

NAAC BASED BEST PRACTICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES AND KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE CENTRES: AT A GLANCE

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Abstract : *This paper is mainly focused on various best practices to be followed by academic library. It discusses importance of introducing best practices in academic library to enable it to improve its process and activities, optimize resource utilization and deliver high quality, efficient services to library users. The article throws light on the various best practices to be followed in Academic Libraries and Information Centers. The present paper also highlight NAAC best practices. Paper also mention IT based best practices like Web page, Blogs, Wikis Virtual library tour, E-alert services, etc. Paper also mentions General Library practices & Library extension services. This paper will be useful guide to other libraries to get an idea about various ways & practices can be adopted in their libraries for creating an effective library management.*

Keywords : *Academic Libraries, Knowledge Resource Centers, College Library, Best Practices, National Board of Accreditation and Assessment (NAAC), E-resources and Library services.*

Introduction :

In the present day scenario the fast- accelerate educational innovations become necessary for continuous review and improvement of the overall functions of the library and information centers. In the present age of information explosion the libraries and information resource centre play not just an important learning-support function, but the library itself has been emerging as a site of learning, sometimes more important than even the class -room.

College form the integral part of Higher Education and libraries in colleges are the primary source for learning process. The college library is a connecting link between teaching and learning as well as place which supplements its resources what is beyond scope of class room. Academic Libraries and Information Centers play an important role in the educational history of both the students as well as faculty members. It serves the users by providing specific information to the user. But how far the Academic Libraries and Information Centers are successful in implementing their goals into its reality is a big question. There must be some agency to have a proper vigilance to rectify the emerging needs, and for this kind of purpose. NAAC was established for maintaining quality education of the institutions.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have made a tremendous impact on the functions of the academic libraries and knowledge resource centre. The developments

and changes in the ICT have changed the user's expectations from the academic libraries in different ways. The ways to build a library collection and offer services to the end users vary from the recent to past exercises.

1. Definition Of Best Practices :

ODLIS (Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science) describes best practices as follows: “In the application of theory to real-life situations, procedures that, when properly applied, consistently yield superior results and are therefore used as reference points in evaluating the effectiveness of alternative methods of accomplishing the same task. Best practices are identified by examining empirical evidence of success.”

Need for best practices in Library :

Best practices are developed in the library for following purpose.

- ❖ To execute the five laws of library science.
- ❖ To magnetize & meet the user demand.
- ❖ To maximize the utilization of library.
- ❖ To identify the needs of the users.
- ❖ To market library services and products.

According to National Board of Accreditation and Assessment (NAAC) “Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solve a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations. Institutional excellence is the aggregate of the best practices followed in different areas of institutional activities.”

From above definition, best practice means, it is a method or technique used to improve the current workflow of an organization to obtain its objectives effectively & with predetermined standards.

2. NAAC Based Best Practices in Library :

The best practices suggested by the NAAC in its quality indicators in Library and Information services are as listed below.

- ⊗ Computerization of Library with standard Software.
- ⊗ Inclusion of Sufficient information about the library in the college prospectus.
- ⊗ Compiling user statistics.
- ⊗ Displaying newspaper clipping on the notice board periodically.
- ⊗ Career/ Employment information services.
- ⊗ Internet facilities to different user groups.
- ⊗ Information Literacy programs.
- ⊗ Suggestion box and timely response.
- ⊗ Displaying new arrivals and circulating a list of those to academic departments.
- ⊗ Conducting book exhibitions on different occasions.

- ⊗ Organizing book talks.
- ⊗ Instituting Annual Best User Award for students.
- ⊗ Organizing competitions annually.
- ⊗ Conducting user surveys periodically.

3.1 General Best Practices :

Following are additional practices to be conducted in library as a routine practice.

- ❖ Regular Library Advisory Committee Meeting.
- ❖ Binding of books & periodical Volumes.
- ❖ Inclusive of Library Information in prospects & College Websites.
- ❖ Intercom facility for easy communication among various departments.
- ❖ Pasting of barcode, spine label and stamping in a definite place on the books.
- ❖ Question sets of previous examinations.
- ❖ Library Calendar of Activity & Events.
- ❖ Use of pesticides for keeping away book worm & damage of books.

3.2 Benefits of Internet Facility in the Library :

- The readers are provided with available up-to-date knowledge with Internet facility. Their educational needs have fulfilled.
- The readers are benefitted with online resources by Internet.
- Students make use of Internet facility for filling up e-scholarship forms, to use NLIST journals, e-books, to check emails, to get information from govt. websites, to fill online job application forms, to check results online, etc
- The students make use of Internet to fill up UPSC, MPSC, SET, NET, Enrollment, E-Scholarship forms, Banking Recruitment applications, Railway Recruitment applications, other online forms, etc.
- The teachers get information about the research made in their concerned subjects.
- Teachers to take help from internet sources in their teaching learning methods and reading materials.
- The users of the library are making use of internet on the large scale.

3.3 A few Examples of Experience of Best Practices in Academic and Research Libraries :

1. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan writes that he brought to the notice of Sir C.V. Raman about Raman Effect which was published in a foreign journal. This incident happened in Madras University Library in early thirties. Sir C.V. Raman received the Nobel Prize for his work on the scattering of light which is called Raman scattering or Raman Effect.
2. Mr. T.N. Chaturvedi, former Governor of Karnataka narrated the experience about when he approached Prof. D.N. Marshall, Librarian Bombay University for a book from his Library. Prof. Marshall sent him the book immediately without waiting whether his library rules permitted him or not. Mr. T.N. Chaturvedi wrote to many

university libraries. He received negative reply from them saying that they have the book in the library but their rules do not permit them to send the book

3. Prof. P.K. Mehta, former Pro Vice-chancellor of IGNOU narrates the incident in 1970 when he wrote to Dr. B. Anderson, Librarian of Bombay University Library that he would like to make use of the library and mentioning his area of research work. Prompt reply came from Dr. B. Anderson. Prof. Mehta went to the library and met the librarian immediately. Dr. B. Anderson gave him three typed papers and told, “ This is the list of books available in our library which, I think are relevant to the area of your work “ and told him please feel free to contact me if you have any difficulty or need of any assistance. Prof. P.K. Mehta spent few weeks in the library. Prof. P.K. Mehta comments “A library is provision and every provision is judged on the basis of three parameters: Availability, Accessibility and Utilization”.

4. Quality Indicators For The Library :

The details relates to the library users, services offered, facilities, collection, rules, budget, usage of services, extension activities etc. and at every step students and teachers are the party in complying with it. In other words we can say that involvement and support of these elements play a crucial role in the self-study report writing exercise. Hence maintenance of daily record needs serious attention. Library rules and the awareness among the users combined with alertness on the part of the library staff becomes the major requirements. It is true that libraries largely support learning, teaching and research processes in institutions. The set of questions framed for the library focuses on library infrastructure, collection, management and services. Extension activities and best practices are also covered. This can be explained in more details by dividing these questions into different headings.

5. Utilization Of The Library Services :

To check the utilization of the available services, various details about the working hours of the library (including Sundays and holidays, and after and before the class hours, during examination) are noted. Facilities like computers and internet connectivity, reprographic service, status of library automation, open access system, number of books issued daily, fine etc are the key questions. Various services are listed in the guidelines like circulation, clippings, bibliographic services etc. Inter library loan service, user orientation and information literacy programs are to be explained. Services used are evaluated through different data like average no. of books circulated, no. of reference queries received, no. of students visiting library, no. of teachers visiting library, display of new arrivals, awareness services etc.

6. Best Practices To Enhance Academic Activities :

In the library context, the best practice may be those services through which the users are able to explore more resources and facilities from the library. This includes steps taken by the library to attract more users by creating suitable academic information environment. Here library is expected to focus on users needs while introducing new services and facilities to them. Guidelines speak about the best practices in relation to new developments in the field.

Service introduced as a best practice today may turn in to an essential one. Previously internet access in the library was considered as the best practice but today it has become an essential service.

Best practices questions includes computerization of library with standard digital software, inclusion of sufficient information about the library in the college prospectus, compiling student/teacher attendance statistics and locating the same on the notice board, displaying newspaper clippings on the notice board periodically, career employment informationservices, internet facilities, information literacy programs, suggestion box, displaying new arrivals, circulating a list of those to academic departments, conducting book exhibitions on different occasions, organizing book talks, instituting annual best user award for students, best intellectual library award, organizing competitions annually and conducting user surveys periodically.

7. **Traditional Best Practices :**

- a. **Book Exhibition** : Arrange book exhibition on different occasion (i.e. National Library Week, World Copyright Day, Independence Day etc.) display rare books, newly added books or books of particular subject which are available in the library. This will lead to increased awareness among readers about knowledge wealth the library possess they can demand the books accordingly.
- b. **Library Hour** : Library should start Library hour for students, It made compulsory for all the students by adding it in their daily class schedule. In Library hour students should. Visit the library for spending an hour in the library for reading materials. By keeping an hour in their time table students spend an hour in the library which brings them closer to the reading materials, indirectly it helps to increase reading habits to of students.
- c. **Orientation Programme** : Orientation is one of the best practices to create awareness among the students about the library resources, services good reading habits and activities for maximum utilization of the library. The orientation helps & useful to the fresh students at the beginning of each academic year about the importance of the library, exposing the students to its various library services.
- d. **New Arrivals** : Putting the list of newly available books on notice board will make the reader aware about the new reading material so that accordingly he could demand for those new books & get it.
- e. **Library Brochure** : It is one of the important sources for creating exactitude about the library environment, services & collection of the library students can be provided the information broacher at the time of Admission. The information brochures include information about the library facilities, like Xerox, internet etc, latest publications, latest editions to the library, CD / DVD list, book bank facilities, library rules & regulations, electronic resources & online information services etc.
- f. **Book Reviews** : User should asked to read all the book and give his review on book. At the end Librarian should collect it & displays it on notice board under the name of reviewer.

- g. **Readers Club** : Library should give its facility to outside reader campus. Library also establish a reader club. This club maintain good relation between library & outside users.
- h. **Library short Term course** : The aim of this practice is to create understanding about library, use of ICT equipment in library & to know the mechanics of library. For this library should organize a two to three months duration course for the benefit of user community. In this course, feeding of data entry for books, creating reader profiles, generating barcode printing & scanning the photo of reducing etc training should be given.
- i. **Training to use E-Resource** : Training programmes should be conduct for student, teacher every year for two to three days as per their need. In this programme, how to find out library books by using Library OPAC, use of library consortiums, free online journals (DOAJ), link to various useful websites etc. training should be given so that library resources, services use more effectively & efficiently.
- j. **Indexing & Abstracting Services** : An indexing and abstracting service is a service that provides shortening or summarizing of particular documents and assigning of descriptors for referencing documents.
- k. **Staff User Meet** : The libraries may organize activities to staff users, which involving to work & share their ideas with each other relating to the new information services & their requirements. This helps to keep abreast the staff & the users about the latest developments & trends in library principles & practices, there by bridging the gap between the staff & users for this arrange various activities such as workshops, seminars and guest lectures.
- l. **Best Library user Award** : This practice should encourage students/ staff to make maximum use of library resources & services for every academic year.
- m. **Carrier Guidance Cell** : User comes to library for searching information regarding their carrier or educational development. Today competition is going on top level, students must aware of this situation. In this context Library and Librarian should play a important role to solve their problems. Library should have very rich collection of competitive examination. Library should invite to guest lecturer for guiding to users for bright carrier.
- 8. ICT Based Best Practices :**
- a) **Computerized Library with Library Software** : Software consists of the stepby-step instructions that tell the computer what to do. In a University Library, the most common computer software used are library automation software, database management software, antivirus software and application software. Many software packages for various applications in the field of library & information services and management are New Gen Lib, Autolib, SOUL, LIBSYS, KOHA etc. used for automation purposes.
- b) **Library Webpage** : A library website provides a library with a website to offer its services and to tell its story to its community. In most of the library website online catalogue is included. A library web page or Universal Resource Locator (URL) facilitates single window access to various web enabled library services.

- c) **Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)** : It is the computer form of library catalogue to access materials in the library. It is an online database of materials held by a library or group of libraries. It is a computerized library catalogue available to the public. Most OPACs are accessible over the Internet to users all over the world.
- d) **Electronic Document Delivery Services** : At present, a document delivery service typically involves a combination of paper, digital and electronic media; document delivery is a "hybrid" medium. Libraries are implementing ICT based interlibrary lending system using electronic networks to deliver copies of journal articles and other documents in digital format [mainly in Portable Document Format (PDF)] to library users' desktops.
- e) **CAS & SDI Services** : A selection of current-awareness services in the form of Table of contents' (TOC) alerts, List of new arrivals of journals and Books, Press Clippings, Research Digest, including Abstracting and Indexing Service have been started by the library. Selective Dissemination of Information refers to tools and resources used to keep a user informed of new resources on specified topics.
- f) **Electronic Mail (E-mail)** : This medium can also be used to send and receive mails. This is commonly and widely used with the internet facilities. E-mail is very useful for sending messages to and from remote areas with enhanced network. Further, it is also useful in various aspects of library environment. Thus, it may be stated that e-mail may play a significant role in information dissemination services.
- g) **Electronic Resources** : The e-Resources on magnetic & optical media have a vast impact on the collections of university libraries. The commonly available electronic resources are accessed electronically through traditional medias like CDRoms, or through internet as electronic journal, online database databases, eBook, or in the form of OPACs, blogs, wikis, podcasts, etc.
- h) **Institutional Repository** : An institutional repository is an online archive for collecting, preserving, and disseminating digital copies of the intellectual output of an institution. Library should develop institutional repository of Question paper, Syllabus, Research papers, Notes, carrier guidance etc can be made available for user community.

9. Conclusion :

The best practices are help for improving quality of library services. The best practices adopted in academic institutes should bridge the gap between library collection & user community for maximum utilization of the resources. Library adopted various best practices in its administration, management, collection & services, extent of the use of services and use of technology. The technology based services are essential for providing up-to-date information to user community. In its effective implementation that make significant change in enhancing the use of information sources/services and users satisfaction level. The above best practices by every academic institution library creates its own image in the mind of students, faculty & society

NAAC policy helps in developing the Academic Libraries and Information Centers to make modernize and to provide good standard service to users. This is the best methodology

for measuring themselves to find deficiency to enhance the library services, which support get maximum score based on certain criteria's, this paper clearly explains importance in maintaining the library to full fill the quality for the NAAC policy.

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