Chapter - 4

COLLEGE LIBRARY POLICY OF INDIA : HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

4.1 College Library Policy Before Independence

Education system in India can be traced back to the Vedic age. Oral communication was the only mode of imparting knowledge and instruction. There was no provision for libraries. Learning through written words started at the time of Buddha. Fahien had hinted the existence of library at Jetavane Monastery in the fourth century A.D. Nalanda, Vikramshilla, Ujjain etc. came into existence much later as seats of learning. The medieval period of Indian history was not very vocal about the existence of libraries in the academic institutions, though many of the Muslim rulers built up libraries in their palaces. With the passage of time the indigenous education system gradually disappeared with the advent of the British in India. Higher education system during the early British period was determined by the needs of the colonial powers. Governor Warren Hastings felt that in order to rule efficiently, the East India Company should make themselves familiar with Indian languages. For this purpose, he started a madrasa at Calcutta in the year 1781. Jonathan Duncan stressed upon the need of collecting books of the most ancient and valuable general learning so that officers could benefit from these in course of their study ¹.
4.1.1 Lord Minto’s Suggestion

In 1811 Viceroy Lord Minto suggested that a library be attached to each of the colleges under the charge of a native with a small establishment of servants for the care of manuscripts. This is the first statement on record made by a viceroy about the requirement of having a library in a college.

4.1.2 Establishment of Colleges and their Libraries

During the early part of the British rule Christian Missionaries and the rulers themselves took the initiative to start colleges with well-stocked libraries in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and other important cities in India. The rising demand for English education led to the famous dispatch of Sir Charles Wood in 1854. It has been described as the “Magna Carta” of higher education in India. It has directly contributed to the establishment and growth of higher education centres in India. Following its recommendation universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. It has been observed that with the rise of the British paramountcy the colleges preceded universities as higher education centres. Thus the college libraries in India have been forerunners of the university libraries. The following decades show rapid expansion of college education. Colleges and their libraries cannot be separated from one another. Therefore, whatever efforts had been made for the betterment of colleges since the very beginning by different education commissions and committees from time to time provided an indirect emphasis upon the development of college library system.
4.1.2.1 Picture of Undivided Bengal

Calcutta being the capital of India, the first half of the nineteenth century saw the undivided Bengal as the centre of interest of British India. Thus the elite educational institutions of the then Bengal were much more privileged than the other institutions in different states of the country. The enlightened Bengal was also recognized as the cultural centre of India. Since the early part of the nineteenth century Bengal was much more cautious about the educational facilities of the people. Many Government reports of that time focused on it. For example, to encourage the habit of reading, the General Committee of Hooghly college (presently known as Hooghly Mohsin College) in 1840 offered a medal to the college student “who had made the greatest progress during the year, in the knowledge attained from the study of the books of the library”\(^3\). The above statement reflected that there was an effort in Bengal for developing a well built-college library system since the mid part of the nineteenth century. Study showed that such effort was not uniform during the following period. K. Zachariah wrote, “In July 1877 the separate post for librarian was abolished and the head clerk took over the duties in addition to his own, the second clerk acting as the assistant librarian. A considerable amount of money was saved, while the librarian had a salary of fifty rupees, the head clerk got only five rupees more for this accession work”\(^4\).

4.1.3 Hunter Commission’s Recommendations

Hunter Commission was set up in India in 1882 in the British period for reviewing the progress and growth of the higher education. Incidentally it also reviewed the growth of
concerned college libraries. The commission observed, “as regards the extent to which libraries are used, the information obtained seem to show that among the students of some colleges, a perceptible taste for general reading has sprung up. Yet Bombay, Bengal and the North Western Provinces’ reports agree in saying that the general reading habits of students are confined to a very narrow range, being almost entirely limited to books which have some bearing on the subjects of examination”\footnote{5}. The Hunter Commission felt that the students did not have interest in other books of general knowledge. The commission suggested the introduction of a policy for increasing the reading habit of college students.

\subsection*{4.1.4 Indian University Commission’s Recommendations}

Indian University Commission was set up in 1902 with the effort of the then Viceroy Lord Curzon. This commission was very critical about the role of libraries attached to the higher education institutions. The commission recommended that, “good reference libraries should be provided in this connection both at universities and colleges in order that students may have opportunity of forming the habit of independent and intelligent reading”\footnote{6}. As a consequence to the aforesaid recommendation of the University Commission, Indian University Act of 1904 was passed by the Government of India. The Act was quite specific about the role of a library in the higher education centres. Thus a need was felt to develop well organized libraries for the progress and development of the students and the teachers.
4.1.5 Sadler Commission’s Recommendations

For bringing all round independence in the educational system of India, Sadler Commission was set up in 1917. The Commission suggested that about 6.5 per cent of educational budget should be the reasonable expenditure on libraries. But it could vary from 6.5 per cent to 10 per cent depending on the state of development of each academic library. Documentary source reveals that up-to the first part of the twentieth century the librarian was still a man with little education and no special qualification relevant to library work. This commission recognized the library as one of the necessary organs of the universities and colleges and stressed the need for an employee of the rank of a librarian with proper qualification in each university or college. The commission also recommended that the university/college should have a post of librarian who deserve the “salary and status of a professor and should be the ex-officio member of the academic council”7. In pursuant to this recommendation, many universities and colleges appointed whole time librarians for the first time. Mr. K. Zachariah wrote in the History of Hooghly College 1836-1936 - “at last a graduate librarian was appointed at Rs.50 per month and very wisely, he was sent once in a week to the Imperial library for several months to learn his work” 8. Subsequently, the policy as it was initiated, was dropped. In college libraries, this special post of librarian was not seriously considered. The charge of the library was given to a teacher in charge as an additional burden along with his allotted teaching work. This picture of Hooghly College may reflect the library situation of almost all the elite colleges of the then Bengal. Till independence there was no significant change in the college library situation in Bengal.
4.2 College Library Policy Since Independence

British Government in India initiated a modern higher education system. As a result, an academic library system began to develop along with the gradual growth and development of the higher education system in India. Unfortunately, the college library failed to get a national recognition as a part of the national system of higher education in India. Higher education policy changed with successive Viceroy's, Governors and Directors of Public Instruction. Such frequent changes have been the cause of hindrance to any long term planning for higher education system including the associated college library system. So independent India had to tackle a host of educational problems and had to reorganize the entire higher education system.

4.2.1 Radhakrishnan Commission’s Recommendations

In 1948-49 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan an education commission was set up for looking after the issues of higher education in free India. The commission discussed all the aspects of higher education, including the organizational facilities in the higher education centres. It was of the opinion that “higher education should be placed on the concurrent list”9. The Commission felt that “the library should have adequate and well qualified staff. Each library requires several grades of employees. At the top will be a person of the caliber of a university Professor, who is specialized in some aspect of Library science; he/ she must have qualification corresponding to a Doctorate in Library Science”10.
The commission made the following observations regarding the college library:

(a) The library is like the heart of a higher education centre.
(b) Importance of libraries is more in higher studies and research.
(c) The proper reading materials should be collected by academic libraries.
(d) Fully trained staff should be appointed in academic libraries.

Radhakrishnan Commission Report (1948), led to much desired “theoretical basis and practical support for our university and college library foundation”¹⁰. The Indian constitution, since its adoption in 1950, provides the basic framework for policies. A number of important provisions which had direct or indirect bearing on education clearly stated the importance of the sharing of responsibility equally by the Central Government of India and the State Governments.

4.2.2 First Five-Year Plan (1951-1956)

The first Five-Year Plan emphasized the need for recognizing higher education by reforming the existing system. During this period the University Grants Commission (UGC) began to function, since 1953. It was an important landmark in the growth and development of college libraries in India as it pin-pointedly realized the importance of the college libraries in the field of higher education. The UGC took initiative for the development of university and college libraries.
During the Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61) the number of enrolment of students in colleges and universities was on the increase. The UGC took up some steps for the progress and improvement of the higher education including academic library development. A library committee under the chairmanship of S.R. Ranganathan was set up in 1957 to advise the commission on various problems of library development. A seminar on “Work Flow in University and College Libraries” was organized in 1959. The recommendations of the library committee covered wide areas, including the basis of grants, period of utilization of grants, selection and purchase of books, promotion of the reading habit, weeding out and loss of books, documentation, status and salary of library staff, courses of studies in Library Science and standard for building, fitting and furniture of the libraries and so on. The most significant recommendation of the library committee was the principle of grants on a per capita basis i.e. Rs.15 per student and Rs. 200 per teacher to be revised periodically in the light of the changes in the cost of books and periodicals. Another important recommendation was relating to parity of professional staff and academic staff with regard to their salary scales. The report of the library committee was formally accepted by the UGC in 1959-60. The report clearly stated that the practice of appointing a person, without the prescribed qualification, even as honorary librarian should be abolished. These old practices invite and kill the enthusiasm and the initiative of the professional librarians. It will make the library to continue to be a mere collection of books instead of an intellectual workshop. As an impact of these recommendations college libraries got rid of honorary librarians and professional
librarians occupied their position instead. The recommendation gave way to some norms that guided the establishment, maintenance and the development of university and college libraries in the country till today\textsuperscript{13}. A remarkable development took place in the arena of university /college libraries during this period. It was found that “the expenditure on library by the university had gone up from 1.88 per cent to 4.04 per cent within a decade (1951-1961)”\textsuperscript{14}.

4.2.4 Third Five-Year Plan (1961–66)

Due to the growing demand for higher education, the Third Five-Year Plan suggested for opening of a dozen higher education centres during the plan period. The suggestion automatically paved the way for more college libraries to come into existence.

4.2.4.1 Kothari Commission Recommendations

To keep pace with this situation in the area of higher education the Government of India set up a commission in (1965-66) under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S Kothari. The report submitted by the commission gives an idea about the position of academic libraries and their standard prevalent at that time along with discussions regarding the development of libraries. It was observed that “with ever increasing enrolment in universities and colleges, the demand for library service has been constantly growing. Unlike the past, the library staff have now to cater to the needs of undergraduates, post graduates and research scholars.”\textsuperscript{15}
The commission made the following recommendations:

(a) The head of the departments and library staff should cooperate fully in drawing up an integrated plan of library development, from a long-range point of view. Such a plan should better take into consideration a number of factors such as the anticipated increase in enrolment, the user-wise distribution of library collection, new subjects and so on.

(b) No new subject should be incorporated 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.

(c) The utilization of a library grant should be suitably phased over a plan period. In other words, there should be a regular programme of strengthening of academic department and library instead of haphazardly overfeeding them in one year and starving them in the next.

(d) The introduction of tutorial instruction as a supplement of the classroom lecture should find an adequate place in academic activities. In this regard the commission commented on the very need of increasing the book mindedness of the academic community. Tutorial classes encourage the student to seek the help of the reference librarian in his search for the relevant reading materials. After all “the reading habit which is appallingly low must be toned up in every possible way.”
The report also called for provision of funds for the improvement of college libraries. During the period of Third Five Year Plan the pay-scale of the college librarian was revised under the UGC instruction with effect from April 1, 1961[ vide its letter no. F 63/2/61 (SS) dated May 1, 1962]. The pay was on a par with that of the teachers in the universities/colleges. Unfortunately, some of the state universities had not implemented the revised pay of librarians prescribed by the UGC at the first instance. In frustration against authorities many seminars were organized in different states to discuss the problem relating to the status and pay of librarians. The issue was the cause for demotivation of library professionals. The academic library field has always faced a scarcity of funds due to the overall financial crisis of the country 18.

4.2.5 Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-1974)

The Fourth Five-Year Plan emphasized upon conducting of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) for the academic staff of the colleges and universities including librarians through the refresher courses/ summer schools, etc. During this period there was an announcement for the revision of pay scales of librarian (letter no- F-29-10/66-U.P dated, September 6, 1968) with effect from April 1966. These scales were on a par with Professors, Readers and Lecturers. M.Lib.Sc. degree was not considered equivalent to any other PG degree and it was “considered a professional qualification and not an academic qualification”19.
Due to the shortage of requisite qualification among the existing library staff there was an appeal on behalf of the universities to the UGC to relax the qualification standard for the librarians. Later the UGC agreed to the proposal.

During this period the Planning Commission set up a working group, especially for the development of library system at the national level. Following issues were highlighted in the report of the said working group:

1. Cooperation among different types of libraries in a region has to be initiated.
2. The regional Book-Bin has to be established.
3. Fund-raising activities through Mitra-Mondals have to be introduced.

The report of the Working Group has not found the fullest expression in the execution of the plan, but the ideas still survive and continue to influence the higher education planners.

4.2.6. Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79)

The Fifth Five-Year Plan 1974-79 was very crucial for academic library development. During this period the academic library professionals were struggling for their academic status. The University Grant Commission de-linked the librarians in the matter of salary status with the teaching cadre while revising the pay scale (with effect from Jan.1, 1973 vide its letter No. F-1-4/75 (D-50) dated, Jan. 29 1977). The pay scale suggested for the
librarians was different from that of the teachers. The librarians did not accept these recommendations and made their representation to the Ministry of Education and the UGC. The Government of West Bengal decided to put the librarians of university and colleges on a par with the academic staff of the universities and colleges as regard to pay scales since 1977. The professional librarians of Delhi University and its constituent colleges were deprived of the privilege at the very beginning; they filed a suit at Delhi High Court for restoration of parity in salary. With the passage of the time the Government of India and the UGC decided to restore the parity. Besides the scale of pay, one more important policy was formulated during the Fifth Five-Year Plan Period i.e. the drafting of the of National Policy on Education, 1979 (which is closely correlated to the library system of the higher education field). The draft was duly considered by the (CABE)Central Advisory Board of Education but the policy did not come into effect within the time frame of the Fifth Five year Plan due to political turmoil in India.

4.2.7 Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85)

The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) suggested a remarkable improvement in the quality of higher education. During this period university/college library field received a special consideration. Resource sharing among the university/college libraries was stressed upon. Even the public libraries can start an inter-lending arrangement with the college libraries. But the suggestion, though not implemented, was good for the community of learners.
During the period of Sixth Five-Year Plan the Planning Commission again constituted a Working Group especially to take care of the library and information services throughout the country. It was realized by the Planning Commission that a separate working group is required for formulating the proper infrastructural designing for the academic library set-up. During previous plan periods library and information services were in general considered to be auxiliaries of the parent institution (colleges/universities). Thus the funds for libraries were coming from the parent body’s budget-head. As a result the number of good college libraries was limited. Most of them continued to face various problems, such as scarcity of funds, for developing physical facilities for libraries, recruitment of staffs and so on. Lending service was the major activity of the most of the college libraries.

The working group realized that the existing library and information service pattern in the country was generally individual, unrelated to each other. It was highly essential to develop an integrated library and information service system throughout the country for the future development of the national library and information service.

4.2.8 Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90)

The National Policy on Education came into effect during the Seventh Five-year Plan period (1986). The National Policy on Education (1986) had pointed out that India had a
broad system of education but the development had been extremely uneven. It dealt with the National system of education only. No other provisions had been made for the development of academic libraries in this policy except a theoretical provision for library facilities in all educational institutions and improvement in the status of libraries.

4.2.8.1 National Education Policy

As an indirect impact of National Educational Policy the Planning Commission of India appointed a Working Group during mid eighties to survey the status of the Indian library and information system as a whole. The ‘Working Group on Modernization of Library Services’ recommended the following steps towards developing a solid base for college/university library system:

The major recommendations are given below—

1. Formulation of National policy for library and information service.
2. Substantial increase in the book budgets of college and university libraries.
3. Improvement of their resources and services through resource sharing.
4. Establishment of an academic library system for universities and colleges.
5. Active role for professional staff in providing services.
6. Larger fund for library building, furniture, equipment, reprographic facilities.
7. Conducting computer awareness programmes for the library staff.

8. Computerisation of major academic libraries for easy information exchange and achieving certain standard, knowledge and skill with respect to hardware and software.

9. Drawing a plan for interlinking the library system.

10. Formation of a group at the apex to work out the plan for computerisation and monitor the process of computerisation and monitor and evaluate the process of computerisation in each college/university library.

As an impact of the recommendations of the Working Group on Modernization of Library Services certain steps were taken by the UGC during the period of Seventh Five-Year Plan as discussed below.

(a) **CONPOLIS**

The formation of CONPOLIS was the most important step in this phase. The Department of Culture, Government of India had set up a Committee for the National Policy on Library and Information System (CONPOLIS) on 7th October, 1985 under the chairmanship of Prof. D.P.Chattopadhyay, Chairman RRRLF. The final report of CONPOLIS was submitted to the Government in 1986. The National Policy on Library and Information Service (NAPLIS) had the following objectives:
1. To collect information related to scientific, technical and other developmental activities of the country.

2. To improve the existing facilities in the said committee.

3. To take steps in the improvement of existing information technology.

4. To provide computer facilities for fast information access and retrievals.

5. To promote the collection and utilization of national and international information resources needed to meet the present and future information requirements.

6. To encourage international co-operation in the use of information.

7. To develop and use efficient tools and technique for document and information handling.

8. To provide financial support to the information organization and its use.

Three task forces were formed to discuss each of these recommendations in the NAPLIS. Unfortunately no decision has been taken regarding NAPLIS either in the Parliament or in the Cabinet meeting.

(b) Library Network

With the passage of time the need for information networking in India was felt by the NISSAT. It initiated efforts to activate network programmes among libraries. Thus the CALIBNET (1986) in Calcutta, DELNET (1988) in Delhi and many other such as MALIBNET were launched. The UNESCO provided a software (CDS/ISIS) initially
free of cost and later against Rs. 1500/- for the educational institutions of the developing countries. NISSAT took the initiative to distribute it for the educational institutes.

(c) **INFLIBNET**

To keep pace with the situation the INFLIBNET (for developing a network among college and university libraries in India) was launched in 1988. To promote the activities of INFLIBNET the UGC provided special assistance for the “installation of computer and library software in 110 Universities and 1216 college libraries”.

4.2.9 **Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-1997)**

UGC provided substantial financial assistance to the central universities and state universities and their affiliated colleges for “computerisation and library operation services during the period of Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-1997)”.

4.2.10 **Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002)**

During the period there was an indirect pressure from the INFLIBNET that the network should be made operational among the large universities and even leading colleges of the country. INFLIBNET developed an integrated library software-SOUL and distributed it
to college and university libraries. For implementing the plan for computerisation there was a provision for a special grant from the UGC for library computerisation in college and university libraries. Many colleges from different states including Delhi and West Bengal received special grants for their library computerisation. The UGC decentralized its functioning by opening seven regional offices in the country since 1994 in a phased manner for easy access and speedy realization of grants and implementation of various schemes/programmes relating to colleges. Along with the funding towards the library computerisation the INFLIBNET regional training programme for library automation had been conducted by the INFLIBNET authority. A series of “training programmes by INFLIBNET were arranged for different states including Delhi and West Bengal during April 2002 to March 31 2003”30. SOUL (the software developed by INFLIBNET), familiarization programmes were held at different cities including Kolkata. About 325 libraries professionals took benefit of these programmes during the time span of Ninth Five-Year Plan period. About “400 participants got trained in these programmes”31.

4.2.11 Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007)

Many new schemes were launched during the Tenth Five-Year Plan in the periphery of higher education. Out of these NAAC (an inter university centre of the UGC) the system of accreditation for higher education centres was introduced “for measuring the standard of the universities and colleges”32. The INFLIBNET which began to function earlier tried to motivate the college libraries during this period. These two components “NAAC and INFLIBNET made a remarkable effect upon the college library system”33.
**NAAC** – The NAAC, an Inter University Centre set up by UGC (in 1998) is working as an accreditation agency for evaluating and grading the universities and colleges of India. According to NAAC’s performance measuring scale the library is placed in the area of “Infrastructural Facilities” of a college. In the previous scale out of 100 only 40 marks were allotted for the Infrastructural Facilities of a college. “Out of 40 only 15 marks were allotted for the library”\(^3\). This was the only means for the evaluation of a college library system up to 2006. In 2007 NAAC reviewed their performance evaluation method. In the new scale only “10 marks are allotted for the college library system”\(^4\).

Some points mentioned below have been considered as criteria for evaluating a college library by NAAC:

1. The number of books/periodicals in the library and the provision of book bank in the library.
2. Number of services rendered by the library.
3. The state of library automation.
4. Librarians and their qualifications.
5. Number of library staff.
6. Library’s working hour and its access, etc.

The NAAC team assesses the total quality of a college reviewing the different aspects of the college in the perspective of the fast changing higher educational scenario.
(b) Potential Excellence Scheme

The UGC proposed to launch a separate scheme to identify at least 100 colleges throughout the country as “colleges with potential for excellence” \(^{36}\). Already 3 PG colleges of West Bengal under the present study have been recognized as centres with potential for excellence. Like West Bengal PG colleges, all Delhi Colleges are also aspirant for “the centres with potential for excellence” tag given by the UGC. “Already two colleges have got this award.”\(^{37}\)

(c) UGC INFONET

Presently the UGC has established 16 mirror sites across the country with 2mbps Internet lines which are evenly distributed geographically for sharing resources electronically i.e. through the UGC-Infonet.

These two schemes have direct impact on the reorganization and reengineering of the college library infrastructure. During the Tenth Five-Year Plan period the UGC took the aforesaid steps to increase access to information and simultaneously to promote the quality and excellence of college education in a focussed manner.

The 10\(^{th}\) Five-Year Plan of the UGC has spelt its vision through four approaches:

1. To expand open and distance education mode of education.
2. To increase both physical and academic infrastructure in the conventional mode and run teaching programmes allowing students to combine the conventional with open mode, i.e. the use of practical full time and practical distance educational mode to get a degree.

3. To use the existing physical infrastructure in double shifts with added human support from contracted retired teachers or guest faculty.

4. To link all the universities and colleges through an information and communication network in order to make the communication and teaching easier.

There is an effort “to raise enrolment in higher education among 18 to 23 years age group from 6per cent in 2002 to 10per cent in 2007 or by the end of the 10th plan. Special emphasis has been laid on networking and accelerated use of IT in college libraries and university libraries”\(^ {38} \).

4.2.12 Recommendation of National Knowledge Commission.

The formation of the National Knowledge Commission in 2005 by the Government of India was a significant step forward in the ambit of academic activities of the country. In its report the NKC has recommended “setting up of a National Commission on Library and Information Services, which was expected to come out with valuable suggestions regarding the modernization of the college libraries all over the country”\(^ {39} \). In this context
it is to be noted that the USA had taken steps to organize their library and information services in a coordinated manner after the formation of National Commission on Library and Information Sciences (NCLIS). The Federal Government had adopted a law in 1970 for establishing a NCLIS. This Commission provides a lot of support to the academic library system in the USA\textsuperscript{40}. It is expected that the Government of India will soon take a decision on the recommendations of NKC.
References


2. ibid. p 21.


4. ibid. p 29.

5. INDIA. HUNTER COMMISSION. The report. 1882; para 317.


11. Ibid. p 112.

13. Ibid.


16. Ibid. p 288.

17. Ibid. p 290.


22. MAJUMDAR (S), BHALLA (S.C.) and CHANDER (R), Comp. Op. cit. p 645.
23. INDIA. PLANNING COMMISSION. Report of the Working Group of the Planning Commission on Modernization of Library Services and Informatics for the Seventh Five-Year Plan, 1984. In MAJUMDAR( S ), BHALLA (S C) and CHANDER (R), Comp. Compendium of select Government reports on LIS services in India. 2003; Central Secretariat Library; New Delhi. p 607.

24. ibid. p 542.


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30. ibid. p 101.

31. ibid. p 118.
32. *ibid.* p 119.

33. *ibid.* p 120.


