8.1 Changing Scenario of Higher Education

Presently, higher education scenario in India is in a process of change. The introduction of IT in different spheres of life and the consequences of globalisation have brought about a social change. Its effect is being felt in the field of higher education too. The gradual increase of student population in the higher education arena, the introduction of distance/open learning system, the advent of multidimensional subjects and the need to develop correlation between institution and industry are reshaping Indian higher education scenario. To match the growth of population in higher education the number of colleges catering to the demand of UG and PG level courses is going up. To keep pace with the changing higher education scenario college libraries need to restructure and remodel themselves very cautiously. The big problem that is raising its head in this regard is the shortage of funds. Financial resources and human resources (the inputs), the application of information technology (a tool for the proper use of the input), the method of performance measurement of colleges by NAAC - all have their profound impact on college library organizational structures, procedures, and services.

8.2 College Library Situation in West Bengal

Analysis of collected data shows that in West Bengal a good number of colleges has already started PG courses to meet the social need. Unfortunately, the UGC grants are
not sanctioned considering the increasing needs of the PG college libraries. Colleges receive only a one time special grant (for books and journals) from the UGC for opening a PG course. Some college libraries find favour of the UGC only because they are old. State Government grant in West Bengal is not also based on the quality of the academic performance of a college and its library.

It has been observed that the staff pattern in the college libraries in West Bengal is back-dated and not need-based. There is also anomaly between government colleges and non-government colleges, and even among different government colleges in this regard. The post-graduate college libraries bearing the additional load of work are running short of library assistants and library attendants. Unlike Delhi colleges, West Bengal colleges are offering PG courses through their existing infrastructure. They are solely responsible for the academic performance of their students. The situation demands better infrastructure in PG college libraries.

The service is satisfactory to UG students’ but it is not at all satisfactory to the PG student communities. Cost-benefit analysis has not been introduced in the college library management policy. Current organizational structure of West Bengal college libraries is not in a state that can introduce the information technology in the LIS activities fruitfully. In quest of a suitable computerised library system a huge amount of money is being spent. In fact, despite plenty of fuel, ignition remains ineffectual. Due to this dismal infrastructural situation of the college libraries coupled with the absence of administrative acumen the pace of development is far from satisfactory. Only in a handful of college
libraries, library-automation has been introduced but that is still in its infancy. Somehow, these libraries can provide off-line bibliographic service. No other steps have been taken for revamping the college libraries to meet the changing needs.

8.3 College Library Situation in Delhi and the USA

It has been revealed (chapter 5) that the current financial capability of Delhi college libraries is better than that of college libraries in West Bengal.

The current staff pattern of Delhi college libraries is better than that of West Bengal college libraries. All DU college libraries are manned by sufficient number of qualified library assistants and library attendants. Currently in many college libraries, posts of librarian are vacant and library assistants are acting as librarians against additional allowance. In Delhi University PG students are admitted through colleges but the PG education is imparted by the concerned departments of the university.

In Delhi, college libraries have installed standard library software, but most of them are still rendering service with the help of the traditional collection. The libraries are providing off-line computerised bibliographic database service. There is limited scope for online database service in college libraries through DELNET and UGC-Infonet.

The services of college libraries are meaningful to UG students’ but these are not satisfactory to the PG-level students and teachers. As there is a close relation between
constituent college libraries as well as Delhi University library, the user communities can enjoy the privilege of using both the respective college libraries as well as Delhi University library. However, the PG students are more dependent on the university library. Apart from this, the introduction of information technology for accelerating the library activities in Delhi colleges, no other significant step has been taken to meet the fast changing situation. Cost-benefit ratio is also not measured.

The study shows that the USA college libraries have sound financial capabilities and staff strength. The FALUSA and different library consortia further strengthen the financial position of the USA college libraries.

In the USA college libraries have adopted IT since 1980s on the basis of ‘trial and error’. Since then the USA college libraries have tried system changing for two to three times in quest of a better option. The introduction of Internet has been a turning point for the USA college libraries. These libraries provide informative as well as interactive websites for their users. All sorts of library information are available through the world wide web. Reference service is also provided through some electronic means like e-mail, chat, instant messaging and so on. Library instructional service, information about the library collection and library catalogue are also uploaded on the world wide web. COLLIB-L@ala.org, the official professional discussion list for the College Libraries Section (CLS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) serves as a means of communication among college librarians in general.
Performance evaluation is a regular feature in the USA college libraries. Library professional organization (ACRL, ALA) plays a significant role in this context. Self appraisal measure elevates the performance level. Cost-benefit analysis is a regular practice in each college library in the USA.

The USA college library administrators follow participative management policy and prefer creation of new positions for newly introduced jobs in the library, self collection development, development of physical facilities and consortia relationship along with their networked service policy, which ensure efficient staff management and access to collections and promote their use. The traditional concept of the USA college libraries has changed, but the new age technologies have failed to replace the existing system entirely overnight. Thus the USA college libraries give a mixed look of a hybrid library for in-house users and a virtual library for off-site users. A never-ending process of change in the college library functioning has resulted in boundary spanning of the library organization.

8.4 Comparative Study

The comparative study of the college library situation of West Bengal, Delhi and the USA has shown that West Bengal college libraries are behind both from the national level situation (Delhi college library system) and the international level situation (the USA college library system) in the following ways.
West Bengal college libraries possess only 25 per cent of physical facilities needed to serve their users, whereas in Delhi it is 50 per cent and in the USA it is 90 per cent. Library hour is at the lowest level in West Bengal - just 42 hours a week. In Delhi it is 60 hours and in the USA it is 103 hours a week. Regarding book collection, the situation is almost similar in the colleges of West Bengal and Delhi. The USA college libraries are at much better position in this regard. In case of periodical collection, Delhi college libraries are ahead of West Bengal college libraries. However, the USA college libraries possess a much better periodical collection than that of the college libraries of both West Bengal and Delhi. Only 19 per cent of libraries in West Bengal provide open access facility to their users, whereas both in Delhi and in the USA it is 100 per cent. The library committee in West Bengal is not a statutory body. The library management policy in West Bengal is not scientific. In Delhi colleges library committee is a statutory body. Full fledged librarians are the convenors of the respective library committees. Thus the library management policy is a little bit scientific in Delhi. In the USA the library directors play the key role in library management. Participative management policy for motivating all the staff members of college libraries is in practice. The US college library management policy is far better than that of West Bengal and Delhi college libraries. The document organization is inconsistent in West Bengal college libraries. The study reveals that document organization system is comparatively better in Delhi college libraries than that of West Bengal college libraries. In the USA college libraries the in-house documents are organized in a consistent way. Downloaded on-line documents are arranged in a separate sequence, because the present library software fails to arrange the downloaded documents instantly with the in-house holdings.
West Bengal college libraries provide 90 per cent service to the UG students, 20 per cent service to the PG students and researchers. Delhi college libraries provide 90 per cent service to the UG students, 40 per cent service to the PG students and faculties. The USA college libraries provide 90 per cent service to both UG/PG students and all user communities.

The financial stability of Delhi college libraries is better than that of the West Bengal college libraries. Financial condition of the USA college libraries is much better.

The staff structure in West Bengal college libraries is very poor and does not meet the actual requirement. The staff structure in Delhi college libraries is much better than that of West Bengal, but still it is not adequate to meet the current requirement. In the USA college library staff structure is very strong, capable to satisfy the need of the college library users. Both in West Bengal and Delhi the qualification of a librarian is after the UGC norms. In the USA the qualification of a librarian is after the norms set by the ALA. The pay structure in both West Bengal and Delhi is the same following the UGC order. In the USA college libraries it is different. According to the specification of the duties demanded by the concerned library the librarian is recruited and his/her pay depends upon the pay-structure approved by the ALA. The status of the college librarians in West Bengal is not yet articulated. In Delhi the librarians enjoy the academic status. In the USA library directors and librarians enjoy the faculty status and academic status respectively. The age of retirement of college librarian is 60 in West Bengal. In Delhi it is 62. In the USA library professionals’ job at the top level (in the position of library director) is usually tenured, not bound only by age limit. The professional competency of the USA library professionals is very important in this regard.
In West Bengal, of all the college libraries under the study only one college library has been fully computerised. Some college libraries in West Bengal use non-standard library software. Only 7 per cent (1 out of 16) of libraries have been computerised. The study reveals that Delhi college libraries have installed standard library software which they have been using till date. The system migration project has been completed in 62.5 per cent (10 out of 16) of libraries. The USA college library system has extensively exploited the information technology. Library system fully (100 per cent) depends on IT. The study reveals that the USA college libraries have been wise in introducing and installing standard library software. In West Bengal there is no provision of networking among the college libraries. In Delhi only two college libraries offer DELNET and UGC-Infonet search facility. Thus networking facilities are available in 12.5 per cent of college libraries, whereas in the USA all libraries work in fully networked environment (i.e. 100 per cent networking). Many colleges in West Bengal have their web-pages having library link. But they do not provide e-mail facilities or other interactive facilities. In Delhi 18.75 per cent (3 out of 16) of libraries provide only e-mail facilities and in the USA all libraries (100 per cent) have interactive web-pages. They offer e-mail facility, instant messaging facility and web catalogue search facility, etc.

The opportunity of CPE for librarians is very low in West Bengal, in Delhi also it is low, while in the USA it is very high. The probability of short-fall of professional competency of librarian is very high in West Bengal, high in Delhi, nil in the USA. The system of co-ordination and co-operation among college libraries is nil in West Bengal, better in Delhi, much better in the USA. College accreditation system by the NAAC, though not very full proof, has covered a considerable number of college
libraries in West Bengal. In Delhi the same accreditation system has not been activated. USA college libraries are very strictly accredited by the American Accreditation Council of Colleges/Universities (of the concerned region) and the ACRL, ALA.

The college libraries in West Bengal fail to play their meaningful role towards the users at PG level. The situation in Delhi is little better. In the USA the college libraries serve the need of the user community to a satisfactory level. In West Bengal and Delhi the performance of college libraries is not duly measured. But it is a regular practice in the USA. In West Bengal and Delhi there is no specific system for performance measurement of the librarians. For the job security the USA librarians are self motivated for enhancing their efficiency.

The West Bengal college administrators have undertaken the library computerisation project without having any prior plan of work. In the colleges under Delhi University the same work was well planned. In the USA the college administrators emphasize on participative management policy, creation of new post for new types of job, development of consortial relationship for providing the required infrastructural facilities in the college library.

8.5 Conclusion

In the fast changing Indian higher education scenario information technology has become the most important driver for re-engineering the organizational structure of college libraries. Changing situation in higher education has brought about a metamorphosis in the concept of college libraries resulting in ‘boundary spanning’ of the college library.
activities (Chapter 6; section 6.4.9). In that context West Bengal college libraries are yet to reach the first range. Delhi college libraries at present stands in the first range, while the USA college libraries have reached the third range by 1990.

The library computerisation project in West Bengal colleges has been consuming much time but Delhi colleges have automated their library system in a preplanned way accommodating the fast changing needs of the LIS. The reason is easy to understand. In the absence of proper knowledge, experience, manpower and overall monitoring from the administrative authority most of the West Bengal college libraries have not been able to complete the system changing project successfully till now. The study reveals that in many cases colleges have installed non-standard software. Thus the newly installed computerised system has failed to run the library work, yet no effort has been taken to find out the reasons for the system failure. Frequent system change has delayed the progress of the computerisation. The study also finds out that the project failure is not only for the shortcomings of the software itself but for some other reasons too. If the manual system in a college library is not in a standardized format, the inherent faults of the original system reappear in the computerised system spoiling the chief objective of the system migration. West Bengal college administrators have started the library system transformation project in an un-planned way on the basis of ‘trial and error’. This is what the USA college administrators did in the mid 1980s. College administrators in West Bengal have played the key role in the system changing project from the beginning, but without having the right knowledge of system transformation which was essential for a system changing venture. In this matter the librarian has but a poor say. But the librarian has to face the consequence of a chain of events. She/he has to serve in a system that fails to meet the demands of the users. As there is no precise method to measure the
overall performance of the college libraries (against the input-output) the actual scenario remains unclear. Unlike this, in Delhi colleges, the librarians themselves played a vital role along with the college administrators in regard to the system migration. They themselves have acquired fair idea about the system of library computerisation. They reorganized the libraries in the first phase and installed standard library software in the second phase which they have been using till date. The result is the completion of the well planned, time bound system migration project without any waste of money, time and energy. The study reveals that in Delhi college libraries and the USA college libraries even being well staffed, the system changing project was out-sourced. On the other hand in West Bengal college libraries which are poorly staffed, for such a project work (additional burden except routine work) there is limited scope for out sourcing.

Following three important findings emerge from the study:

1. The condition of college libraries in West Bengal is worse than that in Delhi and the USA. In West Bengal colleges libraries exist both for the UG students and PG students, but their role is satisfactory only to UG students, but not to the PG students.

2. No measures have been taken for college library performance evaluation in West Bengal.

3. College administrators in West Bengal have undertaken the project of library computerisation in an unplanned way. As a result, the said projects in college libraries have not been completed within due time. Computerisation project has failed even after spending a fair amount of money. Other than the computerisation project no other infrastructural development has taken place in college libraries in West Bengal.
The study has been made on the basis of some important post-graduate colleges of West Bengal. It is deemed that if such a study is carried out in a wider scale a gloomier picture likely to come out. In fact, the infrastructural facilities available in the majority of colleges are poorer than that of colleges taken in the study. The present study leaves a scope for further study taking more colleges within its ambit. Similar study can also be conducted in other states in order to evaluate the college library situation in other parts of India.

8.6 Suggestions

It may be pointed out here that the main reason for the underdeveloped situation in West Bengal college libraries is the absence of any guidelines for college library functioning. In 1965, the report of the Library Advisory Committee, entitled University and College Libraries suggested a set of guidelines for college/university library functioning. The said guidelines are not adequate to meet the present need of the higher education. For sustainable development, a set of need-based guidelines for college library functioning is required and total quality improvement has to be considered. M.R. Kurup has very rightly opined that, one of the most important areas for quality improvement of colleges is the development of infrastructure and learning resources and that “infrastructure should include a wide range of support services including the college library.” According to him “entire infrastructure including institutional library should be both adequate and appropriate…” For developing an adequate infrastructure for college libraries the following points need consideration. The following measures should be taken and enforced for sustainable development of PG college libraries in West Bengal:
8.6.1 Formation of Directorate of College LIS

A separate Directorate of College Library and Information Services should be set up under the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal, which will guide and monitor the overall activities of West Bengal college libraries (both UG and PG level).

8.6.2 Measures for Infrastructural Development

A set of guidelines should be prepared by the proposed Directorate of College Library and Information Services for overall infrastructural development in college libraries. As higher education is on the concurrent list, both the Central Government (the UGC) and the State Government are to be involved in framing the guidelines for the PG college library functioning. Till then state level guidelines should be framed and put to work. The Bengal Library Association (BLA), The State Level Quality Assurance Coordination Committee and the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal should be involved in the said matter. The following points are to be considered in this regard.

8.6.2.1 Restructuring Size, Shape, Physical Facilities and Staff Pattern

A library should be restructured for strengthening the size, shape, physical facilities and staff pattern in the following ways:
i) Developing Balanced Collection

Every college library must be careful about its collection development. Library committees should play a vital role in book selection process. Quality control in the collection development is of utmost importance. For being a successful organization, a PG college library “must maintain itself constantly in a trim state, and not allow itself to be cluttered up with odds and ends”\(^5\). “Every State/ region should have a centre where are kept books weeded out from the libraries…”\(^6\). The said proposal for introducing a Book Bin system was given earlier in the Report of the Advisory Committee for Libraries, 1969. Till today this has not been introduced in West Bengal college libraries. This weeding-out policy should be enforced for all outdated and unused books. A depository library system should also be introduced by the proposed Directorate of the College Library and Information Service to house books weeded out from all PG college libraries (which are apparently outdated but actually important as publications) for occasional use. Balanced collection development policy has to be developed in West Bengal college libraries in the light of document evaluation, weeding, storage and preservation.

ii) Renovating Library Building

Every college library building should be renovated keeping in view the standard and specification for providing better physical facilities to the users.
iii) Strengthening Staff pattern

The PG college libraries are poorly staffed. To carry out the new responsibilities and the existing burden of work it is very much necessary to up-date the staff pattern in the ‘pyramid shape’ following the principle of modern organizational structure. New positions like system librarian may be created for developing computerised library system. For managing the electronically acquired diversified information sources the post of electronic service librarian may also be created for college libraries. Planning commission of India has also stressed upon the need for electronic librarians in the 7th Five-Year Plan. College libraries may reorganize their different units. Each library staff should work in different sections by rotation for enhancing his/her efficiency. For managing all sorts of responsibility with a limited number of staff a cross functioning team may be introduced in West Bengal PG college libraries. West Bengal PG College libraries should extend their reference service hour by appointing part-time librarians. For managing the diversified information sources in the library the UG students’ support as part-time library workers is a useful idea. It also fulfils the goal - “earning while learning”.

8.6.2.2 Reorganizing College Library Management Policy

A PG college library should modernize its management policy as a whole in the following ways:
i) Integration with Affiliating University

Integration should be developed at least between the college libraries and the affiliating university libraries. This will be helpful to the users. The study reveals that all Delhi college libraries are working under certain rules framed by the University of Delhi(7). The system generates some sort of integration between the college and university libraries. The study also identifies the fact that the USA college libraries are the part and parcel of a full-fledged integrated library system existing in a particular region. College libraries, university libraries, public libraries all are set to work together to offer an integrated library service in a particular region.

ii) Emphasizing Role of Librarians

Properly qualified (academically and professionally) librarian must be allowed to play key role in managing the college library. To get the work done, the librarian should inspire and motivate the staff to an effective extent. The participative management policy is the only solution to increase the motivation for work among all staff members of the library. The role of a librarian in a PG college is most vital. Hence the academic status of the college librarians (which still stands ambiguous in WB) must receive the acceptance of the competent authority. To increase the efficiency of college librarians ample opportunity for CPE should be extended to them.
iii) Elevating Work Culture

Measures should be taken to improve the work culture among the college librarians. A system of giving rewards (by means of incremental benefits) to the college librarians for higher efficiency should be introduced to raise the motivation level among the college librarians. It is to be noted that some of the USA college libraries (Boston college library) have introduced a system of reward for dedicated LIS personnel8. The scope for promotion (career advancement/ incremental benefit) should be considered against the accountability to duty and the higher level of efficiency. This system of prize and punishment is sure to rejuvenate the college library system in the state of West Bengal.

iv) Formation of Mitra Mandal Group

Local friendly groups should be organized to provide financial support to the college libraries in West Bengal. This type of supporting organization will function like the ‘Friends of the library’ in the USA. The Advisory committee of Libraries, 1969 (during 4th Five Year Plan) had suggested the need to develop “Mitra-Mandal group for libraries”9. Till now this has not come into existence either in Delhi or in West Bengal. The “Friends of the Library” community can be formed with the help of an NGO, which may also provide financial support to college libraries under the umbrella of the State Library Association. Tax exemption on such financial support for individual/Institution can also be thought of by the Central Government for augmenting financial resources of PG college libraries.
8.6.3 Measures for Introducing IT

The development of a college library also suffers from the absence of need-based guidelines for introducing IT in college libraries for their automated operation. The proposed Directorate of CLIS should take care of this. The following points are to be considered in this regard.

8.6.3.1 Convergence with Computer Centre

Every college should develop a link with the computer centre located in the college premises, which will provide help in the system changing work along with other day to day technical problems arising frequently in the library.

8.6.3.2 Library Computerisation and Networking

For successful library computerisation and networking the library authorities should first reengineer the manual library system. Library documents should be reorganized using standard classification scheme, catalogue code and standard subject heading list, before moving towards library computerisation. In the next phase, three major steps are to be taken for introducing computer in the college library.

1. Automation of each library by using a tested standard integrated software.
2. Creation of a computerised bibliographic database by each individual library.
3. Finally, network /consortia formation among all college libraries.
Ideally, the formation of consortia is imperative for all college libraries, though at this stage it is not so easy in West Bengal because of the heterogeneous nature of infrastructures of the college libraries. The following measures may lead to a solution.

(a) An interlibrary loan system may be introduced among the college libraries.

(b) An academic call centre may be opened under the proposed Directorate of College Library and Information Service which can serve an information enquirer through a toll free call. For developing e-governance the Central Government has already set up 300 centres in West Bengal through NICNET. The proposed Directorate needs to set up such a link with the said body for easy retrieval of information.

(c) A networked workstation may be set up under the proposed Directorate for promoting collaborative ventures among the college library units, framing need-based policies for rendering service to the user community and supplying up-to-date technical knowledge for updating college libraries.

As the mindless experimentations regarding library computerisation are of no use, an expert committee (task-force) should be set up to monitor the work of computerisation of the college library.
8.6.4 Raising Service Quality

West Bengal PG college libraries may undertake user study programme at least once in a year for analyzing the users’ need. In the next phase, the required service orientation must be made in college libraries in the light of the users’ need. This system may bring about a qualitative change in college library functioning. Information literacy programmes are to be organized in PG college libraries in collaboration with faculty members to maximize the use of the diversified information sources. This kind of programme may help to develop an information literate clientele in West Bengal colleges.

8.6.5 Introducing Performance Evaluation System for College Librarians.

A performance evaluation method for library professionals should be developed by means of a self-appraisal report. Usually a librarian has to submit such a report twice in a service career for career advancement. But an annual self-appraisal system may be made obligatory which is likely to improve the work culture in college libraries of West Bengal. Self appraisal form should include some points like official duties, professional activities, competency, extension of college library services and so on. A sample of performance evaluation sheet is provided in Appendix V.
8.6.6  Introducing Performance Evaluation System for College Libraries.

As there is no system of accreditation for West Bengal college libraries exclusively, a performance evaluation system should be introduced. The proposed Directorate of CLIS should involve the BLA (Bengal Library Association) in the matter of policy framing for performance evaluation of college libraries. The example of the ACRL, ALA of the USA can be a model for the purpose. The following steps may be considered by each college library in West Bengal.

(i) Each college library should quantify its services, measure them and publish the said data in the college library newsletter and the Annual Statistical report of the concerned college. The gap between the library users’ expectation and their satisfaction should be analysed for measuring the quality of service of the college library.

(ii) An internal auditing system for the college library service should be introduced.

(iii) Every year each library should fill-up a questionnaire (provided by the proposed Directorate of College Library and Information Services) regarding the staff, grant-receipt, number of documents procured and processed, number of equipment procured and its utilization and the amount of service provided to the user community etc.
A sample of the questionnaire for college library performance appraisal is provided in Appendix VI. The objective of the questionnaire is to elicit the current information regarding the entire library activities. Recognizing the effectiveness of the system of the USA college library performance assessment, the proposed Directorate of College Library and Information Services should scrutinize the questionnaires and manipulate the data regarding “input” and “output” for each library for calculating the ultimate “outcome” i.e. the performance of a college library system.
References


4. ibid. p 7.

5. INDIA, PLANNING COMMISSION. Report of the Advisory Committee for libraries, 1969. 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 255.

6. ibid. p 261.

7. UNIVERSITY OF DELHI. Governance of colleges. 1996; University of Delhi, New Delhi. p 86.

