Academic Libraries in India
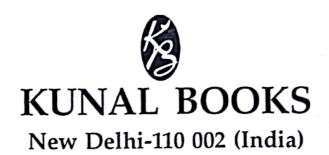
Challenges and Future

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Academic Libraries in India: Challenges and Future

14

Status of Library Services of Selected Universities in North Bengal: An Evaluative Study

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT), library services have brought massive changes in historical civilization. ICT is important to libraries to achieve its goals for management of information, effective services and extension of boundaries from the four-walls to the globe. The function of University libraries is changing due to the application of ICT, especially in the collection developments, organization and services provided to library users. The purpose of the present study is to survey and assess the status of library services of selected Universities, namely 'University of North Bengal', 'University of Gour Banga' and 'Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya' in North Bengal in terms of information resources, use and impact of information technology, user services and cooperation.

***Keywords:** University Libraries, North Bengal, Information and Communication Technology, E-resources, OPAC.*

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Introduction

Academic Libraries are the social institutions and considered to be the cardinal point of academic institutions where users must be supported by teaching, learning, research and other academic functions. The development of information, communication and web technology has made a marvelous enhancement and changed almost all works of existence. The library services have brought massive changes in historical civilization. Academic library and the education both are interlinked in higher education. Higher education without libraries has no meaning and libraries without higher education have no origin. Academic libraries are also essential for political, economical, social and cultural aspects of the society and these libraries are becoming a knowledge centre. Through the Information Communication and Technology (ICT), academic library services cautiously grow and its user can easily access information without any hesitations. Academic libraries are an important part of higher education and library should be well equipped with trained staff, suitable infrastructure that provides the right information to the right users at the right time with proper collection to satisfy most of the needs of all users. The present study implies the current status of the three selected Universities from North Bengal, which is a smaller part of West Bengal. These universities are 'University of North Bengal' (near Siliguri), 'University of Gour Banga' (Malda) and 'Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya' (Pundibari, Cooch Behar) especially for agricultural education.

Literature Review

Review of literature presents a detailed report of original publications, mostly the research publications carried by different scholars. The review of literature was conducted through both printed and online resources.

Ganaie[3] (2012) study was to investigate the libraries as social institutions are playing a very important role in building a strong nation by providing access to information sources available in different formats to those who are in need of information. **Shukla[7] (2015)** reported that libraries are an integral part of educational setup. The main function of the library is to educate. University libraries have their important place in academic and higher learning world. Another studies by **Kumar, B.[4] (2015)** an academic library has been the 'heart of the educational institution' serving the academic community of its parent body. It offers the student curriculum support by providing a wide range of services. **Das, P. R., & Mazumdar, S.[2] (2016)** argue that University libraries are actively taking part in the process of e-learning services. **Saha and et. al.[6] (2008)** tried to attempts to find out the problems of the building of automated college library services. **Singh, M., & Arora, A. K.[8] (2015)** stated that the University libraries make efforts to better serve the users by providing maximum service with their available means or resources. A study by **Mohindra, R., & Kumar, A.[5] (2015)** reported that in higher education considering the dynamic nature of library services, it is very important to know the user expectations and their satisfaction towards library services so that quality of library services can be improved and ultimate objectives of the library are met. **Bhattacharjee and et. al.[1] (2016)** in the present era, library and information services can also be provided through online mode and thus libraries have become more user-friendly and more interactive.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to find out the current status of the library services of selected Universities in North Bengal. As it as follows:

> To know the library services of the universities' central libraries.

- To know the taxonomy of the library services.
- To know the past and present aspects of the library services of those Universities.
- To know the existing library aspects of the Universities of North Bengal.
- To ascertain the print as well as non-print library collections.
- To find out the constraints of the library services.
- To find out the extension of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) application in university libraries.
- To know the impact of ICT in the university libraries.

Scope of the Study

There are five Universities in North Bengal namely, University of North Bengal (1962), Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya (2000), University of Gour Banga (2008), Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University (2012), and Raiganj University (2015). The present study covers three universities out of five universities and the data have been collected from the central libraries of University of North Bengal, University of Gour Banga and Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya for this particular study.

Methodology

Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study and investigation on a focal prospect. The present study is based on the survey method, though other methods/techniques have also been used to collect data.

a) **Questionnaire Method:** In order to gather data, a structured questionnaire was designed to collect all the exhaustive and depth information from the librarians.

b) **Interview Method**: In this study, personal interview with librarians was conducted by asking research questions frequently.

c) **Observation Method:** Observation method was used to collect data for the study by looking up the infrastructures of the libraries of the universities to better understand their services.

Higher Education and University Libraries

Academic library is an important prerequisite for successful implementation of higher educational programs. Without the help and cooperation of the library, institutions are not successfully implemented. Higher education is an essential need of the society for the personality development. Library is the heart of any institution and its play vital role to the development and promotion of university education. In academic libraries, users can acquire knowledge and information under the one umbrella as per user's eagerness and on demand. The libraries have been described more research, teaching and learning process and signifying the self-efforts to be put in by students. Kothari Education Commission (1964-65) defines the importance of libraries in the higher education "nothing could be more damaging to a growing department than to neglect its library, give to it a low priority." The academic library should be a central attraction of any institution.

In higher education, libraries are experiencing the impact of fundamental changes in the educational infrastructure. Library is a social, technological, educational and executive structure of any institution. Now the University libraries are adopting the new technologies to establish a digital environment and as a result the library collections are not within the four walls of the library. Information resources can be retrieved physically as well as in digital format in the libraries of the universities. Current academic libraries are not only increasing the number of collections,

but users are also using them properly.

Impact of Technology Based Library Services

The rapid growth of technological advancements accompanied with numerous advantages and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications has extremely augmented the library operations in the last past years. The success of the library services is depended upon the application of new technology and its innovative prospects. Now the most of the libraries offer new services to the users through ICT which has almost limitless potential for a variety of useful applications in libraries. It has become an integral part of libraries and increases the efficiency, productivity and effectiveness of their operations and services. Through information and communication technology, library can provide OPAC, CD ROM database, e-reference services, CAS, SDI, in house archives, subscribed database, journal, bibliography Service, indexing & abstracting, Inter-Library Loan (ILL), reservation services and so on.

An Overview of Three Selected University Libraries

Central Library, University of North Bengal

The University of North Bengal was established by an Act of the Legislature of West Bengal in 1962. The Central Library of the University of North Bengal was established along-with the Establishment of the University in 1962. The University library provides books, journals and e-resources to meet the requirements of the users. The location of the University Library is adjacent of the University Administrative building. This library uses 23rd edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme for book classification. Earlier, the card catalogue system was used to hold the bibliographic records and now it has been replaced to Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) format by using SOUL automation software.

Central Library, University of Gour Banga

The University of Gour Banga was established in 2008 Malda, West Bengal. This University just completed their eight years of establishment and the University central library, namely Pandit Bidhu Sekhar Sastri Kendriya Granthagar is implemented library automation software with android mobile application for the OPAC. This University enlightens in the higher education in its territory. The University implements Teaching, research, innovation and training and skill development aspects among the students. The shelf arrangement of the library resources is maintained in classified form and the classification of the library resources is done by DDC 23rd edition.

Central Library, Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya

Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwavidyalaya is an agricultural University in Pundibari, Cooch Behar. The territories of the Northern Zone of West Bengal are based on agriculture, which encompasses natural resources like forests, economic plant resources, agro-ecosystem, etc. National Agricultural Research Project (NARP) formed Pundibari as the headquarter of the terai-agro climate zone of West Bengal. For covering the entire North Bengal agriculture manifesto, the Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya was established in 2000 and started functioning on 1 February 2001. The central library of the University was also established in the same year. The total number of books are classified (DDC 23rd ed.) and arranged in a systematically. From 2015 the automation system (circulation) was stated full-fledgedly.

Data Analysis and Major Findings

This study is basically a comparative study of library services among the three universities in North Bengal. Out of three universities, two universities are general and one university is specialized for agriculture and

agriculture engineering. We have conducted this survey through structured questionnaire method and personal contact.

Learning Resources of the Three Libraries

Table 1: Learning Resources of the Three Libraries

Name of the University	Total no. of collection	Total no. of non-print	Total no. of Journals	
			Indian	Foreign
University of North Bengal (NBU)	2,77,474	1,049	539	135
University of Gour Banga (GBU)	40,000	110	82	20
Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya (UBKV)	35,000	200	65	10

This table shows that the University of North Bengal has richest collections of both printed and non-printed resources. This library also subscribes more than 500 Indian and 100 foreign journals. University of Gour Banga library has the collection of approx forty thousand books and 82 Indian and 20 foreign subscribed journals and it has 110 non print resources. As a special library UBKV is enlarged with 35 thousand books, 200 non print resources and 75 subscribed journals.

Categories of Users

Table 2: Categories of Users

Name of the University	Students	Research Scholars	Teachers	Non teaching
NBU	2025	89	24	32
GBU	2780	80	109	45
UBKV	60	40	110	24

The users are the most important factor of any academic or public library and only the users can justify the status of library services. This table shows that there are four types of library users, which are students, research scholars, teachers and non-teaching staff. Maximum numbers of users are students among all Universities and followed by Research scholar, teacher and non teaching staff.

Number of Library Staff

Table 3: Number of Total Library Staff of Three University Libraries

Name of the University	Library Staff
University of North Bengal (NBU)	27
University Gour Banga (GBU)	21
Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyala (UBKV)	7

Total twenty seven library personnel provide all the existing library services in the central library of University of North Bengal. Other two libraries, University of Gour Banga library provides their library services by 21 numbers of library personnel and seven library personnel, including librarian provide all the services in Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya central library.

Distribution of Seating Capacity of the University Libraries

Table 4: Seating Capacity of the University Libraries

Name of the University	Seating Capacity	
	Reading Room	Computer Lab
University of North Bengal	150	40
University of Gour Banga	160	80
Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya	70	20

The reading room service is the one of the most momentous part of library service. In reading room users can find latest newspapers, journals, text and reference books and new arrivals. Seating capacity of any library implements the all adjacent services of the library. The central library of University of Gour Banga, has the most number of seating capacity in the reading room section and other University libraries respectively 150 (NBU) and 70 (UBKV).

On the other hand, the computer lab is another integral part of library service. Through computer lab, users can access the digital resources which are subscribed by the institutions such as databases, e-journals, etc. Among the three Universities, as the table no. 4 shows that University of Gour Banga has the largest number of seating capacity in the computer lab. The study extends approximately 40 users can use the computer lab at University of North Bengal and Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya have only 20 numbers of seating capacity in computer lab.

Frequency of the Library Visit by the Users

Table 5: Distribution of the Library Visit and Daily Book Lending

Name of the University	Daily visit	Daily Book Lending
University of North Bengal	150	257
University of Gour Banga	125	130
Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya	80	175

This table shows the frequency of the library visit of each library in a single day. It also shows that 150 users apparently visit the central library of University of North Bengal and maximum numbers of issuing books are 257 books per day. A good number of the students also visit the central library of Gour Banga University per day. Approximately eighty users visit Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya library and 175 books are being issued in a single day.

Library Services of the Three Universities

Table 6: Library Services of the Universities at a Glance

Sl. No.	University Name	Library Management Software	OPAC	OPAC Mobile App.	CAS / SDI	Bibliographic Services	Indexing / Abstracting Services	Reprographic / Printing Services	Inter Library Loan Services	Library Consortia	DDS
1	NBU	SOUL	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	GBU	Koha	Yes (Local Host)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
3	UBKV	Koha	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Library Management Software and Open Public Access Catalogue

All the three University libraries use computers to automate their housekeeping jobs such as acquisition, cataloguing and serial control, etc. Central library of University of North Bengal adopted SOUL for automation and all the bibliographic data enlarged in cataloguing. The circulation system is done manually by mixed process and this library provides OPAC services as the local host and Web OPAC. On the other hand University of Gour Banga previously used SOUL and now the databases are migrated to Koha. They have initially launched Android Mobile App for Web-OPAC which can be accessed 24x7 from beyond the university wall. The circulation system is done manually in the central library of the University. Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya firstly used relational database for holding the computerized bibliographic records. After that Libsys, library management software was implemented for library automation. Now this

University library is using Koha, which is a based on SaaS platform.

CAS/SDI

Current Awareness Service (CAS) and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) both are the most used services in the Universities among the research scholars. Though SDI is the form of CAS but both keep the users with up-to-date, pinpointed and exact information in their working field. All the three University central libraries provide the services to the research scholars by current lists. This service is done by manual and computerized process. Researchers are involved in the current contents of primary journals and other sources of current information.

Bibliographic Service and Indexing/Abstracting services

Bibliographic service plays an important role in research activities and other purposes. Any research worker while initiating any new research project or at the time of writing his/her research results, needs to know all the details on that particular topic. He or she needs to execute the work by bibliographic prospect which can be done manually or virtually. This requires an exhaustive search of the literature and compilation of bibliographies. This study implies only two libraries viz. University of North Bengal and Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya are initiating the bibliographic services.

Indexing and abstracting service is another significant part in the modern library services. Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidayalaya library assigns all the indexes in dissertation and theses in e-form. The knowledge dissemination process is done through CAB abstract and abstracting of all the research oriented works such as theses or dissertations. University of Gour Banga doesn't have this service yet, but it will be processed soon.

E-Resources and Services

Table 7: E-resource and Services

Name of the University	E-resource provider	Online Archives	Digitized resources (Theses)	E-resources / Online Resources
University of North Bengal	UGC INFONET	Shodhganga (Theses)	1262	8500
University of Gour Banga	No	Under Process	07	Under Process
Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyal aya	J-Gate/Springer link	Agrifact, Krishikosh	200	2000

Now-a-days, E-resources dominate in every division of library services. The concept of digitization is emerging high in the library and it is marching to the digital environment. Users are aware of e-access of the information through various platforms which are some of publishers, archives, online databases, consortia, etc. University of North Bengal Library generally embodied with UGC-Infonet consortia and organized with Shodhganga by which all the submitted theses papers can be accessed (1360). This study also denotes that the central library of University of Gour Banga is still not providing these services as the work under processing and all the e-resource services will be provided soon respectively. Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya is the member of CeRA, which is formed with the objectives of subscribing to journals; developing a science citation index facility for evaluation of scientific publications (Agri-informatics & crop-informatics). Users are benefitted by J-Gate, which is the largest gateway of e-journal accessing. As the table shows more than 2000 e-journals are being corresponded with this central library. On the other hand online archive like Agrifact and theses or dissertation archives like ETD, Krishiprabha is the prominent countenance of the library services of UBKV. For

strengthening the Digital Library services IACR has initiated open access aspect through e-granthya/krishiprabha.

Other Services

Other services like reprography, printing, document delivery service, resource sharing, Inter Library Loan (at a nominal) etc. basically done by the libraries. University of Gour Banga is committed with Malda District library by Inter Library Loan activities. Uttar Banga Krishi Viswasvidyalaya provides technical enquiry service through information technology centres. The library also provides Union Catalogue of Periodicals with the collaboration of other agriculture universities, extension services like user orientation program, seminars on the use of information resource. The central library of University of North Bengal provides resource sharing, bibliographic information services, communication and technology based services, news summaries and many more. Specialized services like seminars, career guidance are also being done in the library.

Conclusion

The findings of this study focused on the services of three selected University libraries in North Bengal. The highlighted areas of the present study are library collections both (printed and non-printed), e-resources, ICT infrastructure, utilization of library management software, impact of ICT based library services. The library services are designed for the users who can reach their goal prosperously. Library organizes all the resource materials for easy and handy use by cataloguing, classifying and self arrangement. Library staff guides the users in finding materials and using library resources. All the three libraries are concerned with various specialised and condensed services. This study also possesses that University libraries extend activities to other campuses of Universities, such as University of North

Bengal facilitates their services to Jalpaiguri campus. The libraries are also featured with extension activities like user awareness, workshops on library development and retrieval services. It clearly shows that how the libraries are working in the field of knowledge dissemination system.

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