

Libraries as Gateway for Academic Excellence: Students and Teachers Perceptions in Different Colleges of Imphal, Manipur

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Abstract - The purpose of this paper was to examine the present status of academic libraries in and around Imphal in bringing academic excellence thereby uplifting the relevance of libraries in academic platform. The size of the collection is used as the indicator of academic quality but it should be mentioned that effective use of library resources by students will boost the academic performance. The study was cross sectional randomized study and students, librarians, teachers across various colleges were participated with their informed consent. The study results showed that all the libraries were having required number of books along with newspapers for general knowledge. All the students agreed library is must for learning process and also use of library improved their performance and recommended others to use the library for achieving the academic excellence. Majority of students visited the library once daily and 65% visited library to understand the subjects and 71% were visited even there were no scheduled examinations. Majority agreed that teacher motivated them to visit the library (41%) but stay in the library by majority was 1-2 hours (71%). Library and information centers have become important channels for disseminating the information available in multiple formats to those who are in need of information. For any library to succeed in implementing knowledge management will require a strong leadership and vision from the top administration, which has positive impact in knowledge sharing and thereby academic excellence.

Keywords: Management Information Systems (MIS), Librarian, Students, Learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Library is considered as heart and soul of any learning institution, which is pivot of teaching-learning process. A well-equipped and well maintained library is the foundation of modern education structure which will provide the essential knowledge to students. College library plays an important role in providing overall library and information services to its users. College libraries are the hub of the teaching and learning activities where students and teacher will explore the vast resources of information. In order to reach the goal of creating a knowledgeable society, the learners should be helped to overcome 'information poverty.' The basic function of library is to provide knowledge to those who were deprived of it and help in their developmental process which ultimately benefits the community. Our society is undergoing a process of rapid change, moving toward what is called the information society, the knowledge society, the network society or the informational mode of development

Libraries should be so organized and the staff so trained that they become pertinent to users in every aspect. Also, to optimize resources, efforts should be made to synergize the strengths of different types of libraries through innovative collaboration. Management Information Systems (MIS) have emerged as a solution to this capacity expansion requirement of Academic Libraries. In the present day, the MIS based libraries maintain customer (reader) focus as their central idea during all performances. The objective of an MIS based Library is to be an effective library through:

1. Providing convenience and justice to its readers.
2. Attract non-readers to become readers by providing cooperative environment.

Sethurvel¹ study stated that, Academic libraries not only work as a place to keep the books in shelves but they also play an vital role in teaching, research and other academic programmes with limited resources. Higher education in INDIA has evolved in distinct and divergent streams with each stream monitored by an apex body and many of them controlled indirectly by Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD).

In the present digital era where every day new information is added, the Library and Information Networks are playing a great role through resource sharing. In the development of higher education INFLIBNET's role is very important from the post independent period. INFLIBNET center is a boon of Indian Higher education Karn, S. K *et al*². Changes in higher education, the new student-centered curriculum and new learning and teaching approaches have also created a need for a reconceptualization of the roles and responsibilities of librarians.

Arjun, Dinesh Kumar *et al*³ study mentioned the report of the Library Committee of University Grants Commission in 1957 has given some key points for academic library in an institution;

1. The library is the heart of education.
2. 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.
3. A quality education is impossible without a quality library.

4. A library is vital organ for proper exploitation of our intellectual resources.
5. A library is essential for maintenance of free access to ideas, and to the functioning of the untrammelled mind.

These are the very important aspects to achieve maximum learning process and must be borne in mind by teacher, students, librarian and administrators. Based on these facts the study was selected to know what extent libraries today contribute to information sharing and other aspects of student learning in terms of performances. This was done by assessing the student's views about library and their usage.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the perceptions of Students and Teachers in bringing up academic excellence.
2. To provide information sources and services to the Users efficiently.
3. To find out the short-comings faced by libraries in providing information services.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was cross sectional randomized study and students, librarians, teachers across various colleges were participated with their informed consent and clear explanation were given to the subjects regarding the study. The pre designed pre validated questionnaire was prepared after searching through various resources. Only relevant questions were used for the study. The validity of questions was assessed by implementing the questionnaire on 10 students who were not involved in study. The data was analyzed in SPSS 18 and the Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the internal consistency of the questionnaire which gave a value of 0.8. Students and librarian were also encouraged to give any other comments regarding the library usage in form of open ended questions.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts;

1. Questions pertaining to librarians and teachers
2. Questionnaire for students involving views about library and role in their performance.
3. Questionnaire for other students involving library usage.

The random sampling was done every 2nd (Part 2 Questionnaire) and 3rd (Part 3 Questionnaire) student out of 100 were given questionnaire on the same time. The entire questionnaires were collected on the same session and data entered into excel sheet. The data was analyzed and percentages were used to compare.

Limitations of study

1. The study population was small but study will be continued in various other colleges.
2. Student individuals strength and weakness were not assessed in the study.
3. Gender and age differences were not considered due to small sample.

IV. RESULTS

The study results showed two colleges out of 4 conducted library orientation programmes for new students. The library committee was present in 3 colleges and none of them decided the allocation of budget for library. All the libraries were having required number of books along with newspapers for general knowledge. 2 out of 4 libraries used E books and E journals as E resources in the library. The average number of students visited per day was 70 and 33 books were issued an average in these libraries. The duration of books issued for students was 10 days and for teachers it was 14 days on average.

The students were assessed in 2 parts one group with library and service other with library usage.

All the students agreed library is must for learning process and also use of library improved their performance and recommended others to use the library for academic excellence.

Out of 30 students responded 70% of them used library on daily basis and most of them 41% browsing through the shelves to find the resources and 35% of students taken help from librarian to locate the resources and 99% agreed proper reading materials available but 41% opinioned that lack of relevant books is one of major challenges they face in library as shown in below table I.

TABLE I STUDENTS VIEWS ABOUT LIBRARY SERVICES

Questions	Once daily	Once weekly	Once monthly	Never
How often you have visited the library	70%	30%	0	0
	Browsing through the shelves	Seeking assistance from library staff	Seeking assistance from colleagues	
Which are the ways you locate the materials in the library	41%	35%	24%	
	Always	I don't find them	Never	
What do you think of availability of reading materials in library	99%	1%	0	
	Lack of relevant books	Inadequate knowledge on how to use the library catalogue	Related subjects are not properly linked	Outdated library resource
What are the challenges you faced while using library	41%	23%	18%	18%

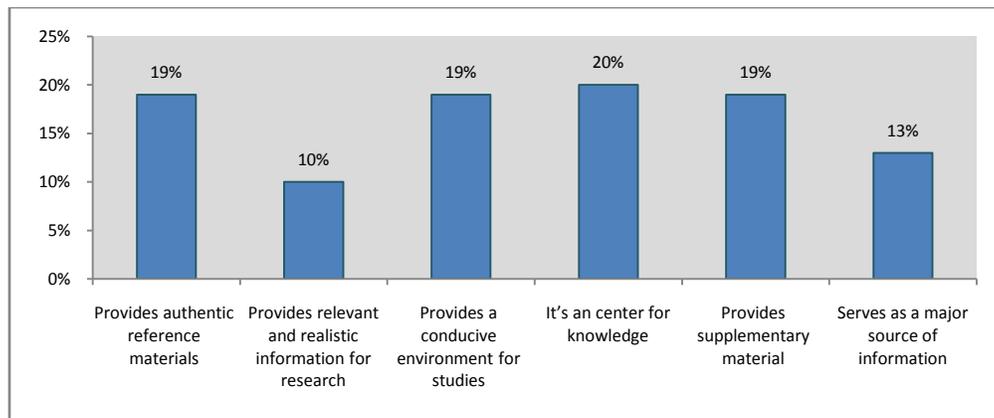


Fig. 1 Showing views of students about role of library in learning process.

Majority of students agreed that library provides authenticated, proper supplementary materials and also acknowledged that library provided pleasant environment and is the center for knowledge as shown in Fig. 1. As shown in the table II majority of students visited the library

resource once daily and 65% visited library to understand the subjects and 71% were visited even no examinations were scheduled. Majority agreed that teacher motivated them to visit the library (41%) but stay in the library by majority was 1-2 hours (71%).

TABLE II STUDENTS VIEWS ABOUT LIBRARY USAGE

Questions	Yes	No			
Do you use library resources regularly on day today basis?	100%	Nil			
Do you use library resource to understand the subject regularly?	65%	35%			
If there are no examinations scheduled do you visit library?	71%	29%			
If yes, Who motivated you to do so?	Teacher	Friend	Self-motivated	Not answered	
	41%	11%	11%	37%	
How many hours per day you will be using library?	1-2 hours	Less than 1 hour	3-4 hours	More than 4hours	
	71%	29%	Nil	Nil	
Type of resources you use from library	Book	Reference materials	Journals	News papers	Internet Browsing
	41%	27%	18%	14%	Nil
Which of the following you use to finish the work given in the college?	College library	Using others work	Using internet		
	29%	42%	29%		

Fig. 2 showing the views of students about librarian help in finding various resources and Majority 26% said librarian helped in finding books, journals and web resources followed by coordinating research work and finding other form of resources.

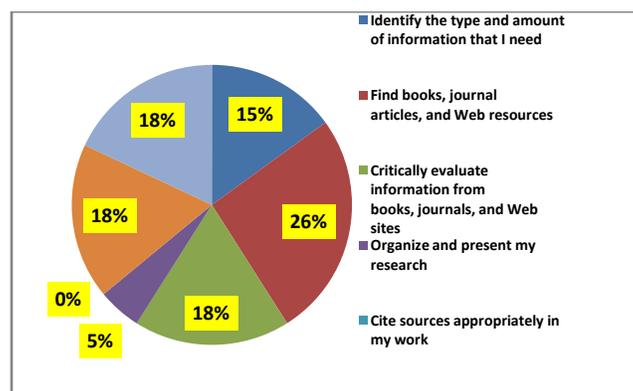


Fig. 2 Showing librarian assistance in searching resources

V. DISCUSSION

Academic libraries historically have strived to provide excellent library services to their users such as students, faculty and staff. A library is not a building stacked with books – it is a repository and source of information and ideas, a place for learning and enquiry, and for the generation of thought and the creation of new knowledge.

Jones, S. et al⁴ report showed that, on average, college students spend as much time on the internet as they do studying. In our study many students used internet as source of information but also they needed the direction of librarian to find the resources be it hard copies or online resources. The study done in India by Lal and Ingle⁵ found that although 97% of undergraduate students reported visiting the library, only 41% made regular visits. The majority of students (82%) only consulted textbooks. In our study 70% students visited the library on daily basis and 30% once in week and only few percentage students borrowed books (18%) and read for examinations (20%). Which was correlating with study carried out by Chatterjee et al⁶ found that the majority of interns (62%) visited the library to prepare for examination. This indicates that students visit the library only to prepare for examination and this attitude should be changed by stressing the importance of library in knowledge gaining in all aspects.

A number of studies done by Hiscock,⁷ J.E, Robertson, M., & Jones, J.⁸ Whitmire, E.⁹ indicated a correlation between academic library usage and perceived educational performance of students or academics. In our study we found that 100% students said their performance has been augmented by use of library and they have performed well in examinations. They also suggested to their colleagues to use library and resources to obtain good academic marks to have positive effect on academic performance. Apart from this, our study also showed that teachers motivated them to visit the library (41%) but stay in the library by majority was 1-2 hours (71%). Majority said librarian helped in finding books, journals, coordinating research work and finding online resources.

The Colorado Academic Library Impact Study done by Dickerson, D¹² found that students using the library were quiet space for study, availability of computers, availability of specific materials, and convenient location. In our study many students were using library because of availability of proper reading materials. And also majority agreed that library provides authenticated, proper supplementary materials and also acknowledged that library provided conducive environment for study and is the center for knowledge.

Our study also found that many librarians were having proper resources in terms of books, staff etc. They were

giving orientation programme to new students but teachers were unaware of this. Also library committee was established without any role in the budget allocation.

VI. CONCLUSION

All the students, librarians, teachers must agree that library is the center for knowledge. But how effectively they are been used is the question. Library and information centers have become important channels for disseminating the information available in multiple formats to those who are in need of information.

To move forward in academic library and student's performance, we need to strengthen the role of librarian and library and make librarian as academic partner to the faculty.

For any library to succeed in implementing knowledge management will require a strong leadership and vision from the top administration, which has positive impact in knowledge sharing. As libraries enter the 21st century, librarians should take lead in knowledge sharing process to students and faculty in any institute.

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