Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The role of the academic library is very significant in higher education. At present the task of academic library has become more challenging and complex due to financial crunch, enormous rise in student population and information explosion. The growing financial crisis along with the increasing social demands for higher education compel many academic institutions to find different means to solve their problems. Of late, a good number of colleges have started PG courses to meet the market need. With the passage of time colleges are likely to impart education even through distant mode. Already the CEC–an interuniversity centre of University Grants Commission of electronic media has taken some initiatives to meet the situation. CEC planned to make countrywide teaching objective active by the end of July 2005 or so under EDUSAT network 1. Another such way, which is still in the experimental stage, is collaboration with the industry. The situational need is forcing some academic institutions to start self-financing course. Some of the higher education centres have formed library consortia to minimize the financial need. In future postgraduate colleges, gaining autonomous status may similarly try to find out means for solving the financial problem of the respective institutions. “Globalisation” and the rise of “Information Technology” profoundly influence the contemporary society. The higher education scenario undergoes a drastic change – in form, in content, in methodology, and in objectives.
1.2 Paradigm Shift

The traditional concept of the libraries has fundamentally shifted. Information technology has been applied in the library system and the library has changed its shape to some extent retaining its traditional characteristics. Thus the library has changed to a hybrid library. Gradual application of IT may lead to development of truly digital library. Thus a never-ending process of change in the library constitution results into a boundary spanning in library services. The traditional library system has been all about managing information resources within the library periphery. But in the changing system the library has extended itself far wide as a hybrid library and ultimately as a virtual library with an eye to the best benefit of the users. The paradigm-shift is reflected also in the relationship between the users and the library in the following way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>User/Library Interaction</th>
<th>Type of Library and Nature of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Holdings</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Traditional library/ Static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Hybrid library Both Static/Dynamic Virtual library/ Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To keep pace with this changing educational panorama the academic library has to reshape its organizational structure. It requires intelligent planning. The plan requires to recognize practical constraints and consider an appropriate balance of resources devoted to print and electronic sources of information.

In the field of higher education the college library sector has ever been the most important area. In India “with the rise of British paramountcy the college Libraries preceded the university libraries”\(^2\). Rightly, the college libraries have been the forerunner of university libraries. Apart from this, in recent years, with the advancement of the scope of learning and academic activities, the college libraries are expected to undertake the higher responsibilities of a university library because many of the colleges have undertaken PG programmes. Most of the reputed colleges of West Bengal are now running post-graduate as well as under-graduate curricula. Considering the demand of the day, new courses and curricula are being started with an eye to the market relevance. The college teachers are engaged in research too; they are either doing research work themselves or providing research guidance (under major/minor research projects) in order to promote themselves to the desired standard. So in the changing situation the role of college libraries is becoming very significant for the success of the new educational schemes.
1.3 Identification of the Research Area

The library is recognized as an important unit of a college. At present a good number of colleges in West Bengal is conducting both UG and PG courses. In times to come, it may happen that the colleges may have autonomous status both in academic and in financial spheres. They may open new courses through distant mode. (Now some of the colleges have the academic autonomy for their PG courses, e.g. Lady Brabourne College, Presidency College, etc). These changes in the college education system will affect directly the college library system. To meet the challenges posed by the new developments in college education system, every college library is trying to change its infrastructural set-up. Unless the situation in the college libraries improves to the extent necessary to meet the challenges, the total endeavour of the educational planners will be upset. The University Grants Commission (during the period of 9th plan & the 10th plan) has provided a special grant for upgrading college libraries. Most of the college libraries in Kolkata and its suburb have already received special grants for library computerisation. Thus, the college library sector of West Bengal is now in a transition state. It is necessary to analyse how college libraries of West Bengal are improving their infrastructural facilities and how the library professionals are enhancing their skills for a meaningful survival in the changing environment. It is high time for the West Bengal college library professionals to review their library infrastructure and their position to cope with this fast changing need.
1.4 Scope & Coverage

1.4.1 Scope

For reviewing the college library situation of West Bengal sixteen post-graduate college libraries have been studied in the light of their physical facilities, library hour, administrative policy, organizational structure, financial capabilities, man-power, scope for co-operation and co-ordination among the college libraries, CPE for library professionals, use of IT for rendering services, accreditation and so on. The output of the college libraries i.e. the amount of library services rendered by them has also been measured in the light of their hour of functioning, access to users, users’ satisfaction etc. For measuring the growth and development in West Bengal college libraries in comparison to college libraries at the national and international levels (16 college libraries of Delhi and 16 of the USA) have also been studied.

1.4.2 Coverage

In West Bengal out of the eight general universities only five are affiliating universities. These are Calcutta University, Burdwan University, Kalyani University, Vidyasagar University and North Bengal University. There are 375 affiliated colleges under these five universities\(^3\). Out of these colleges in West Bengal only 46 (list enclosed) are imparting PG education.\(^4\) The colleges that have opted to offer PG courses are naturally
regarded as the pioneers in the field of implementation of the new trend of college education. Out of the 46 PG colleges, only 16 (i.e. one third) colleges have been chosen for the present study. Initially the study had been confined to 14 PG college libraries in West Bengal. Later, the libraries of two more colleges, viz. St Xavier’s College library and Scottish Church College library were included as they were declared as colleges with potential for excellence by the UGC. The colleges located in Kolkata, the state capital are expected to have acquired the best form of library infrastructure. Hence, eight college libraries (out of 25) providing service in PG courses under Calcutta University have been chosen. These are Presidency College library, Lady Brabourne College library, Bethune College library, Bidhannagar College library, Moulana Azad College library, Rashtra Guru Surendranath College library (Barrackpore), Scottish Church College library and St Xavier’s College library. Out of these eight colleges, three (Presidency College, St Xavier’s College, Scottish Church College) have been declared as “Colleges with potential for excellence” by the UGC. Another eight college libraries have been chosen from other four affiliating universities. These are Hooghly Mohsin College library, Chandannagar Government College library and Durgapur Government College library (out of nine PG colleges) - all affiliated to Burdwan University, Krishnanagar Government College library (out of four PG colleges)- affiliated to Kalyani University, Midnapore College library (out of three PG colleges)- affiliated to Vidyasagar University and A B N Seal College library, Coachbihar, Ananda Chandra College library and Darjeeling Government College library (out of six PG colleges)- affiliated to North Bengal University. These leading college libraries providing service in PG education are having good status (both from financial point of view and the point of view of social
status) among all other colleges under the said universities. Out of sixteen, only three colleges (A B N Seal College, Krishnagar Government College and Darjeeling Government College) are not yet accredited by the NAAC. All other colleges are accredited (marked as A+, A or B++ grade) by the NAAC. So, it can be assumed that these sixteen colleges rightly reflect the highest form of college library situation of West Bengal. The study takes the time period of last ten years since 1997 to consider the developments of the concerned college libraries.

1.5 Objectives

The chief objective of the study is to evaluate the present college library situation of West Bengal and to assess the compatibility of the college library services with the present day demand of the higher education. More broadly the objectives are:

1. To identify the ‘Role’ of a library in the college education of West Bengal.
2. To study the existing method for performance measurement of a college library of West Bengal.
3. To scrutinize the measures taken for the development of West Bengal college libraries.
1.6 Methodology

Observation, interview, communication via e-mail and questionnaire methods have been followed for the study. Two preset questionnaires (questionnaire 1 for librarians; questionnaire 2 for library-users) have been used to estimate the prevailing situation for West Bengal post graduate college libraries. Data have been collected during May 2006 and Sept. 2007. The situation of West Bengal post-graduate college libraries has been estimated in the light of the Louis Shore’s idea of comparative librarianship. He suggested, “the study and comparison of library theory and practice is required between two countries for the purpose of broadening and deepening our understanding of professional problems and solution.” In this context it has been considered that Delhi college librarians have also taken certain measures in order to encounter the similar fast changing library situation. During the 1980s in the USA college library situation was similar to what college libraries in India face today (the fact is revealed from the USA-library literature). Thus the growth of Delhi college libraries and of the USA college libraries have been taken as a yardstick for measuring the rate of growth in the college libraries of West Bengal. The data obtained from (questionnaire-1) 16 college libraries of West Bengal have been compared with data obtained from sixteen college libraries (admitting post-graduate students) of Delhi and sixteen college libraries of the USA. Questionnaire –2 has been used for getting information regarding the college library services in West Bengal, Delhi and the USA. Information regarding the library services, manpower, collection, organizational structure, etc in an individual USA college library during 1980s (when the library system transformation took off) could not be obtained
through questionnaires -1. Present data regarding the aforesaid context of the concerned USA college libraries reflect the growth of the USA college library system for the last 30 years. Some of these relevant data have been collected for the present time for making the comparative study in the absence of data dating back to 1980 regarding the number of library staff, number of documents, organizational structure of the concerned individual library. Library literature published from ACRL, ALA and a few web-articles have been studied for gathering information regarding the history of college library development in the USA. Qualitative information are transcribed and weighted. Quantitative data are represented through statistical table.

1.6.1 Sample College Libraries from West Bengal, Delhi and the USA

(1) West Bengal College Libraries

Total 16 post graduate college libraries in West Bengal have been chosen for the study. Out of the 16 college libraries - eleven are government college libraries, four are non-government college libraries and one is autonomous college library. Name of these college libraries and the reason behind their selection has been stated in the earlier section 1.4.
(2) Delhi College Libraries

Questionnaires were sent to 48 Delhi college libraries (admitting post graduate students). Following 16 college libraries responded to it. These sixteen college libraries have been selected for the study. Filled-in questionnaires reveal that most of these colleges have been marked as extended-colleges (having more than fifteen-hundred students). These institutions are getting better funding from the UGC. Name of the selected college libraries are given below.

Trust College Libraries

1. St. Stephen College Library (1881)
2. Hindu College Library (1899)
3. Ramjas College Library (1917)
4. Sri Ram College of Commerce Library (1926)
5. Lady Irwin College Library (1932)
6. Hansraj College Library (1948)
7. S G T B Khalsa College Library (Day College-1951)
8. Daulat Ram College Library (1960)
9. Sri Venkateswara College Library (1961)
10. Zakir Hussain College Library (1975)
College Libraries Maintained by Delhi University

11. Miranda House Library (1948)
12. Deshbandhu College Library (1952)
13. Kirarimal College Library (1954)

College Libraries Run by Delhi Administration

14. Kamla Nehru College Library (1964)
15. Laksmibai College Library (1965)
16. Gargi College Library (1967)

(3) The USA College Libraries

Initially the US-News was consulted for selecting the USA college libraries. Addresses of the forty-eight college libraries (mentioned in the US-News) were collected through LIBWEB. Questionnaire-1 was sent via e-mail to these USA college libraries. Only five college libraries responded. Those five college libraries were chosen in the first phase for the study. In view of the insufficient number of responses an academic library forum ERIL-@LISTSERV.BINGHAMTON.EDU was used in the second phase. The questionnaire-1 was remodelled with the help of FREE ONLINE SURVEYS.COM and then it was circulated through the aforesaid academic library forum for getting information from the USA college libraries. From the various responses information were
scanned and more eleven college libraries were chosen on the basis of the merit of the information related to the study in the second phase. The data of those eleven college libraries have been supplemented with information from their web-sites and www.petersons.com (a commercial website that supplies information regarding USA Colleges). Total sixteen college libraries of the USA have been chosen in two phases for the study. Many students from West Bengal have gone to the USA for further studies. Help has been taken from such a few number of students (5) for getting information regarding the library services in the USA. Questionnaire –2 has been used for this purpose. Names of the selected college libraries are given below.

**Private Independent College Libraries**

1. Dickinson College Library, Pennsylvania (1783)
2. Williams College Library, Massachusetts (1793)
3. Trinity College Library, Connecticut (1823)
4. Oberlin College Library, Ohio (1834)
5. Elmira College Library, New York (1855)
6. Wellesley College Library, Massachusetts (1870)
7. Smith College Library, Massachusetts (1871)

**Religious College Libraries**

8. Boston College Library, Massachusetts (1863)
9. Canisius College Library, New York (1870)
10. St. Olaf College Library, North Field, Minnesota (1874)
11. Grand View College Library, Des Moines, Iowa (1896)
12. Whitworth College Library, Washington (1896)
13. King’s College Library, Pennsylvania (1946)
14. Eckerd College Library, Florida (1958)

State Funded College Libraries. (information about 2 college libraries are available)

15. Wayne State College Library, Nebraska (1910)
16. Queens College Library, New York (1937)

1.7 Conspectus

The thesis has eight chapters. Chapter 1 deals with introduction, identification of research area, scope and coverage of the study, methodology, etc.; Chapter 2 deals with the review of literature; chapter 3 deals with the changing Indian higher educational scenario and its impact on college libraries; Chapter 4 deals with the college library policy of India and its historical perspective; Chapter 5 deals with the college library situation in West Bengal; Chapter 6 deals with college library situation in Delhi and the USA; Chapter 7 deals with the comparative study of college library systems of West Bengal, Delhi and the USA; Chapter 8 deals with summary of the study and conclusion. References are provided at the end of each chapter following IS:2381-1978 Indian Standard Recommendations for Bibliographical references: essential and supplementary elements (first revision).
At the end there are six appendices and one index. Appendix I contains a list of PG colleges of West Bengal; Appendix II contains two questionnaires; Appendix III contain comparative charts of West Bengal college libraries, Delhi college libraries and the USA college libraries; Appendix IV contains two Government orders regarding the staff pattern of non-government college libraries of West Bengal; Appendix V contains a sample of self-appraisal form for college librarians. Appendix VI contains a sample proforma for measuring the overall performance of individual college libraries;
References

1. *CEC Television News: a monthly newsletter 24 hour higher education channel*. 2, 4; May 2005; p 1.


