CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

Information is one of the powerful tools for the development of the society. According to Chandel, it is a valuable component for initiating and executing the logistics for research and development activities to ensure productive and gainful operation. (Chandel, 2003: 13)

Library and information service is not something very new; rather it started with the inception of education among the masses. The human civilization has gone through different waves of social changes at different stages. The age of information is one of such remarkable phases in terms of social changes in human civilization.

The tremendous development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) encompassing the entire globe has fashioned a new dimension in the functioning of the academic libraries of higher educational institutions of the world. The development of the World Wide Web, internet, electronic media and modern information technologies have changed the visions of library users about their expectations from academic libraries and librarians of these institutions in many different ways. To meet the need of the user, enrichment by way of collection of resources of academic libraries were one of the essential practices since its inception. Presently, the academic libraries are required to adopt value based services and best practices to meet the end users demand effectively.

Library and information services in a higher education institution play a significant role in enhancing the quality of academic and research environment. A well-equipped and well-managed library is a dissemination centre of knowledge and
hence a pillar of the knowledge society we have begun to talk about. It is said that education without library services is like a body without the soul. So, the academic libraries are expected to take a proactive role to meet the challenge of the 21st century education. As such, the librarians of the academic libraries have an essential role to play in fulfilling the mission and vision of their organizations.

The University Libraries are playing a pivotal role in shaping and nurturing the academic fraternity by providing the most specific, relevant and exhaustive information thereby providing their worth and existence and perhaps being rightly called as the heart of the university. A library is more important than a university because a library can function without a university whereas a university cannot function without a library said Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Ex President of India, while inaugurating the Eighth World Book Fair on 5 February, 1988 in New Delhi. (Bhatt, 2011,p9)

The role of the libraries and information system in the new millennium has been defined by different scholars and thinkers. One of the views which has been thought to be just and apt is like the following:

“The libraries of 21st century have to conceive not merely as the store house of knowledge, but an effective mechanism to facilitate dissemination of knowledge, promoting information and knowledge sharing, while, at the same time, supporting the growth of knowledge and the growth of intellectual property. In essence, the libraries of 21st century have to be an effective support mechanism for both the dissemination as well as cultivation of knowledge. The libraries of 21st
century should facilitate the transition of today’s literate society to a knowledge based society of tomorrow. This undoubtedly requires that the libraries and education system in 21st century should take advantage of the development in the information technology. We have to go beyond automation of libraries. We have to create local area networks, national networks and link our local and national networks to the global network of libraries and information system so as to facilitate global access of knowledge and promote information and knowledge sharing.” (P.B.Sharma, 2005, p.16)

The Government of India has recognized the importance of the libraries and have been making provisions for its development in the five year plans. With this objective in view, various commissions have been set up by the Government of India from time to time which has given special emphasis on the library services and its contribution in the furtherance of several activities of national development.

Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) emphasized on annual grant, open access system, working hours, organization of library staff, steps to make students book conscious and the need to award grants to teachers to buy books etc. in its recommendations. There have been recommendations emphasizing strengthening of reference services, documentation services, bibliographic services in order to promote research among the faculty and students, making libraries proper centre for research activities and raising of standard of services. The commission also emphasized on the need and importance of well qualified staff in the libraries of higher educational institutions.
S. R. Ranganathan Committee (1957) strongly recommended the introduction of Open Access System in every academic library. Ranganathan emphasized in his report on the preparation of the union catalogue of books and list of periodicals.

Kothari Commission (1964-66) also realized the significant role of libraries in education and warned the educationists that, “No new university, college or department should be set up 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”. The Kothari Commission also recommended the specific measures for the development of the library- norms for financial support, long range planning for library development, need for the establishment of a well equipped library before the starting of a university, college or department, suitable phasing over the library grant, encouraging the students in the use of books, interdisciplinary communication and documentation services in libraries etc. (Chandel, 2003: 29)

National Knowledge Commission (NKC) of India (2005) recommended some important steps relating to library and its services to create sustainable knowledge in the country. Some of the recommendations of National Knowledge Commission (NKC) of India were to-

- Set up a national commission on libraries
- Prepare a national census of all libraries
- Re-access staffing of libraries
- Set up a central library fund
- Modernize library management
- Encourage greater community participation in library management
- Promote ICT application in all libraries
The NKC has basically focused on access to knowledge, concept of knowledge, creation of knowledge, application of knowledge and services of knowledge, which are termed as the focal areas of knowledge pentagon.

The Murthy Committee Report on ‘Corporate Participation in Higher Education’ (Murthy, 2012) opined that the quality of higher education has got deteriorated due to several factors. Among these, inadequate library facility in the higher education institutions is a major one. The report states, “The system is plagued with … and ill-equipped libraries. As per the FICCI-E&Y report, the number of books per student in the library of an average higher education institution in India is just 9 compared with 53 at IIT Bombay and 810 at Harvard University”.

There are different government agencies in India like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) etc. to regulate the system of higher education in India. The Government of India has taken several measures to improve the quality of education by instituting quality control organizations like National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), AICTE, ICAR, and Distance Education Council (DEC) etc. The University Grants Commission (UGC) and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India have been trying to develop the quality of library services of higher education institutions since its inception. The UGC has been providing financial grants liberally to strengthen libraries and its parent organizations. The establishment of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 is a path breaking attempt to consolidate quality and to establish ‘national
standards’ in higher education. The NAAC has been framing some guidelines on quality indicators to facilitate assessment of higher education institutions as well as the libraries and information services of the institutions.

In order to ensure quality services in the academic libraries across the globe, higher education institutions have made unyielding efforts in adopting quality models and institutional self-assessment approaches. In the United States, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), and in the United Kingdom, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model has been adopted for the higher education sector.

Quality is the term used synonymously for excellence. Academic libraries are known as the heart of academic institutions. The present day academic libraries are dedicated to provide high quality of service to its users. Almost all such libraries have taken some measures to keep pace with the fast moving new technological development. Nowadays, users of the library demand quicker and better services. As such, the success of a library can be rated on the basis of the appropriate timely services provided to its users.

The libraries of higher education institutions are service organizations dedicated to their users. The libraries and library professionals need to shoulder the responsibility of merging the information revolution in an increasing competitive environment by improving the ways and formulating a strategic plan and focus on providing the best services possible and reaching a state of continuous improvement.

To evaluate the quality of library and information service, different quality assessment tools have been adopted by the experts of management and professionals of library and information science. Total Quality Management (TQM), ISO:9000,
Kaizen, SERVQUAL, LibQUAL+™ etc. are some of the tools used in the libraries for the purpose.

Applying the consumer behavior theory in education, we can regard the students as consumers looking for the services. Therefore, the students have the right to obtain the best of information. Moreover, there are different types of consumers: the students, faculties and staff members are consumers purchasing the services provided by the library. As such, the users of the library have the right to obtain the best quality services to fulfill their expectations.

Against such a backdrop, what is being proposed is to look into the libraries of higher education institutions of upper Assam. The college libraries of higher education institutions of this area are functioning reportedly in an unsatisfactory manner. The libraries of the region are facing lots of challenges in the way of providing different services to its users. To live up to the principle of library and information science-“Right information to right person at right time” and to cope up with the present day demand of the customers, the college libraries should provide quality library and information services to its clientele. To provide the quality service in the academic libraries of higher education institutions, librarians and the staff of the library should be well aware of the quality and the management of quality services. So, an attempt is made in this study to know the quality awareness and quality management level of librarians of the higher education institutions of upper Assam. In order to have a clear idea of what should be, let us sum up what higher education ideally should be which in turn will provide the context for the proposed study since libraries covered by the study is an essential part of it.
1.1. SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA

Indian higher education has a long tradition tracing back to several centuries with universities like Nalanda and Takshashila. In India, there were some other well-known educational institutions like Vallabhi (in Gujarat), Vikramshila (in Bihar), Nadia and Mithila during the medieval times. Other institutions known as *tols* in Bengal also carried on the tradition of higher education. Some Muslim rulers patronized and established the *madrasas*, which had imparted higher education. Out of those, *madrasa* founded by Muhammad Ghori at Ajmir and *madrasa-e-mozzi* founded by Iltutmish were well known.

The first modern college in India was established in 1781, followed by the Sanskrit College of Banaras in 1792, and the Hindu College of Calcutta (1817). All these were established by the East India Company. The Christian missionaries also opened colleges, mostly in Bengal, and the total number of colleges rose to 28 in the year 1855. (Hasan, 2010:p242)

The modern higher education system in India began with the introduction of western education in India. The East India Company established three universities, one each in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. After independence, there has been a notable increase in number of universities / university level institutions and colleges in India. At the time of independence of India, there were only 20 universities and 500 colleges with 2.1 lakh students in the higher education system. These institutions in India have now increased to 523 universities and 32,964 colleges as on 31.03.2011. By the end of 31.03.2012, the numbers of university and university level institutions in India increased to 574 and the number of colleges increased to 35,539 as shown in Table-1.1 below.
Table-1.1: Category wise number of universities/ university level institutions and colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Type of Institutions</th>
<th>Number of Institutions (As on 31.03.2011)</th>
<th>Number of Institutions (As on 31.03.2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Central Universities</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>State Universities</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>State Private Universities</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Institutions established through State Legislation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Institutions Deemed to be Universities</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Colleges</strong></td>
<td><strong>523</strong></td>
<td><strong>574</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32,964</td>
<td>35,539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: UGC Annual Report: 2011-2012)

The number of university and university level institutions of different states of North East India as per UGC annual report 2012-13 is given below in Table-1.2.

Table-1.2: Number of university and university level institutions in North East India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>No of Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>State</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: UGC Annual Report, 2012-13)
1.2. SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ASSAM

Education and to be more precise, higher education institutions in Assam have reached the present day status through many twists and turns. “Collegiate education in Assam had its beginning in 1866: when the first year classes in arts were instituted in the Gauhati Seminary (the present Cotton Collegiate School). It was affiliated to the Calcutta University. Due to continued poor result in the university examination, the college classes were abolished after ten years.” (Saikia: 1981, p-93)

The modern higher education system of Assam started with the establishment of Murari Chand College on 27 June 1892 at Sylhet, presently in Bangladesh. On 1st of April 1912, the college became fully government administered and got affiliated to the University of Calcutta.

Cotton College, the nerve centre of higher education of north eastern region was established in the year 1901 in Assam after the formal approval of government of India and of Calcutta University. One year prior the establishment of this college i.e. in the year 1900, a medical school (Berry White Medical School) was established at Dibrugarh in Assam during the rule of the Imperial Government of British India, under the provision of the Medical Act, 1886.

During the first part of the 20th century, a number of colleges were founded by different private bodies including the Christian Missionaries. In 1914, the Earle Law College was founded in Guwahati.

Hereafter, we find that quite a good number of educational institutions came up in undivided Assam. The following table (Table-1.3) will provide a picture of this.
Table-1.3: Some important HEIs of Assam established before independence of India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of establishment</th>
<th>Name of the HEI</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>J. B. College</td>
<td>Jorhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>St. Anthony College</td>
<td>Shillong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Lady Keane College</td>
<td>Shillong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>St. Edmands College</td>
<td>Shillong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Gurucharan College</td>
<td>Silchar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Handique Girls’ College</td>
<td>Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>M.C. College</td>
<td>Borpeta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>B. Baruah College</td>
<td>Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Nowgong College</td>
<td>Nowgaon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>D H S K College</td>
<td>Dibrugarh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Nalbari College</td>
<td>Nalbari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Darrang College</td>
<td>Darrang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>B N College</td>
<td>Dhubri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presently there are 5 general Government colleges, 295 provincialised general (B.A./ B.Sc./ B.Com.) colleges, 100 Non-Govt. colleges, 466 Junior colleges in Assam. Apart from various central, state and private universities, there are 7 research institutions, 2 Agriculture and Forestry institutions, 2 Veterinary institutions, 14 Management institutions, 18 Technology and Engineering colleges (including central/state and private), 23 Medical colleges (including Homeo / Ayurvedic / Dental / Pharmacy /Nursing colleges), 20 GNM Nursing Institute, 17 ANM training college and 21 Government and Non-Government colleges in the state. Moreover, 10
Polytechnic institutions, 3 Architecture and Hotel management institutions and a good number of Teachers’ Training Institutions are available in Assam. (Source: Statistical Hand Book-Assam : 2015, p.329)

1.3. LIBRARY

A Library is a temple of knowledge. According to the father of Library Science, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, ‘A Library is a public institution or establishment charged with the care of the collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighbourhood into a habitual library gore and reader of books’. (S R Ranganathan. 1940 : 25)

Libraries are the store house of knowledge where documents and records are kept in a systematic manner. A modern library with distinct expectations is regarded as a service Institution with the objective of enabling the users to make the most effective use of the resources and services of the libraries.

A library is a repository of knowledge drawn from the great philosophers, thinkers and intellectuals of the past and the present. The libraries make it available in the form of documents. A well equipped and well managed library in that way is the foundation of modern educational structure. Education and library services always go together and cannot be separated from each other. In fact, the library is a learning center which contains resources in a systematic manner for the beneficial use of the users. The great thinkers and the great teachers are sitting in the library stack room in the form of books to teach the user of the library about their lifelong experiences and wisdom.
A modern library, with such noble objectives is regarded as a service institution. It’s aim is to enable the users to make the most effective use of the resources and services.

Some of the general aims that could be accomplished through library experiences are -

a. Stimulating intellectual curiosity
b. Familiarizing students with journals
c. Developing ability to select reference material
d. Developing ability of taking notes independently
e. Inculcating correct reading habit
f. To develop ability to tackle problem through self study

1.3.1. COLLEGE LIBRARY

The college library is an institution which provides learning and knowledge resources for 10+2 level and bachelor degree courses generally.

According to Reitz (2005), a “College library” is a type of academic library maintained by an independent four-year college, or by one of several colleges with a large university, for the use of students and faculty.

College libraries are information centers established in support of the mission of the college to generate knowledge, equip students, teaching and non-teaching members of the college with knowledge in order to serve the society and take forward the well being of mankind. As such the college libraries are the treasure trove of knowledge which cater to the needs of all those who are directly associated with the mainstream of higher education. The main function of a college library, therefore, is to-
serve the community of the college
- serve the alumni of the college
- influence the society for the expansion of knowledge and help the citizens
to satisfy their quest for truth

In such a way, the first and foremost function of the college library is to assist
its parent organization to accomplish its mission. As an integral part of the college,
the library serves not only as source of information to the members of teaching staff
but as means to improve a teaching technique. A college library collects, preserves,
organizes, interprets and makes available printed as well as audio-visual materials and
help the interpretation of the extension activities for socio-economic, cultural,
educational, and political development of the students.

1.3.2. OBJECTIVE OF COLLEGE LIBRARY

The following are the objectives of the college library-

a. To promote the records of human knowledge and keep them up to date
   in accordance with the growing needs and requirements of today and
tomorrow
b. To remind the faculty members of the various opportunities for using
   library resources in teaching
c. To facilitate an individual and a group of readers in the use of library
   resources with practical demonstration on how to seek the information
d. To provide necessary resources for staffs and students
e. To assist the teaching staff in organizing the synthetic methods of
   teachings
f. To bring the documents to the notice of students and the teaching faculty together under environment which stimulate reading for pleasure, self realization, personal growth and development and the cultivation of intellectual excellence.

1.4. QUALITY

It is a very difficult task to define quality since it has myriads of interpretations. The word quality comes from the Latin word *qualis* meaning *what kind of*. Quality can be defined as that which satisfies and exceeds customers’ needs and wants. The definition of quality depends on the mental and intellectual preoccupations of the thinkers defining it as well. Most consumers have a difficult time defining quality, but they know it when they find it. There is a whole lot of definitions of quality. Crosby (1979) defines quality as “conformance to requirement” while Juran and Gryna (1980) define quality as “fitness for use”. Deming (1986) defines it as “a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability at low cost and suited to the market”.

For Harmann and Meek (2000), quality in the context of higher education can be defined as judgment about the level of goal achievement and the value and worth of that achievement.

Harvey and Green (1993) explained quality as a ‘relative concept’. Quality is relative to the user of the term and the circumstances in which it is involved. It means different things to different people. This also raises the issue of whose quality? (Harvey and Green, 1993:10).

American Society for Quality defines that “Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy given need”.

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American Heritage dictionary (1996) defines quality as an inherent or distinguishing characteristic, a degree or grade of excellence.

According to Sivakumar, B. & Dominic, J. (2013), “Quality is primarily concerned with meeting the wants and needs of customers. One of the key and enduring definitions is that ‘quality is fitness for purpose’. Quality can also be described as doing the right thing, in the right way on right time as well as doing it right the first time and doing it right every time. In the context of the library, it can be described as:

- **Q** - Quest for excellence of knowledge
- **U** - Understanding the user's need
- **A** - Actions to achieve user's demand
- **L** - Leadership quality for Librarian
- **I** - Involving all staff
- **T** - Team spirit in achieving common goals
- **Y** - Yardstick to measure progress” (Sivakumar & Dominic, 2013)

Quality is a dynamic phenomenon too. It is improved simultaneously with the development of new technology and management techniques.

1.5. MANAGEMENT

Management has been defined in the glossaries as the process of coordinating the total resources of an organization or institution towards the accomplishment of the desired goals of that institution through the execution of a group of interrelated functions such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling.

Management refers to maximum or proper utilisation and making the best use of limited and scarce resources.
According to Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (Glasgow (UK), Harper Collins, 2001) (i) Management is the control and organizing of a business or other organization; (ii) Management is the way people control different parts of their lives.

According to Oxford Learners Dictionary, (Sixth Ed., 2000) Management is the act of skill of dealing with people or situation in a successful way.

In the context with the objectives of a body of management or their activities in an institution or functions irrespective of nature of the organization or institution, the following are the seven basic elements as L. Gulic and L Urwick have listed –

P – Planning
O – Organizing
S – Staffing
D – Directing
CO – Coordinating
R – Reporting
B – Budgeting

1.5.1. LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

In a higher educational institution, the library is another teaching learning centre for both the students and faculties. A well managed library encourages its users to make good contact with the resources available in the library. Library is a service organization which is different from the other profit making organizations. As it is basically a non-profit organization, so, the management of the library should be carried out very judiciously.
Library users in today’s context demand effective and efficient services. It is the duty of the library professionals to meet the expectations of the users which is a challenging task for the library professionals. To manage a library in a conventional way is becoming more and more difficult as information has started to flow in a variety of forms and the users are also having different approaches to information. As such, modernization is inevitable.

Advancement of the technology has transformed the traditional libraries to hybrid libraries. Development of electronic and digital libraries has changed these to what has emerged as libraries without walls. As a result, the libraries are gateways to the world’s knowledge in a transformed way.

The use of modern information technology in an organization like library has to be systematic. Libraries of higher education institutions need an environment that is conducive to the best practices. Digitization of more and more information has opened new avenues to optimise user services. For this, the library professionals must manage the library system in a user friendly way.

The fundamental tasks in library management includes

- Planning the acquisition of materials
- Processing of materials
- Storage and preservation of materials
- Borrowing materials
- Administering the library tools and general functions of library.
- Users services
1.5.2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN LIBRARY

Today, all kinds of organizations are becoming customer oriented organizations. So, they need to offer quality products and services to their customers. Quality management is that aspect of the overall management that determines and implements quality policy.

The first and foremost aim of an academic library of higher education institution is to provide the academic assistance and to offer support in reading, research and other academic activities/programmes of its parent organization. Although, an academic library is a service organization, it is different from other manufacturing organizations. The customers of academic libraries are generally students, academicians, research scholars, teaching and non-teaching staff of the institution/organization. In a manufacturing house, customers do not have direct contact i.e. the customer is remote, whereas in a service organization like academic library, the producer and the customer meet face to face. In such type of organizations, the customer’s satisfaction becomes a tangible index of how the things are managed.

When quality of library services is being discussed, one needs to take into account not just the kind of reading material available in the library but also the availability of reading rooms, appropriate furniture, defined library schedules, circulation of all types of reading materials, the task of developing reading as a virtue, etc. A systematic and structured approach towards the library services will result in the library becoming the focal point of academics and centre of holistic education of the students. (Kumbar, 2012:14)
Quality management of an academic library depends on the skills and expertise of the librarian and the staff of the library. They must understand to design various services according to need based on availability of resources. The overall quality must be the concern of everyone who works there.

They must find out what the readers want and concentrate upon providing it. Dabas (2008) suggested 3As to define quality in libraries. These are –

i) Accessibility: - stands for both building and equipment and staff, which include ease, convenience, comfort, excitement and interest in using printed, electronic and online information resources.

ii) Availability:- is the proportion of documents made available to users on request- it implies physical availability of all the resources,

iii) Applicability:- the accessibility and availability of library resources enhance the applicability of resources.

The library can benefit from the principles of Total Quality Management as suggested by Sirkin (1993)-

a. Ask vendors to give product demonstrations
b. Change hours of operation
c. Conduct a user survey about library services
d. Create service brochures
e. Develop an active outreach program
f. Develop user and staff training material
g. Give a new staff a through orientation
h. Implement interlibrary loan facility
i. Improve signage
j. Improve the physical layout of the library
k. Library orientation
l. Make a library brochure
m. Motivation
n. Offer electronic document statement
o. Publicize new or changed services
p. Smooth acquisition procedure
q. Target services to specific group
r. Technology used for easy information retrieval
s. Training and development of staff
t. Use flexibility in staff assignment
u. User based information services

1.6. ROLE OF LIBRARY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Education has been a primary factor in order to enhance knowledge in any age, whether it is in the form of clay tablets, stones, papyrus, leaves, printed books, magazines or information stored in the form electronic documents. There is an upsurge nowadays in production of printed and electronic documents amounting to what may be called knowledge explosion. To what extent benefit may be derived by making use of that knowledge by the individual will be determined only by the library organized to do so in any institution dedicated to dissemination of knowledge and improvement of standards. The library therefore plays vital role in this regard.

According to John Dewey, the great educationist and philosopher, “the aim of education is development of individuals to the utmost of their potential”. Education plays a significant role in the life of a nation. Education imparted at different levels helps the people to build their character and quality. The learner, learning process and
the learning situations are the three main aspects of education. The teacher is the key factor in the learning process. All these three factors are interrelated. In all these, the academic library has a crucial role to play.

An academic library has a great role in influencing and stimulating in the user’s mind and intellectual curiosity in various ways. Thus the basic function is to assist its parent body to achieve its vision. It must adequately serve the needs and requirements of the teachers and students towards reading, study and research. Library in higher education contributes to ‘teaching, research, publications, conservation of knowledge and idea, extension, service and integration’. (Wilson and Tauber, 1964: 25)

All the Education Commissions and Committees have paid due emphasis on the role and importance of the university library. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) rightly called it, ‘The heart of University’. It plays a vital role in dissemination of knowledge scattered in different sources preserved in the library. Besides, usual teaching at graduate and post graduate levels, university also gives due emphasis on research. Research without support of university library cannot be thought of. Apart from this, effective teaching and learning cannot take place without it.

The report of the Indian University Education Commission (1948-49) rightly emphasized on the importance of library. According to the report, “Teaching is a co-operative enterprise. Teachers must have the necessary tools for teaching purposes in the shape of libraries and laboratories as also the right type of students. The library is the heart of all the university's work directly so, as regards its research work, and indirectly as regards its educational work, which derives its life from its laboratories, while scientific research needs a library as well as its laboratories, in the same way as for research humanities, is both library and laboratory in one. Training in higher
branches of learning and research is mainly a question of learning as to how to use the tools, and if the library tools are not there, how can the student learn to use them? President Truman's Commission on Higher Education says, ‘The library is second only to the instructional staff in its importance for high quality instruction and research’. Both for humanistic and scientific studies, a first-class library is essential in a university”. (India University Education Commission, 1948-49)

The library functions as a knowledge navigator. Tremendous growth and explosion of information in the present era is a big challenge to its users in finding out the reliable and relevant information when needed. To meet this challenge, the library and information professionals should focus on providing the best services possible and be willing to serve its customers. It will help the users of higher education institutions to get the required/relevant information exhaustively and expeditiously at their hand.

The academic library information services and the librarian play a vital role of intermediary and facilitator to help the academicians and researchers to access, retrieve, and disseminate the required knowledge.

1.7. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Ramification of fields of academic areas, explosion of knowledge and expansion of information technology have brought both a new era and a challenge in to the field of Library and Information Science. Application of QM in college libraries can help to establish a culture of continuous improvement of related products and services. The demands of users continue to change with the passage of time. On the other hand, limited budget, insufficient manpower and infrastructure of the library are hindrances for accessing and providing all the resources and services to its users. In such a situation, librarianship is a major challenge.
Proper management and dissemination of quality information are essential for improving the quality of higher education and research. In this context, proper management of a college library can become a boon for the higher education institutions. The level of college libraries of Assam is not found to be satisfactory after 65 years of independence of India. They are still struggling to live up to expectations. So, an attempt has been made to carry out the study in this field. The findings of the present study is expected to indicate the nature of the role of college librarians and libraries in relation to quality management. The study will not only explore the present scenario but also serve as an opening for future research. It will also help the management to know about the areas to be strengthened in delivering the services by libraries.

1.8. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Quality Management in the Libraries of the provincialised colleges in Assam and as such in upper Assam is still an uphill task. However, there have been significant efforts on the part of the libraries to ensure its quality to the best possible levels within the constraints. The present study is structured to examine the quality management of college libraries and its role in higher education institutions of upper Assam. As such the study has been entitled as – Quality Management of College Libraries and its Role in Higher Education Institutions of Upper Assam.

1.9. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are -

i. To study the current status of Quality Management (QM) approaches of provincialised college libraries of Upper Assam.

ii. To study the Quality Awareness Level (QAL) among the library professionals of provincialised college libraries of Upper Assam.
iii. To study the key activities for Quality Management (QM) as initiated by the provincialised college libraries of Upper Assam.

iv. To study the users perception of quality services in the provincialised college libraries of Upper Assam.

v. To study the best practices that enhances the academic information environment and usability of the provincialised college libraries of Upper Assam.

vi. To study the quality indicators on Management and Services of provincialised College Libraries of Upper Assam.

vii. To study the present Information Communication Technology environment of the provincialised College libraries of Upper Assam.

viii. To study the benefit derived by the users from college library.

1.10. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

Best Practices: The best practices of a library are the skills or services provided by the library to motivate and attract the attention of its users to look for their information. This study is designed to find out the best practices adopted by the provincialised college libraries of the area.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) Environment: ICT is the electronic process for collecting, storing, processing and communicating information. The ICT Environment refers to different electronic processes which are available and used in a library for library automation, digitization, library website, other Information Technology tools and resources.

Automation Software: Library automation is the process to promote the library housekeeping operations with the help of computerization to help its users to
save their time. For this, specific programmes are developed to perform different services like acquisition, cataloguing, serial control, circulation, management and information services of libraries. These programmes are known as library automation software.

**Library Digitization:** Digitization of library is the process to archive the library resources / documents in digital format to be made accessible to the library users on electronic devices or over a network.

**LAN:** Local Area Network is the process through which the computer terminals and other IT tools of a library in an institution are connected with a view to communicate and share data and services.

**URL:** URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator. URL is the address of a website or of a homepage or of an information resource to understand its name and location.

**Provincialised College:** Provincialised college means not the purely government colleges but merely a government recognized college wherein services of the employees are provincialised.

The Assam College Employees (Provincialisation) Act, 2005, comes into force with effect from the 1st day of December’2005. The preamble of the act mentioned that, “Whereas it is expedient to provincialise the services of employees of the Non-Government Colleges in receipt of deficit grants-in-aid from the Government of Assam”.

According to ‘The Assam College Employees (Provincialisation) Act, 2005’, “College” means any Non-Government College in Assam in receipt of deficit grants-in-aid from the Government and imparting general education in Arts, Commerce or
Science stream in graduate level. In the Act, “Provincialisation” means taking the liabilities for payment of salaries including dearness allowance, medical allowance and such other allowance as admissible to the government employees of similar category and gratuity, pension, leave encashment, etc. as admissible, under the existing rules, to the employees of the State Government serving under the Government of Assam.

1.11. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study has been delimited as follows-

- For the present study Upper Assam, i.e. Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts have been selected as the area of study.

- The present study has been delimited only to the libraries of the provincialised colleges (covered by the notification by the Government of Assam on 22\textsuperscript{nd} December 2005, Assam Act No. XLVI of 2005) belong to Upper Assam. The colleges of professional and technical education, non-provincialised colleges, government colleges, junior colleges are not included in this study.

- The study is confined only to the general provincialised degree colleges under Dibrugarh University and belonging to the districts mentioned above. The Dibrugarh University has territorial jurisdiction over seven districts of Upper Assam, viz. Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji which are spread over both the banks of river Brahmaputra.
To study the users’ perception of quality services, teachers and students of the colleges have been selected for the study.

Quality management (QM) is that aspect of the overall management function that determines and implements the quality policy. The investigator proposes not to include all the aspects of quality management in the present study; but an attempt has been made to understand the quality awareness level of library professionals, the key activities for quality management and the users’ perception of quality services. Apart from this, the investigator has also tried to understand the best practices, quality indicators on management and services on the basis of the NAAC’s guidelines on quality indicators in library and information services: affiliate / constituent colleges and present status of ICT environment of the provincialised College libraries of the area.

1.12. AREA OF STUDY

Assam - the gateway to North East India geographically extends from 22°19’ to 28°16’ North Latitude and 89°42’ to 96°30’ East Longitude between the foot hills of the Eastern Himalayas and the Patkai and Naga Hill ranges. The state is bounded to the north by the kingdom of Bhutan and the state of Arunachal Pradesh, to the east by the states of Nagaland and Manipur, to the south by the states of Mizoram and Tripura, and to the west by Bangladesh and the states of Meghalaya and West Bengal. Its geographical area is 78438 sq km. with a population density of 398 per sq. km. The state is comprises of 27 districts with a total population of 31205576 persons. (Source: Statistical Hand Book-Assam : 2015)
Throughout centuries the identity of Assam has been closely linked with the river Brahmaputra. The eastern part of the Brahmaputra valley has come to be regarded as Upper Assam in an unofficial way. Different scholars have agreed upon this even though there is no official notification about it under the modern administrative arrangement. In the well acclaimed book *Assam and India: Fragmented Memories, Cultural Identity, and the Tai-Ahom Struggle* by Yasmin Saikia, the author says “Ujani Aham is not identified in official maps.” Further, she adds that in “administrative terms, the districts and communities of Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar, and Dibrugarh to Sadiya, and Lakhimpur all the way to Dhemaji, are loosely considered the area of Ujani Aham. This broadly coincides with the cartographical space of colonial “Upper Assam.” It is a large and heterogeneous territory…” (Saikia, Y : 2005, p.150). Prof. Md. Taher seems to come closer to this version when he writes about the agro-climatic regions of Assam. These kinds of historical and other methods of defining what is termed as Upper Assam cover the geographical areas under the academic jurisdiction of Dibrugah University as well. Hence, for the convenience of study, by Upper Assam, we mean the districts of Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji.

The geographical area of these districts taken together is 21706 sq.km. The total population of the area as per 2011 census is 76,92,728 numbers, out of which 39,26,770 nos. are male and 37,65,958 nos. are female.
Map of Assam

(Source: Assam Land and People, 2015)