for books, a workshop for readers and business home for the staff. Today the libraries are termed as laboratories of learning. While planning the buildings the future requirements must be kept in mind. In this regard Mahatma Gandhi's³ advice was to plan the building of the library in such a way that it can be

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enlarged as the library expands without marring its symmetry. The later additions should not appear as extraneous accretions to the original building.

Sannwald⁴ has given a checklist of library building design which will be taken as guiding principles for planning and designing the library building. However, the existing literature on library building does not point out the exact structure and layout of the library buildings suitable for a university. Therefore the local conditions such as availability of free area, financial constraints, size of the library holdings, and strength of the library users, govern the structure of library buildings. In the present paper an attempt has been made to report on the efforts made by the Mangalore University in organizing the collection and services of its library.

MANGALORE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Mangalore University Library came into existence in the year 1980. Prior to this it served as the library of the post graduate centre of the University of Mysore. Initially the library was started with a mere collection of 40,000 documents. It was housed in a single hall which was formerly used as the university auditorium. With the increase in the size of the collection as

well as the strength of users the hall was found to be inadequate. Therefore the library collection was shifted to another building which was found to be sufficient for organizing only the stack, textbook and reference collection. The periodicals section and Kannada language collection were maintained in the nearby class rooms, both the library staff as well as the users found such scattering of library holdings inconvenient. Hence, the university planned for a new independent building for its library. Keeping in mind the ever growing size of the library collection as well as the strength of the users the library was planned for 9000 sq. mts. of carpet area. It was decided to build it three phases. The construction of the first phase of the building with a carpet area of 3000 sq mts. was initiated on 18th October 1993 and is a milestone in the history of Mangalore University.

Today it has 1,78,000 documents in its collection. With an increase in the number of post graduate departments of the university from five to 24, the strength of the library users has increased from 362 to 2500 over the years.

LOCATION OF THE LIBRARY BUILDING

The new library building has been located in front of the main faculty building facing towards the double road of the campus. On the right side of the library building there is the humanities block

Model of the Mangalore University Library Building



and on the left side the building for the Department of Business Administration is getting ready. Hence it is easily accessible to all the faculty members of various departments of the university.

The complete structure of the library building is hexagonal in shape. It was planned to be built in three phases. The entire plan comprises of six big reading halls, two office blocks and a beautiful garden at the centre. Each hall is also hexagonal in shape.

The first phase of the library building consists of an entrance hall, three big reading halls and two office blocks. Its exterior is very attractive and the interior is pleasing for the users. It has good ventilation and gets very good natural light. Further, there are two gardens, one in front of the library and another at the centre of the entire library building.

SPACE UTILIZATION OF THE PRESENT BUILDING

The entrance area of the library building has been used for establishing the property counter and circulation desk. The free area available on both sides of the circulation desk has been utilized for displaying the daily newspapers and general magazines. The mezzanine area has been used for organizing the text book collection. The right wing hall of the library building has been used for organizing the stack section. Its mezzanine area is used for Kannada Section. Similarly, the ground floor area of the left wing reading hall has been used for journals and the mezzanine area for organizing the reference collection.

Of the two office blocks, the ground floor of the right side block consists of the Deputy Librarian's chamber and the photocopying section. The weeded out collection of books has been maintained on its mezzanine area. The left side office block consists of the librarian's chamber and office, its mezzanine area has been divided into two halls. One of these halls is used as audio-visual room and the other has been used for housing the library web server.

There are two gangways on two sides of the circulation desk. The right gangway takes the

users to the stack and Kannada sections. All along this gangway, five notice boards have been kept for displaying important information like population statistics chart, notices of seminars, conferences, workshops, refresher courses, orientation programmes, paper clippings on various subjects of interest to the academic community and also book reviews. The other gangway which takes the users towards the periodicals and reference sections also has five notice boards on wall. Here the first two boards contain the reprints of the publications of the faculty members, the third one is used for displaying the information about admissions, the fourth board is used for displaying the information about employment notifications and the last board for displaying information on the various scholarships and fellowships. At the end point of this gangway one more photographic unit has been installed to provide easy access to the facilities available for the periodicals and reference section users.

NETWORKING FACILITY

A local area network has been created within the library and it has been connected to the campus network and finally to the internet. The library web server has been maintained within the library and it has been connected with twelve client machines spread over different sections of the library. This has helped in developing the library database and managing the library house keeping operations of different sections of the library.

COMMUNICATION FACILITY

As a result of centralized library building all the ground floor sections have been connected through intercom facility. This has enabled the library staff to have interaction among themselves from their respective sections.

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENTS

The library has been furnished with Godrej model book racks, cupboards, tables and chairs.

Each reading hall accommodates about 100 students at a time in addition to the book collection and back volumes of the journals.

LIGHTING AND VENTILATION

The present building gets adequate natural light and ventilation. To meet the lighting requirements during night and also during cloudy days it has a generator.

PROVISION FOR EXPANSION

The fifth law of Library Science 'Library is a growing organism' clearly emphasizes the necessity of making provision for expansion of the building. As the present library building has been planned to be constructed in three phases, in future, whenever the already built first phase of the building found inadequate, steps could be initiated for building its second and third phase part. This clearly shows that the building has adequate provision for future expansion.

BENEFITS

1. The present building has enabled the organization of the entire library collection under a single roof.
2. It has helped in avoiding duplication of work which resulted in the early days due to scattering of collection in different buildings.
3. It has enabled to get network facility within the library.
4. It has helped to provide all the sections with alternate electricity supply during power failure.
5. Each section has been built in such a way that, cannot carry books from one section to another without coming to the notice of the library staff. This has helped in reducing the misplacement of books.
6. The movement of books and staff does not disturb the serious readers in the library.
7. Library automation has become easy.
8. The audio visual room has helped in

organizing user orientation programmes systematically.

CONSTRAINTS

Movement of Books: All the sections of the library must be well connected so as to make it easy for the movement of books and staff. In this regard the movement of books from the circulation counter to stack section is not easy as it is situated a little away. In the gangways if book trolleys were used it would have been easy for the staff to send the books to the stack for restoration. To reduce the noise, mats have been put along the gangways and pushing book trolleys over the mat will be difficult.

Workflow Arrangement: The workflow arrangement should be such that, the staff can keep a watch on the users carrying books from the stack to the circulation desk. But in the present building it is not possible for the staff members of either stack section or circulation section to keep a watch on such movement. Therefore, the charging work of the circulation section has been shared by the staff at the stack as well as circulation counter.

Further, the library must have separate sections for acquisition and technical processing. These sections perform the behind the scene activities and support the entire library services. There must be a facility for easy movement of books and staff from these sections to the stack and other sections to which newly added books are usually sent. This is lacking in the present library building. Both these sections have been accommodated in the Deputy Librarian's chamber itself. Therefore there is a need for making provision for this in the next phase of the building.

PROVISION FOR LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

In the modern era there is a need for the establishment of a learning resource centre or a division for using the e-resources. Therefore it is essential to make provision for such centre in the next phase of the library building.

NEED FOR AN INTERNAL

BINDING SECTION

Regular use leads to wear and tear of the library books and other reading materials, which needs to be repaired as early as possible. At present the library is availing the services of external binders for this purpose. As they carry the torn books to their bindery, there are chances of increased damage to the reading materials during transit, and the time lag in returning the bound books to the library will also be more. Therefore, it is essential to have an internal binding section in the library itself.

CONCLUSION

The newly constructed independent library building has helped in organizing the entire collection under a single roof. From the point of view of security of library materials, avoiding their misplacement of books and keeping a watch on the users the library must be equipped with closed

circuit cameras. At present the circulation transactions are handled using barcodes, if it is replaced by RFID systems, the problem of replacement of barcode labels again and again will be solved. It also helps in keeping track of the movement of the reading materials.

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