University is an institution of higher education and the library is the heart of the learning community, providing a place for students, research scholars and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge.¹

The university library, being the pivot of all academic activities of the university, shall have the following objectives²:

- To support the teaching and research programmes of the university.
- To develop its collection by acquiring necessary reading materials to meet the present and future needs of its users for whom it is meant.
- To organize its collections, operations and services so as to provide for the reading materials and information needs of its users in anticipation and on demand. Networking and resource sharing among university libraries should be practiced by each institution towards utilization of all resources.
- To introduce, if necessary technological innovations like computer word processing etc. to facilitate users in getting prompt service.
- To provide facilities like reprography, inter-library loans, translation and documentation to assist the users.
- To promote library user education.

The main aim of the university library is to serve efficiently the participants in the instructional programme.³ University library directs its activities towards the fulfillment of the functions of the university, which are conservation of knowledge and ideas, teaching, research, publication, extension service, and interpretation of results of research. The library exists not merely to help the instructional function of the university; it does also a good deal in aid of research, which is another major function of the university. The library, therefore, performs a variety of functions, by way of helping students with text-books, parallel studies, reference books and periodicals; by providing a large number of bibliographical tools and up-to-date literature on every subject for students, teachers and research workers; as well as by maintaining an efficient reference and information service.⁴

University libraries play a vital role in the development and promotion of university education in the country. Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the then President of India, while inaugurating the World Book Fair at New Delhi in
1988 rightly observed that a library is more important than that of a university because library can function without a university whereas a university cannot do without a library.  

**Ancient Period**

The importance of libraries in academic institutions was recognized in India even in the remote past. In the Vedic age instructions were imparted “orally, without the medium of books.” The Gurus were like walking encyclopaedias. Libraries of the important centres of learning such as Nalanda, Vikramasila, Taxila, Vallabhi, Odantapuri, Somauri, Jaggadal, Mithila, Kanheri etc., have existed in our country from the very ancient times. All these centres of learning had reading materials.

Taxila University had an excellent library with a collection of works on Hinduism, political science, literature, medicine and philosophy. The Nalanda University library was the biggest in Asia. It had a huge library known as ‘Dharmaganja’ consisting of three buildings called ‘Ratnasagara’ (sea of gems), ‘Ratnadadhi’ (ocean of gems), and ‘Ratnaranjaka’ (collection of gems). Among them ‘Ratnadadhi’ was a nine-storeyed buildings which housed the rare manuscripts- Prajnaparamita Sutra and Tantric works such as Samajguhya etc.

In the seventh century A.D., there were two more famous seats of learning in the South India known as ‘Amarawati’ and ‘Nagarjuna’. Most of the collection of these learning seats was related to Rasayana Sastra. All these libraries were destroyed at one time or the other by fire.

**Medieval Period**

The existence of academic libraries during the medieval period of Indian history is not known, though the Muslim rulers did patronize libraries in their own palaces.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, India was ruled by Muslim rulers- Khilji and Tughlak who had their private collections. Thereafter Amir Khausru a famous scholar, poet and musician was appointed as librarian of the Imperial Library at Delhi by Sultan Jatt Jalaluddin....Among all the Mughal Emperors Akbar was very much interested in maintaining, collecting and preserving the books.
During the rule of Mohammed Shah (1719-1748), Nadir Shah attacked on India and he took away all the collection of Imperial Library from Delhi to Persia. After the decline of Mughal period, libraries became the matter of loot. All the material which was carefully collected, maintained and preserved by former rulers was destroyed.15

**Modern Period**

**Early Nineteenth Century**

College libraries are the fore-runners of a modern university library. Lord Minto, Governor-General (1807-13), in his minutes of the 6th March, 1811 wrote that a library be attached to each of the colleges under the charge of a learned native with a small establishment of servants for the care of manuscripts (India, Bureau of Education 1920).16

Lord Auckland, Governor-General of India (1836-40), further outlined the library policy in his minutes of the 24th November, 1839 that in order to make the greatest use of the advantages of the colleges, I would attentively watch the degree to which the students profit by their access to the considerable libraries which are now attached to many of our institutions.17

Library collections of the colleges thus started growing during this period. Hunter Commission (1882) reported that some libraries have crossed the thousand mark of the collection of books18 as shown in table 4.1 and figure 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>No. of Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPG College Trichinapally</td>
<td>1120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency College, Madras</td>
<td>3289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government College, Lahore</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government College, Jabalpur</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 4.1
The recommendation of the Hunter Commission (1882) about special grants to libraries was actually the “first official statement stressing the need for assistance to libraries attached to institutions of higher learning”. 19

Seven years after the Hunter Commission Report, in 1889, the library of the Forman Christian College at Lahore was established. Within five years, 13000 books were purchased. H. N. Grinwold was the first Librarian. The reading-room was opened for twenty-four hours and the students were encouraged to go in at all hours.... It helped to promote the habit of self-study and stimulated general reading outside the prescribed text books. 20

Later Nineteenth Century

The libraries of the universities established in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857 were not established simultaneously with the establishment of these universities. The time gap is revealed in table 4.2. 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the University</th>
<th>Year of Establishment of University</th>
<th>Year of Establishment of Library</th>
<th>Time Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>17 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>16 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>50 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allahabad</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>29 Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the establishment of Calcutta University on January 24, 1857, a new era of higher education and academic libraries started in India. 22 The Calcutta University Library owes its origin to the philanthropy of Joy Kissan Mookerjee who offered to donate Rs.5000/- for purchase of books in 1869, but it was not before 1873 that a library was started there. 23

Bombay University was also established in 1857 without any library attached to it. The principal reason for excluding a library was that the university was only an examining body. The foundation stone for the university library was laid on March 1, 1869, due to the efforts of a Bombay businessman who offered a donation of Rs. 2, 00,000/- for the construction of the library building. 24

Similarly, Premchand, Raychand a merchant of Bombay offered to the university a donation of Rs. 20,000/- towards the erection of a university library which may be an adornment to the city, and by becoming a storehouse
of the learned works, not only of the past, but of many generations to come, may be the means of promoting the high ends of the university. The same donor gifted further a sum of Rs. 200000/- for a clock tower for the library in memory of his mother Mrs. Rajabai. The construction of the library and the clock tower was started in 1869 and completed in 1878. The library was formally opened to readers on February 27, 1880.25

Madras University was also founded in 1857. Like Bombay and Calcutta, it was started as an examining body. Unfortunately, no one thought of establishing a library, with the result that it remained without a library for fifty years of its existence. It was only in 1907 that Madras University was able to get its first university library through donations.26

Pre-Independence Era

Universities Commission, 1902

With the universities of Panjab and Allahabad coming into existence in 1882 and 1887 respectively, the number of universities in India rose to 5 before the close of the nineteenth century. In all these universities, libraries were conspicuous by their absence in the priority list of university development.27 Since these universities were not the centres of learning and research but were mainly meant for holding examinations and awarding degrees, the need for well-equipped and organized library system was not felt.28 This situation was evident from the Report of the Universities Commission 1902 (Chairman: Sir Thomas Raleigh). It remarked29:

“For the present university libraries there is not much to be said. The library at Madras appears to be entirely neglected. Bombay has a good collection of oriental and other books; but the library is little used by graduates and hardly at all by students. Calcutta has a library and money has been granted for the purpose of making it supplementary to other libraries in Calcutta. It is opened to fellows and to persons permitted by the syndicate to use it for the purpose of literary search. The Allahabad University has no library. Lahore has not a very large university library.”

The Commission, therefore, sought to recommend that “good reference libraries should be provided in this connection both with universities and colleges in order that students may have an opportunity of forming the habit of independent and intelligent reading.”30
An immediate outcome of the observations and recommendations of the Universities Commission (1902) led to the Indian Universities Act (1904) which was quite specific about the role of a library in a university set-up. The Panjab University, Lahore was the first to take note of this and secured the services of Asa Don Dickinson, an American Librarian and a student of Melvil Dewey, “to reorganize and catalogue and administer the university library and to give a course of training in modern library methods.”

Calcutta University Commission, 1917-19
The Calcutta University Commission appointed in 1917, under the chairmanship of Dr. Michael Sadler produced a ten-volume report and dealt in great detail the state of affairs existing in libraries and suggested suitable measures.
A detailed study of the report gives a picture how the commission viewed the role of the university libraries. The report said that the university librarian should be appointed by the Executive Council on the recommendations of the Academic Council. He ought to be functionary of great importance, ranking with university professor, having the salary and status of a university professor and should be ex-officio member of the Academic Council.

University Libraries during 1919-1947
During the period 1919-1930, eight new universities were established and with them the university libraries. There were international contacts between Indian and British university libraries, and gradually with American university libraries as well. The administrative set-up of the Indian university libraries was after the model of the western libraries.

The University of Madras appointed Dr. S.R. Ranganathan as its librarian in 1924. He introduced the lending and reference service at the Madras University Library and extended the library hours for the benefit of readers. The State Government provided additional grant to buy books and periodicals in pure sciences, humanities and social sciences.
According to Ranganathan, “this was the first time when such a forward financial step in the history of university libraries in India was taken in the second quarter of the 20th century.”

The years between 1939 and 1947, clouded with the effects of World War II, were almost bleak so far as university library development was concerned.
On the whole, the concept of library was more or less useless before Independence. The result was that the libraries even in the well-established universities were not properly organized and the status of librarian was pathetically low. Many libraries were housed in buildings meant for some other purposes. Among the more serious defects of these library buildings were the lack of sufficient space for books and readers. Most libraries do not allow open access. The furniture and equipment provided in the libraries were also of old and antiquated types. Before Independence, the status of the university librarians was no better than that of a watchman of books. Anybody was considered fit for this position. Such practices had become traditions and this was why hardly any well qualified person thought of joining the library profession. Then came the practice of putting an honorary librarian-usually one of the professors-over the library staff. This deprived the university librarians of all initiative and infused in them an attitude of inferiority complex.

In this context, the University Education Commission, 1948-49 observed, “it was distressing to find that in most of colleges and universities the library facilities were very poor indeed.”

Post Independence Era

Realizing the value of libraries in higher education, various expert committees and commissions set up by Government of India have made strong recommendations for the development of university libraries.

University Education Commission, 1948-49

The University Education Commission set up in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observed the importance of libraries in the fulfillment of the objectives of higher education and stated that “the library is the heart of all the university’s work; directly so, as regards its research work and indirectly as regards its educational work which derives its life from 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?” The Commission also recommended:
• Introduction of open access system in university libraries;
• Increase of library hours, beyond the college or university hours;
• Organization and creation of new large libraries; and
• Adequate and well qualified staff in hierarchy.

It also recommended that $6\frac{1}{4}$% of total budget of the university or Rs. 40 per student should be spent on libraries. The Commission also recommended non-recurring grants once in five years to cope with the arrears of books and journals.$^{46}$ It was for the first time that such a detailed attention was paid to library matters by a commission on university education in India.$^{47}$

**University Grants Commission, 1953**

After the publication of Radhakrishnan Commission Report in 1949, the University Grant Commission (UGC) was constituted in 1953 and it was made a statutory body in 1956. Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, the first chairman of UGC, while drawing an analogy between a university and the human body remarked that “the students form the body of the university, the administration is the head, the teachers are the soul and the library is the heart.”$^{48}$

He further realized the need for$^{49}$:

• Libraries being housed in functionally suitable and spatially adequate buildings;
• A qualitatively and quantitatively adequate book stock to support the teaching and research programmes of the universities; and
• Scientific organization of the book collection and the organization of appropriate services around the book collection suited to the needs of teachers, research scholars and students.

**Ranganathan Committee, 1957**

The UGC appointed a library committee in 1957, under the chairmanship of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan to advice on all the aspects of libraries. As remarked by Mukerjee, “this Library Committee Report is a document of enduring value, which provides standards and guiding principles for administration and organization of university libraries, specifies qualifications and pay scales of university and college libraries, makes recommendations for education for librarianship and deals with other relevant matters in a novel and ingenious way.”$^{50}$
The UGC’s library committee (1957) in its report further suggested that 50% of the total expenditure of a university library should be spent on books, periodicals and other kind of reading materials, while 50% should be spent on staff.\textsuperscript{51}

Similarly, the UGC organized a seminar “From Publisher to Reader: Work-Flow in University and College Libraries” at Delhi from March 4-7, 1959 and invited all librarians to keep them informed about the progress of the committee, discuss their problems and find out the solutions.\textsuperscript{52} The UGC also appointed a Review Committee in 1961 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan in order to get well-qualified staff for the university libraries.

**Education Commission, 1964-66**

The Education Commission (1964-66) under the chairmanship of Dr. D. S. Kothari marked another important stage in the history of university libraries in India. Some of the recommendations made by the commission are worth mentioning:

“No university, college or department should be set up without taking into account its library needs in terms of staff, books, journals, space etc. Nothing could be more damaging to a growing department than to neglect its library or to give it a low priority. On the contrary, the library should be an important centre of attraction on the college or university campus.”\textsuperscript{53}

“With ever-increasing enrolment in the universities and colleges, the demand for library service has been mounted. Unlike in the past, the library staff has now to cater to the diverse needs of undergraduates, postgraduates and research scholars.”\textsuperscript{54}

However, in spite of these, the recommendations of this commission on libraries did not indicate anything revolutionary or far-reaching.\textsuperscript{55} A university library’s potential for providing the learning environment was conveniently overlooked by the commission.\textsuperscript{56}

All the commissions on university education–Releigh, Sadler, Radhakrishnan and Kothari – have, in fact, “treated library as an adjunct to research, but not a process that should permeate the academic life of the university campus; and never a thought has been given to bring the library into full participation in the teaching process.”\textsuperscript{57}
Wheat Loan Education Programme

The Wheat Loan Education Programme came into existence after the passing of Public Law 480 (PL 480) in 1951 by American Congress. According to this Act, a sum of $19000000 was provided to India for the purchase of wheat. Further, it was made clear that a sum of $5000000 of the interest of total loan should be spent on the purchase of American books, scientific equipments, tools, machines and on the exchange of educationists and academicians in between India and the United States.58

As observed by Mangla and Sardana, “during 1954-61 approximately $17000000 were spent on books and exchange of librarians. The contributions made under the Wheat Loan Programme have helped a great deal in the growth of the 36 universities and 52 research libraries in India.”59

The Wheat Loan funds also were used in establishing and providing resources in three university extension libraries to serve the colleges in Ludhiana, Madurai and Udaipur.60

Review Committee on University Grants Commission (RCUGC) (1977) expressed that use of a library is itself a technique and unless students are trained to use libraries, they may not derive any benefit, the matter needs attention; the main emphasis should be put on the improvement of library facilities.61

Modernization of Libraries

National Policy on Education, 1986

National Policy on Education (NPE) advocated a nation-wide movement for improvement of existing libraries and the establishment of new ones as well as provision of library facilities in all educational institutions.62

Documents for formulating National Policy on Library and Information Science (NPLIS) for providing adequate library services to the masses of the country, has developed the programmes to use large number of academic, public special and departmental libraries for active participation of their users, The document prepared for NPLIS has laid more emphasis on the following areas63:

- Resource Sharing
- SDI/CAS services
- Modernization/computer application
- Use of microprocessor
- Network of library and information science centre
- User education programme
- Quality of service to be improved

**Eighth Plan Provision for Library Facilities**

In eighth plan guidelines under the broad directions for development schemes, the Planning Commission setup a Working Group on Libraries and Informatics. The commission laid emphasis on the upgradation of library facilities and services. Libraries should be transformed into information centres and steps be taken to link the library with various departments through modern communication technology. Library services be strengthened to extend its access with a view to make it whole day institution working with modern facilities including computer, search and documentation services. 64

**Need for Computerization and Networking**

In the early 1960s several libraries of North America and UK began to experiment with computers. In USA this work of experimenting was mostly confined to special libraries and university libraries. 65 H. P. Luhn, in 1961, used a computer to produce the ‘Keyword in Context’ or KWIC index for articles appearing in Chemical Abstracts. 66 The first use of computer in library and information centre in India was reported in 1965 at INSDOC. 67 The use of computer in the library is the need of the day and its application will certainly increase the use and utility of libraries. 68

The libraries are being automated to provide information to the users/researchers electronically not only of its own resources but also of the resources of the libraries of the entire globe. 69

There are number of library automation packages available in India. At present, a number of foreign as well as indigenous library automation software packages are being used in India, such as Alice for windows, Virtua, TechLib Plus, Libsys, Granthalaya, Sanjay, WYLYSYS etc. to enhance the effectiveness of library services including retrieval of information activities. Computerization of the university libraries is a must due to shrinking budgets, escalating cost of publications, information explosion and increasing capabilities of IT. IT helps libraries not only to cope with this difficult
situation but also to utilize the collections optimally and to offer better service.  

Economic pressures, growth of publications and emergence of subject specialization have compelled the libraries and information centres to think of sharing the information resources and optimizing the use of existing resources with in India as well as from abroad through various networking systems. Some of the notable networks in India are NICNET (National Informatics Center Network), ERNET (Education and Research Network), CALIBNET (Calcutta Library Network), DELNET (Developing Library Network), ADINET (Ahmedabad Library Network) etc. These networks are engaged in compiling union catalogs, creating various databases of experts, providing training to library staff, Inter Library Loan (ILL), on line facilities, reference service, etc.

**Information and Library Network**

The University Grants Commission has set up an autonomous Inter-University Centre (IUC) in 1991 named Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) with its headquarter located at the Gujarat University Campus, Ahmedabad. Major activities and services of the Centre are geared towards modernization of academic libraries and information centres to promote information transfer and access, to support scholarship, learning and academic pursuits. The centre acts as a nodal agency for networking of libraries and information centers in universities, institutions of higher learning and R & D institutions in India. The centre was established as an independent autonomous Inter-University Centre of UGC in May 1996 and set out to be a major player for promoting scholarly communication among academicians and researchers across the country. Almost all academic libraries, especially university libraries are members of INFLIBNET. It has also developed library automation software called SOUL (Software for University Libraries). The software was offered free-of-cost to 103 libraries with extensive training for its implementation. The centre has a lot to offer to personnel working in libraries and educational institutions in the North–Eastern Region.
Library Consortia

Due to financial crunch and increasing costs of journals, many Indian university and college libraries cannot subscribe to all the required journals and databases.

On an average, an Indian university library subscribes to even less than 500 journals and at many universities there is no subscriptions. As a result, many libraries are forming consortia for resource sharing.

According to Potter, “academic libraries are forming consortia to provide common access to electronic resources across the Internet, and they are forming these consortia on a statewide basis.”

UGC INFONET Consortium

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched an ambitious programme to bring about a qualitative change in the academic infrastructure, especially for higher education. Under this initiative, the UGC facilitates modernization of university campuses with state-of-art campus wide networks and has set up its own nationwide communication network named UGC-INFONET Consortium with INFLIBNET as its executing and coordinating agency.

The UGC–Infonet Digital Library Consortium was formally launched in December 2003 by Honorable Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the then President of India soon after providing the Internet connectivity to the universities in the year 2003 under the UGC–Infonet Programme.

The consortium provides current as well as archival access to more than 7500+ core peer reviewed journals and 10 bibliographic databases from 26 publishers and aggregators in different disciplines.

INDEST Consortium

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has set-up the Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST) Consortium on the recommendation made by the Expert Group appointed by the ministry under the chairmanship of Prof. N. Balakrishnan. The ministry provides funds required for the subscription to electronic resources for 48 academic institutions including the Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), Regional Engineering Colleges, Indian Institute of Managements (IIMs), and few other centrally funded Government
institutions through the consortium headquarters set-up at the IIT Delhi. The INDEST consortium is the most ambitious initiative taken so far in the area of engineering and technology disciplines.

The National Knowledge Commission
The National Knowledge Commission\(^{77}\) was set up by the Government of India on 13\(^{th}\) June 2005 with a time-frame of three years, from 2\(^{nd}\) October 2005 to 2\(^{nd}\) October 2008. As a high-level advisory body to the Prime Minister of India, the National Knowledge Commission was given a mandate to guide policy and direct reforms, focusing on certain key areas such as education, science and technology, agriculture, industry, e-governance etc. Easy access to knowledge, creation and preservation of knowledge system, dissemination of knowledge and better knowledge services are core concerns of the commission.

The commission\(^{78}\) envisaged the future road map for the growth and development of academic libraries by imbibing core issues such as set up a national commission on libraries, prepare a national census of all libraries, revamp LIS education, training and research facilities, re-assess staffing of libraries, set up a central library fund, modernize library management, encourage greater community participation in library management, promote information communication technology applications in all libraries, facilitate donation and maintenance of private collections and encourage public private partnership in LIS development, etc.

With the advent of information technology, the situation began to change as printed information began to be digitized and make available for use with the help of computer networks.

The primary objective of university libraries is to organize and provide access to information, and it remains the same although the format and methods have changed drastically. Under the present scenario of declining budgets and higher subscription costs of journals in India, it is becoming very difficult to meet the demands of library/information users. The only solution to the problem is the pooling and sharing of resources – print as well as electronic by way of consortia. New technology has provided great opportunities for delivery of services within consortia.\(^{79}\)
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