

## A Role of Libraries in 21<sup>st</sup> Century in India

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### Abstract

Library is a medium for the current exchange of ideas, not just for finished collected wisdom to be set down imperishably for posterity. It is way of talking to one another - important talking, but tentative talking nonetheless. Eventually, when the excitement is largely gone and the subject all wrapped up, then for the most part it will appear in books that are treatises.

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.

**Key Word:** Higher Education; 21<sup>st</sup> Century in India; Libraries in India; Education in India.

### Introduction

In human race and development of civilizations, Indian ancient cultural and educational tradition has a rich record in the history of civilization. From the very beginning, man has always been anguish to know about unknown objects (Sun, Moon, Sky, Stars, Planets, Air, Water, Atmosphere, Animal's Kingdom, Forestry Growth, Human Races, Basic Elements and All visible / invisible Atoms of the Universe etc.). In this regard to know the object's meanings, salient features and its usefulness for human race is called education.

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Education is one of the largest activities in the world. It is as important as any resource is for a nation's economic and industrial development because it is the key to human resource development. Through education we can achieve knowledge and information, which is power and this power, is very essential for the development of personality of individuals as well as the nations.

### *Historical perspective of education in India*

Education in India has a long history and continuous tradition. In the past, education was restricted to Brahmins only. The young Brahmins were not only prepared for the education, he was trained for his practical duties in life as a priest and teacher but also was enabled to achieve self-realization and spiritual emancipation. Education is to guide man from falsehood to truth, from darkness to light and from death to immortality.

Between 1882 and 1902 there was rapid growth in educational efforts. By 1902 there were 145 colleges. Though the progress of Women's education was slow, at the initial stages it gained sufficient momentum to

demand separate Schools and Colleges for Women and different curricula were developed for boys and girls. In 1937 Mahatma Gandhi proposed a new system of Education in order to create a new social order during the struggle for independence.

After independence the Government of India formed Indian Education Commission (1964-66) under the Chairmanship of Dr. D. S. Kothari, to examine the entire education system in India, in need for national system of education along with its other recommendation.

In the meaning of education, "It is a total development of the personality. Education consists of all these experiences that affect the individual from birth till death. Thus, education is that process by which an individual freely develops his self according to his nature in a free and uncontrolled environment. Education is a life long process of growth and development. Education is essentially a process of growth and development which goes on throughout the whole life."

"The real concept of education is a synthesis of a process will develop the child to the full according to his inherent tendencies with emphasis on concurrent development of society, of which he is an integral part. Such an education will develop both child and the society to higher and higher position of glory and cultural eminence."

Distribution of knowledge is found in a three-tier system of Muktabs and Madrasas, mosques and monasteries and private houses denoting three forms of education viz.

- i) Primary education imparting elementary knowledge. Primary education aimed at teaching, reading and writing;
- ii) Secondary education as in grammar schools, high schools and private academies;
- iii) University or higher education is undergraduate and post-graduate

courses. Higher education comprised teaching in religion, philosophy and medicine etc.

#### *Purpose of Education*

The purpose of education is essentially that of effecting desirable changes in individuals who in turn change different aspects of life of the society that is social, economic, political, technological or cultural in nature. Education directs and changes the people and enables them to change the society in the relevant ways so as to conquer its environment for the benefit of mankind. It is to bring out what is the best in a man, to develop his personality, to train him to be useful to the society so as to contribute to its culture, social and economic development, and to make him a better person to enable him to contribute in shaping the world.

The basic task of education is to promote the powers of mind, acquisition of special skills and the advancement of knowledge but above all to generate in young generation a sense of purposefulness and maximum dedication, confidence, in themselves and faith in the country's future. Human mind has wonderful resources of energy, but to bring out the best results from it, it has got to be tapped developed and canalized with the help of education.

Education without library is like a body without soul, a vehicle without an engine and a building merely a collection of bricks without cement. Education and library service cannot live apart from the other.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The purpose of all education is to provide a coherent picture of universe and potentials in the most desirable form to young people in order to take up positions in the real life or an integrated way of life. Since education is both training of minds and training of

souls, it should give both knowledge and wisdom.

### *Higher Education*

The higher education is the basic need of the society for individual development. Education is to equalized opportunities enabling the backward and under privileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their condition. Every society that values, social justice and is anxious to improve a layman and cultivate all available talent must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the society.

“After independence the first action of a real significance to be taken by the Government of India in the field of education was the appointment of the University Commission in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. Sarvapali Radhakrishnan, a distinguished scholar and former Vice-Chancellor of Banaras University, who rose to become the Second President of India.” It is on his name that the commission is known as *Radhakrishnan Commission*.

The report of the commission is a document of great importance as it has guided the development of the university education in India since independence. The commission made a thorough study of the problems of higher education in India. The higher education is basically the University Education. After independence, the main emphasis was on the consolidation and expansion of facilities in the existing institutions. The Revised National Policy on Education, 1992 in the field of higher education provided the following facilities:

- i) Redesigning the college education.
- ii) Planning and co-ordination.
- iii) Regulated admission.
- iv) Transformation of teaching methods.
- v) Open University and Distance Learning.

### *Management of Higher Education*

The Indian higher education system is one of the largest such systems in the World. It is estimated that during the X Five Year Plan period (2002-07), there will be a tremendous pressure of numbers on this system and a large number of additional students will be knocking at the doors of higher education institutions in the country. There are also new challenges of management and regulation being faced by these institutions, which require serious attention, both at the institutions in the public sector and also those in the private sector now growing at a fast pace. As a result, the old structures of management established in pre-independent India and working during most of the twentieth century are now required to undergo drastic changes. Besides, the demands of the society for equity and accommodation cannot be neglected any more.

The following five sub-sections cover important aspects of the deliberations, recommendations and action plans of UGC Golden Jubilee Seminars organized at different Universities in the country:

- Public/Private Partnership in Higher Education, at University of Calicut, Kozhikode, Kerala;
- Governance of higher Education, at University of Jammu, Jammu, J&K;
- Access and Equity in Higher Education, at G.C.D .University, Bilaspur, Chattisgarh;
- Export of Higher Education, at J.N.V. University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan and
- Policy Planning for Higher Education under WTO and GATT regimes at North Bengal University, Darjeeling, West-Bengal.
- Economics of Higher Education, at N. E. Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya.

### *Concept of university*

In the modern era, the concept of higher education and university education clearly

introduced in 16<sup>th</sup> century but in the Indian civilization we also read about *Textla* (Takshila), *Maghda*, and *Patliputra* universities. In India, the British established the first university in Calcutta in 1857, which is rich in its collection. After that Bombay, Madras, Aligarh universities were established. University is primarily a place of teaching universal knowledge.

University is, "an autonomous body giving instructions and degrees for various courses recognized by the other such bodies of the world and area."

According to the 'International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, "Universities are organizations engaged in the advancement of knowledge, they teach, train, and examine students in a variety of scholarly, scientific and professional fields. Intellectual pursuits in universities define the highest prevailing levels of competence in these fields. The universities confer degrees and provide opportunities both for members of their teaching staff and for some of their students to do original research."

#### *Aims, objectives & functions of university*

The University is an important agency for imparting higher education. The traditional functions of a university are mainly acquisition, preservation, dissemination and extension of the frontiers of knowledge, the balanced education of individuals and the training of personnel for all walks of life. The Education Commission (1964-65) was of the opinion that universities are undergoing profound changes in their scope, functions and organizations are in a process of rapid evolution. In addition to the broad **aims**, they share in common with all the universities. Indian universities will have to shoulder special responsibilities in the present state of our social and educational development. They are:

- i) Conscience of the Nation: Universities must learn to serve as the conscience of the nation; and from this point of view, they should encourage individuality,

variety and dissent, within a climate of tolerance.

- ii) Programme of Adult Education: They should develop programme of adult education in a big way and to that end, evolve a wide spread network of part-time and correspondence courses.
- iii) Qualitative Self-Improvement: They should assist the schools in their attempts at qualitative self-improvement.

After great deliberations, "the Commission formulated the following objectives for the universities to strive for:

- i) The aim of university should be to promote intellectual adventures.
- ii) Universities should be the organs of civilization. They should train the intellectual pioneers of civilization.
- iii) The content of education must accept the best of what modern advancement has to offer, but without neglecting our cultural heritage from the past.
- iv) One of the main functions of the universities is to bring about the spiritual development of the students.
- v) Literature deepens and enlarges the human feelings. Hence universities should give the most important place to the mother tongues in the general education.

#### *Development of university education*

There are so many commissions and committees consisted for the development of university education.

University Education Commission (1948-49) was appointed under the chairmanship of *Dr. Sarvapali Radhakrishnan*. "The report of the Commission is a document of great importance as it has guided the development of University Education in India since Independence."

Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), "Recommendations of the Commission occupy a place of paramount importance in the history of secondary education of free

India, as they have great impact upon the change in nature of education. The Commission is indeed a big kind mark in the history of secondary education in free India.”

“Indian Education Commission (1964-66) popularly known as Kothari Commission was appointed by the Government of India under the headship of Dr. D.S. Kothari dated July 14, 1964. The Commission was appointed to advise government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects.”

National Policy on Education (1986) is popularly known as New Education Policy. “The new policy on education was introduced with the following features:

- Recognition of new technology in education, to the required extent.
- A culturing role of education was emphasized and highlighted through media.
- Policy also asserts the need for examination reforms. This reason alone is sufficient for exploring other areas of education and evaluation.”

### *Library*

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 a 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.

### *Role of library in higher education*

The role of the library can be defined within the framework of the university’s mission and a library development programme can be undertaken accordingly.

In the words of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, “Libraries are not more store houses, they are rich springs from which knowledge flows out to irrigate field of education and culture.”

The fundamental role of the university library is educational. It should not be operated as a mere storehouse of books attached to a reading room, but as a dynamic instrument of education. It is emphasized in different reports brought out by various library and educational commissions in India and abroad. A university library is established with the intention of aiding in successful accomplishment of the objectives such as teaching, research, publication programmes, etc. In modern education system, the university library has important responsibilities.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan headed the report of the Library Committee of University Grants Commission in 1957 that dealt with in detail the role of the university library in academic development especially in the field of higher education.

*The above observations can be summarizing in the words as:*

- i) The library is the heart of education;
- ii) Methods & fashion in education change from generation to generation, but each generation uses the library as a means of realizing its items; hence the library remains the great conservator of learning;
- iii) A quality education is impossible without a quality library;
- iv) A library is vital organ for proper exploitation of our intellectual resources;

- v) A library is essential for maintenance of free access to ideas, and to the functioning of the untrammelled mind.

The Kothari Commission report (1964-66) on education to role of libraries in higher education is reflected in these words, no new university, college or department should be setup without taking into account its library needs in terms of staff, books, journals, space etc. "Nothing could be more damaging to a growing department than to neglect its library or to give it a low priority. On the contrary, the library should be an important centre of attraction on the college or university campus."

The importance of the library's role in imparting and disseminating knowledge has, of late, been enhanced by developments in continuing education, distance education and the Open University system. The university / college libraries have assumed even greater importance in a country like India where the majority of students cannot purchase the most essential books.

#### *Aims, objectives of university library*

A library is considered as the 'heart' of a university and it is the centre of learning for higher education. Each university has a central library attached to it and may have many constituent libraries attached to its different teaching departments or the constituent colleges. The aims and objectives of a library are as below:

- Education must facilitate the process of change that is essential for a developing and growing society.
- To provide the promote facilities for advanced study and research in education.
- To conduct research in several branches of education, publish the result of such research and act as an educational information dissemination centre.
- To prepare educational leaders in teaching, research and administration.

- To stimulate educational research of high quality, both fundamental and applied, required for the improvement of education.

The basic characteristic of a good library is its complete identification with its institution. The measure of its excellence is the extent to which its resources and services support the institution's academic pursuits. The university library provide reading material and other graphics records to help the university to engage itself earnestly and vigorously in its pursuits of intellectual attainments which is to assemble, preserve, transmit and illuminate knowledge of the wisdom and past.

#### **Conclusion**

Information environments are very much alive including libraries in higher education and other research environments. For the most part...we can't make one decision for the future but individual decisions need to be made and the common decisions need to be identified.

#### *We need to:.....*

- focus on access and speed
- partner for access and speed
- proactively identify and design partnerships and cooperation
- increase our "market share" for higher education constituents
- seek ways to position ourselves within our institutions to be "sitting at the decision-making table"
- link ourselves to higher education programs/services and outcomes
- focus on training (change, competencies - particularly technology)

#### *We have:.....*

- unique materials/Unique formats of materials

- unique expertise in creating structures for organizing and accessing materials
- unique curriculum to use in teaching our constituents on how to deal with 21st century opportunities and challenges
- processes to enable our constituents to create content
- a structure to support and possibly store content acquired and/or created
- information and research “about” information and research”

*We don't have.....*

- a place at the “decision making table”
- a leadership role to play in the academy
- all of the ongoing dollars needed for supporting our constituents
- a market presence or niche where others might/would “turn to us first”.

For any library to succeed in implementing knowledge management will require a strong leadership and vision from the top administration, which can influence the organization’s knowledge sharing efforts in a positive way. As libraries enter the knowledge age of the 21st century, we should not take a back seat in the development of knowledge management. Instead, armed with our professional knowledge and experiences, we should be in the driver’s seat.

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