Chapter 1

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1.1 Introduction

The University Library is a vital instruction and information resource for the University. It is considered to be a supplementary and complementary to the classroom instructional programme of the institution. The mission of the University Library is to provide users with information and access to information in support of scholarly activity and research, student learning, teaching excellence and curricular development.

The primary users of the University Library are undergraduate and graduate students, faculties and staff. Its collection should serve instructional, curricular and research needs of all its primary users, including those with disabilities. At the same time, exploding production of books, periodicals, audiovisual media and electronic resources, rising costs and a limited budget demand a prudent selection policy which acknowledges the need to rely on cooperative resource sharing.

Book selection policy of the University Library demands a rationalistic approach so that the different kinds of reading materials procured to the library could be put to the proper uses. This needs to be very religiously adhered to. Fund from different sources are made available for the procurement of library materials but the strict policy laid down by Melvil that is "The best reading for the largest
number at the least cost" (Chakrabarti, 1986) need to be strictly followed. Anything and everything for the library since the fund is available should not be taken into account. Hence, a broad policy for the pursuit of aim and objectives of the University Library can be properly safeguarded. Therefore in this study utmost care has been taken so that user studying as well as users' education are organized for making the procured materials usable. Different steps and policies have been suggested in this study so that the library materials acquired so far reach the hands of the users. This succinctly is the reflection of the third law of Library Science enunciated by Ranganathan (1998).

1.1.1 The University Libraries

The term 'university library' is used here to represent a library which is an integral part of an institution of higher education, a university, in which teaching and research are conducted in multi disciplines. Report of the Radhakrishnan Commission on University Education (1948-1949) stated that: "The library is the heart of all University's work, directly so, as regards its research work, and indirectly as regards its educational work which derives its life from research work. Scientific research needs a library as well as its laboratories, while for humanistic research the library is both library and laboratory in one. Training in higher branches of learning and research is mainly a question of learning how to use the tools, and if the library tools are not there how can the student learn to use them?" (University Education Commission, 1949).
The prime necessity of a university is a good library with a balanced and adequate collection, which can satisfy the needs of the university faculties and help to promote advance study and research programme. A university is rated highly by its library. No university can develop effective work, in the academic sense, without a strong library as its centre. It is the central workshop of the university which provides the students, the teachers, the scholars and research workers with the tools required for the advancement as well as the acquisition of knowledge. The programme of the university library ranges from the needs of fresh students to those of the doctoral candidates and teachers.

1.1.2 Objectives of University Libraries

A library plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of higher degree of research. The important activities of university libraries include the Collection Development, Reference Service, Circulation, Document Delivery, User Education, and Access to Electronic Resources etc. University libraries are expected to provide cost effective and reliable access to information using the state-of-the art information technology tools.

The basic objective of the university library is to be as a dynamic instrument for explaining the expanding the horizons of knowledge. The library endeavors to make the genuine needs and demands of the users, from the senior academics engaged in advance research to the fresh entrant stimulate and encourage students to
develop the life long habits of good reading, study and research and to be the centre of university for educational and scholarly pursuit.

According to Chakrabarti (1983), University imparts higher education and encourages research. University library is an organ of the University. The objectives of the university library are closely related to the objectives of the university itself. These objectives are:

- To seek and cultivate new knowledge and to interpret old ideas and knowledge in the light of new needs and discoveries;
- To provide the right kind of leadership in all walks of life, to identify gifted youth and help them develop their potentiality;
- To foster in the teachers and students the attitudes and values needed to develop the good life in individuals;
- Preparation for examinations which depends very much on textbook teaching;
- Organisation of research projects;
- Extension lectures;
- Publication of the results of creative writing and research;
- To conserve and propagate basic knowledge and ideas, as well as research and interpretation; and
- To serve as a valuable aid in the conservation and dissemination of knowledge and ideas as well as teaching.
1.1.3 Functions of University Libraries

University libraries have the basic function, which is to aid the parent institutions in carrying out its objectives. University libraries should be designed to support the role which has been assumed by or assigned to the university. The library contributes to the realization of these objectives and supports the total programme by acquiring and making available the books, materials and services which are needed.

The Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) in its report clearly defines the functions of university libraries in order to realize the objectives of university education, as follows:

"(a) provide resources necessary for research in fields of special interest to university;

(b) aid the university teacher in keeping abreast of developments in his field;

(c) provide library facilities and services secondary for success of all programmes of instruction;

(d) open the door to the wide field of books that lie beyond the borders of one's own field of specialization; and

(e) to bring books, students and scholars together under conditions which encourage reading for pleasure, self-discovery, personal growth and sharpening of intellectual curiosity." (Education Commission, 1966).
Line (1968) opined, "The functions of the university library is to bring together information or knowledge on the one hand and human beings on the other."

The well organized and properly administered university library serves as an invaluable aid in the conservation of knowledge and ideas by acquiring and processing reading materials. The university library, therefore, performs a variety of functions, by way helping students with textbooks, reference books, and periodicals, by providing a large number of bibliographical tools and up-to-date literature on every subject for teachers and researchers, as well as by maintaining an efficient reference and information service.

1.1.4 University Library Services

Indian universities constitute one of the largest higher education systems in the world today. This vast academic community needs a wide variety of information services in the changing academic environment.

The popularity and use of any library depends upon bringing of right contact between a right reader and the right book at the right time. In other words popularity depends on the extent to which satisfactory of optimum library services are being provided to the readers or library clientele. The intensive services made available by some of the special libraries or documentation centres cannot be provided by the university libraries over a whole range of interest without great increase in the number of professionals. However, with the help of automation, university libraries
are in a position to provide a variety of services over a wide range of areas, which were not possible previously (Krishan, 2000).

The services to be provided by a university library are given below:

- Lending service
- Library orientation and bibliographic instruction
- Provision of general and specific information
- Assistance in location (searching) of documents or use of library catalogue or understanding of reference books etc.
- Reference and referral services
- Document delivery services
- Literature search services
- Readers’s advisory service; Selective dissemination of information (SDI), Current awareness services (CAS)
- Compilation of bibliographies, preparation of indexing and abstracting services
- List of additions
- Reservation of documents
- Inter-library loan
- Holding of library exhibitions including display of new additions to the library
> Maintenance of clippings, vertical files containing pamphlets like prospectus, reports etc.

> Reprographic and printing services

> Translation service

Moreover, there are some other technical services in the university libraries. These services are also known as work behind the screen. In other words, technical services are the preparation for providing better reader services, which include

> acquisition of materials

> classification

> cataloguing

> binding

> weeding out of reading materials, etc.

Thus a university library extends the academic research supports at all levels and all stages of research.

1.1.5 Traditional Role of Library Professionals

Some of the traditional systems are characterized by manual systems of information organization, utilizing predominantly pre-co-ordinate indexing systems with resultant author or dictionary catalogue as the main storage and retrieval
devices. Unfortunately, this is the predominant method in most of the libraries in our institutions of higher education today (Amkpa and Obaje, 2012).

Some of the traditional roles of librarians and information professional are highlighted by Martin (1996) as:

- **Liaison with users**: the subject librarian is often formally associated with particular school or department
- **Enquiry work**: often including timetable stints on enquiry desks
- **Selection of materials and management of materials budget**: traditionally the subject librarian selects books taking into account recommendation from users.
- **Cataloguing and classification**: the latter in particular is commonly done by subject staff in some libraries
- **Managing collection**: including looking after collections, in some cases 'subject area' or 'subject floor', binding administration, conspectus activity, relegation of material, etc.
- **User education**: particularly library induction to new students.
- **Production of guide and publicity**: including subject guides, etc.

The foundation of librarianship which includes skills in cataloging, classification and user education that are relevant in an electronic age as they are in a print based and will continue to provide a solid base of roles and skills.
1.1.6 Library Professionals’ Role in the Use of Library Resources

Library professionals in the university play a very dominant role in transferring the massages from the resources to the human beings i.e. users. The use of the library resources are the basic objective that university can think of, hence all library professionals including non-professionals and semi-professionals are to be kept in a proper line by the authority for proper movement of the documents. So that these can reach the hands of users.

A faulty selection in the book procurement policy may cost a more if unwanted and unsought for materials are procured in the library. This will no doubt a colossal wastage of money and manpower together with occupying the space in the stack room, which is obviously very costly.

Experiences proved that because of non-checking and non-comparing of documents with the present procured documents those available in the stacks, a clear betrayal to the purpose of book selection and these further is hampering factor for the professionals to see the flow of book movement from stack to the readers.

Therefore it can easily be presumed that library professionals should have a say in the book procurement policy.

Under this present context it is considered wise enough to give a rethinking on the role of the library professionals in this respect.
1.1.7 Changes in Library Services

The advancement of science and technology has made a tremendous improvement and changes in library services worldwide. The increasing role of technologies in libraries has a significant role on the changing role of librarians. Similarly, academic librarianship is supposed to have changed more over the last few decades than in its entire previous history, and it is suggested that the academic librarians in India have to redefine their roles, and indeed to refine their understanding of what they were trying to do in this era.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has enormously increased the capabilities of library services, creating options for networking to provide access to vast stores of electronic information, for more sophisticated library housekeeping systems, and for greater bibliographic access through services. However, technology can also create further pressures and drains on a library’s resources simultaneous for delivering a vastly advanced service. Problems of obsolescence and compatibility of hardware and software can be costly, and the demands for training, both of staff and library users are great. A significant challenge posed by Information Technology (IT) for both library and information staff and users is the sheer volume of information available electronically, leading to a sense of “information overload” for users (Deekle and de Klerk, 1992). A further problem is the greater levels of bibliographic access, which puts pressure on library holdings and inter-library loans, raises students’ expectations, thus highlighting the library’s shortcomings, and creates “a greater awareness among students of the
services and facilities which libraries can, in principle, provide" (Feather, 1993). Thus library users become more demanding and dissatisfied with the level of service that they receive.

Changes of function of Academic Library from past to present can be represented by the following table:

**Table 1.1: Changes of Functions of Academic Library from Past to Present**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Library System</td>
<td>Provided MARC, patron, and circulation records</td>
<td>Web-based: meta-data; resource links; cross data-base searching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information available</td>
<td>The print collection; Inter-Library Loan for anything else; CD Abstracts &amp; Indexes</td>
<td>Print collection plus online data-bases; Document Delivery; extensive E-resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>Walk-in to OPAC, PC's, stacks</td>
<td>Remote, wireless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study space</td>
<td>Quiet areas</td>
<td>Group study areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Instruction</td>
<td>Bibliographic Instruction, by instructor request</td>
<td>Information Literacy; hands-on &quot;learning&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information printouts</td>
<td>Dot matrix printer</td>
<td>Laser printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Bureaucratic; functional; hierarchical</td>
<td>Services oriented; Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Local Regional,</td>
<td>consortia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer access</td>
<td>OPAC;</td>
<td>Online access to DBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Parent dependent</td>
<td>Participate in fundraising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortia</td>
<td>Test and buy databases</td>
<td>Negotiate special DB’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Midda, Kahn, Khan, & Mukherjee, 2009)
1.1.8 Role of Library Professionals in the Present ICT and Digital Environment

New roles emerge for library professionals as a result of introduction of ICT to library and information services. It has been emphasized that library and information service provision has witnessed a paradigm shift, from purely, traditional, and physical manipulation of information resources to technological manipulation as well as electronic provision of library and information service. This is because of the discovery and application of ICT to library operation. They affirmed these new roles of library professionals as creation of web pages, development of digital contents, collaborators, information brokers, educators, policy makers and business managers (Ugboma and Edewor, 2008).

In the same way, Abbas (1997) summarized the roles of librarians in an electronic age as gateway to future and past, knowledge manager or worker, organizers of networked resources, advocates for information policy development, community partners, sifters of information resources, collaborators with technology resource provider, technicians and individual information consultants.

The digital environment means that every copy is a technological equal of the original. Absent printed output, content may exist without form. Paper becomes an interface, a volatile, disposable medium for viewing information on demand or a storage medium. It no longer serves a primary function as a communications medium. That attribute is performed by the computer’s monitor screen.

The emerging roles of library professionals in a digital environment has been identified by Anderson (Amkpa and Obaje, 2012) which include:
➢ Selecting electronic resources and evaluating their quality;

➢ Developing expeditious and effective locator tools to make the complex web of resources more readily accessible to users;

➢ Bring value added components and indexing to the numerous resources, which will continue to proliferate since anyone can now, in effect, publish on the web;

➢ Delivering information services where librarians are not merely the passive catalyst who direct inquires to relevant sources, but to provide the information to users actually seek-analyzed, evaluated, synthesized and transferred in its most useful form;

➢ Teaching novices how to find resources, libraries can also teach specialists how to locate relevant resources outside their own disciplines and even within their own field;

➢ Teaching critical evaluation skills, which includes assessing the authenticity and quality of what is found and determine whether an identified document is worth downloading;

➢ Functioning as a bridge between system designers and users, by having sufficient credibility with programmes and by understanding users’ needs, librarians can serve as the users’ advocate with the system designer while also interpreting to the user what may or may not be technically feasible.
1.1.9 University Libraries in India

The university library exists to serve the needs of the university to support education, learning and research and meet information needs of their academic and research community. These are the hub for information storage and dissemination. There has been a vast change in the shape and service of libraries during last two decades. Many university libraries have been placed in magnificent big buildings, huge grants have been made available, large number of professional and non-professional staff have been employed and large number of users are visiting these than ever before.

According to University Handbook (2010, 32nd ed.) there are 341 university level institutions including 203 (Conventional), 62 (Technical), 36 (Agriculture), 18 (Health Sciences), 9 (Law), 2 (Journalism) and 11 (Open) universities. In addition, there are more than 15,500 colleges which offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that the libraries of the universities of Assam have a good collection of documents for the users. But some of the books procured in the university libraries are remaining in the shelves just from the time of its inception of the library till today, without any use. This speaks either the users do not need these
books or users are not made aware about their (documents) availability through a simple system.

Again, it has been noticed that the users come to the library with their queries or needs on a particular subject or topic, and they get the documents bearing the title of their queries. However, interestingly the users, i.e. students, teachers or research scholars do not find their subject or topic within those books or documents. The contents of the books seem to be irrelevant or out dated, which do not fulfills their needs. That says that the actual relevant demands of the students, teachers and research scholars are not taken care of, simply looking at the title, probably the books are procured, which betrays the real needs of the users. Frequent change and developments in the subjects and fields of studies of different disciplines have also make some books almost not usable by the users.

The teachers of the universities who played a dynamic role in molding and broadening the outlook of the students, but because of their lack of updateness in the respective subject, sometimes newly acquired documents in the library remained unused.

Even it has been observed that, after the arrival of new documents or books in the libraries they are not made aware to the users or sometimes it took a long period of time to get those books to the stacks due to delay in processing works or technical works.
Shortage of professional staff also leads to these situations in some cases. Though there are some services in the libraries like new arrivals, new book etc. but even then their arrival information is not properly disseminated to the users.

Though library initiation programmes or users orientation programmes are conducted by the libraries in the universities, still most of the users of the library do not know the proper retrieval policy of the information, that is how to search the books/ documents in the library through appropriate tools or procedure, like catalogue cards, opac etc. The reasons behind this fact may be negligence of departments or teachers about the library orientation or initiation programs. They do not send the students to these programmes or they take it very casually. Sometimes the library professional also take these programmes very casually which ultimately leads to the fact that many users do not know how to get the right document in the stacks or they do not know what are the types of documents or which documents/information are available in the libraries or what maybe the alternative source of these information in their respective fields or in general.

It is also found from the different surveys conducted by some scholars that a good number of students get admitted in the university without having proper library background in their school and college days. So the students find the library as an non entity for their future academic career.

It has also been experienced that instead of exhaustive use, the reading areas of these libraries remain almost vacant throughout the year, except at the time of examinations, unlike the libraries of other universities in metros like JNU Library,
Delhi University Library etc. This reveals that the students or other users, either they do not find the library environment comfortable for reading or the library is not in a position to cater to their needs for reading. May be the library or teachers have not motivated the student community to utilize the resources of the library.

So, this points ultimately make the library not a proper house of consultation of the reading materials. Since the education system implemented or the environment in the universities of Assam are seems to be not library oriented rather examination oriented.

Hence, an endeavor is contemplated to study why these library materials or library resources, which cost hundreds and thousands of rupees per year remain mostly unused. So information economy demands that documents should be brought to effective uses for the up-liftment of the scholarship in the state.

1.3 Title of the Study

"The role of Library Professionals for effective use of Library Resources in the present context: A study with reference to the University Libraries of Assam."

1.4 Area of Study

The area of study has been taken into account as such:

i) A clear idea of collection of the university libraries and their use.
ii) Users' awareness about the materials and how they are benefitted.

iii) Role of the Library Professionals in making the effective use of the Library resources.

iv) How these valuable materials can be brought forward for their effective use, and how it can contribute for the development of the society.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the reasons why some books are not used at all in the university libraries.

2. To know whether the documents available in the libraries do cater to the actual needs of the users.

3. To find out whether the facilities and environment of the libraries are conducive for the users.

4. To know whether the students of the universities consider the library as an essential part for their future academic career development.

5. To know about the measures which have been taken by the libraries to make the users aware about the availability of resources for their effective use.

1.6 Research Sites

The study has been made covering the five University Libraries of Assam.
1. Krishna Kanta Handiqui Library, Gauhati University. Guwahati (1948)
2. Lakshmi Nath Bezbaroa Library, Dibrugarh University. Dibrugarh (1967)
4. Rabindra Library, Assam University. Silchar (1994)
5. Central Library, Tezpur University. Tezpur (1994)

1.7 Methodology

Research methodology is the foundation of any research project carried out for a systematic study of the problem. It provides guidelines and channelizes the available information of the given subject in a structured manner. It provides scientific thought to available resources and relevant data for the research problems. Research findings will be drawn on the basis of a systematic method of research. Therefore it is very important to follow certain methodology to carry out the research problem.

The methodology for conducting the study mainly consists of library user survey and library survey. Survey is the scientific method to study the related current social problems and conditions having geographic limit and to come to conclusions and recommendations. The different techniques of investigation used in a survey are: direct observation of a phenomenon, collection of information through interviews, questionnaires etc.
In this study, a survey was conducted for the collection of data regarding organisation, administration, resources, and services of university libraries in Assam. This method was also employed to collect data regarding the use pattern of members and their evaluation of university libraries. In addition, personal interview with librarians, field observation, and examination of library resources were also used to collect the data and to examine the problems in their real and correct perspective.

The following methods have been considered for conducting the study:

1.7.1 Questionnaire Method

Two types of questionnaires were designed to collect data and circulated to the selected respondents as:

i) To collect data and other necessary information relating to the research topic, a structured questionnaire was designed and circulated to the users of the university library of the selected universities.

ii) To collect data and other information relating to the research topic another questionnaire was designed and circulated to the libraries of the selected universities.

1.7.2 Observation Method

The observation method has also been carried out in order to assess the real situation of the functioning of the university libraries. Spot study has been made in
the university libraries to know the users who come to the library for study and reference, as their interest and attitude. They have been observed without their knowledge and to know how they are benefitted by their libraries.

1.7.3 Interview Method

To obtain the best result on the services, organization, administration and development of university libraries in the state, interview was conducted to the selected library users, library personnel, and librarians of the selected university libraries.

1.8 Hypotheses

Although the objectives of the study are clear and transparent, there remains the possibility that study may deviate from them as the study progresses. Hence it is considered necessary to have hypotheses running through the objectives. For the present study, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. Active participation of teachers, research scholars and students in document selection process is not taken seriously in the University Libraries.

2. The extension services by which use of books can be made maximum are not fully applied in the University Libraries.
3. No proper programmes or steps are taken by the University Libraries to make the users aware about the information available in the Library and the proper way to retrieve them.

1.9 Population

To get proper responses from the Library Professionals, Teachers, Research Scholars and Students as to know how the Library Materials and the Information available have impacted on their academic life and career, some 100 Teachers, 75 Research Scholars, 150 Students and 25 other users, totaling 350 have been targeted to contact personally from the five universities through questionnaire and some library personnel have also been approached for the purpose.

1.10 Limitations of the Study Area

The survey of the study is confined to the University Libraries of the jurisdiction of Assam only. In this study only five major state and central universities of Assam have been covered, as cited in the research sites of this report, which prevailed during the time of preliminary survey. The new universities established in recent time in Assam have not been included in this study, as in general these do not have sufficient numbers of resources, library professionals and well developed infrastructure facilities in their libraries. Therefore, under these circumstances, those newly founded universities in Assam are not taken into account.
1.11 Chapterization

The present study has been organised under six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter includes a general introduction to the research topic, about the university Libraries, their objectives, functions, services and also the traditional role of library professionals of university libraries in India. Role of library professionals in newly emerged ICT and digital environment in university libraries has also been highlighted in this chapter. The chapter also includes statement of the problem, area of study, objectives of the study, research sites, methodology, hypotheses, population and limitations of the study area along with the chapterization of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter deals with the Literature survey and literature review of related studies which helps to bring clarity and broaden the knowledge base in the subject area. It also helps in preparing the findings and principles of different aspects involved in carrying out a study. Documents including books, journals, articles, online resources, dissertations, theses and seminar papers dealing with university libraries, library resources, library services and library users have been consulted at regular basis.
Chapter 3: Role of Library Professionals for Effective Use of Library Resources

In this chapter, a discussion has been made on Library Professionals, categories of Library Professionals, their job description and qualifications etc. Basic professional skills for Library Professionals and their role in present context has also been discussed in this chapter. The responsibilities of University librarians has also been highlighted in this chapter. This chapter also includes the description about the Library Resources their types, e-resources and open sources etc.

Chapter 4: Role of ICT for Effective Use of Library Resources

The chapter four of this study discusses about the library automation, its need and importance, information and communication technology, advantages of communication technology, developments in communication and network technology, need of ICT in libraries, development of ICT in library services, use of internet, automatic identification and data collection technology in libraries, different information technology based library services, and also about the digital library.

Chapter 5: Survey and Analysis

In this chapter a brief description of the surveyed universities along with their libraries has been given. Data collected from the university libraries as well as from the users has been given here and respectively their analysis has been given with proper diagrams and tables. Views of library professionals obtained from
interviews and the results from the library observation have also been incorporated in this chapter.

**Chapter 6: Conclusion and Suggestion**

Chapter six the last one includes the summary and findings of the study highlighting how the objectives have been achieved and the hypotheses are tested with the suggestions. Conclusion drawn from the study has been given here with some of the future scope for further study.

**References and Bibliography**

In preparing bibliography and references, APA citation style (6th ed.) has been followed, which was established by the American Psychological Association. It is mainly used for psychology, education, social sciences references. The APA specifies the names and order of headings, formatting and organization of citation and references.