

Symbiotic Relation between a Library and an Academic Institution

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Abstract:

Academic libraries and academic institutions are always interlinked and dependent on the purpose of serving educational activities and the well-designed curriculum of the formal education system. Academic institutions without a library have no significance and an academic library without its parent institution has no origin. But it is rarely found that these are named, discussed, analyzed, and worked together as a whole. This study aimed to find out the academicians' perceptions of the symbiotic relationship between academic institutions and libraries. For the study, the Central Departments of the University Campus Tribhuvan University, Nepal were chosen. The study followed the quantitative method using a survey research design through a questionnaire tool eleven responses were received. Data were analyzed descriptively. Academicians have a keen interest in the establishment of libraries within the department and arrange the library scientifically to enhance research and teaching learning activities. In most of the departmental libraries the post of librarian was found vacant. The praiseworthy dedication of the academicians to the development of libraries for their collaborative partnership was found. They are very much sure about the impact of libraries in teaching learning and research activities. The service delivered by the libraries as the first door to the search for information by students and faculties is recommended undoubtedly.

Keywords: *Academic libraries; Higher education; Library - Staff; Library - Education.*

Background of the Study:

Education has a multi-dimensional nature of the concept. Education is a continuing process of modification, it is highly essential for human beings to advance themselves to execute and handle any environment or tasks intellectually. It is the process of enabling

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learning, or the acquisition of knowledge (Watson-Boone, 2000). Educational methods include teaching, training, describing, observing, storytelling, discussion, experimentation, and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators and mentors, but learners may also educate themselves in a self-learning environment for lifelong learning (Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 2013).

The right to education has been recognized as a basic need by our constitution (Government of Nepal, 2015). It corresponds to the education process normally adopted by primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities. Formal education is a hierarchically structured and graded education system, running from primary school through the university. The methodology of teaching in a formal system is called pedagogy. Informal learning usually takes place outside educational institutions, does not follow a detailed curriculum, organize accidentally, and may be associated with certain occasions due to changing requirements. It is not necessarily planned to be pedagogically conscious and systematic (Jantz, 2012). The levels of formal education have a compatible relationship with academic libraries but informal education is not in a close relationship with it.

Academic institutions are those that are devoted to education and research, after the completion of pre-determined courses they grant academic degrees. An academic means an educational institution such as a university that has been established or accredited by governmental approval and offers various programs including a university, college, or high school, as well as libraries (Abdullahi, 2009).

A library is a collection of information resources in a variety of forms and formats, where collected information is organized systematically by skilled professionals or by experts who provide appropriate manual, electronic, bibliographic, or intellectual access. To the clients, they offered well planned services and activities with the goal of informing, educating, entertaining or expanding knowledge to an audience with various information needs and the goal of motivating individual for self-learning practice and evolving society as a whole (Eberhart, 2000). The library is the product of humans 'cultural maturation', it is essentially responsible for the total communication pattern of modern society. The advent and advance of democracy, the extending range of education, the extremely increasing ratio of research activities, and the virtual explosion of knowledge and information have necessitated the service of a well-stocked, well-staffed, well-organized, and up-to-date library. Libraries of today are information centers, knowledge dissemination centers, and social agencies for social change, to address all the users' requirements. Libraries are the foundation to advance research activities and human knowledge (Oakleaf, 2010).

Among various types of libraries, academic libraries are playing a vital role to advance modern society. Academic libraries comprise school, college, and university libraries whose prime objective is to meet the academic needs of the particular institution

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for which it is created to serve (Bailey-Hainer & Forsman, 2005). The purpose of a university library differs, to a varying degree, from that of a school or college library in that the former observes the extensive and particular emphasis on research projects apart from the curricular needs of the institution. Besides aiding in the studies of students and assisting the teachers in their teaching and research, a university library is primarily concerned to get a first-hand-knowledge to use the library resources most effectively. This kind of library serves to build up a strong mental base and character among the future of the nation. Academic libraries are established to cater basic level of education to a higher level of education. Academic libraries are distinct from other kinds of libraries because they serve as learner-oriented laboratories which support, extend, and individualize an academic program and the curriculum (Owusu-Ansah, 2004).

Academic libraries, knowledge, and ideas are central to functioning in today's knowledge-based society successfully. They are places for learning and thinking to play a key role in supporting and developing enjoyment of reading and multiple literacies including recreational, research, and experimentation tasks (Gayton, 2008). So, the importance of libraries within the departments of the universities cannot be ignored because it is a fundamental resource for supporting students' learning and a key support for professors. The library reflects and encourages collaborative learning and sharing of ideas. Libraries provide access to materials in various formats, assists to increase students' curiosity in reading, learning, observing, analyzing, identifying, and using the latest available information and ideas. Libraries within the department as a repository prepare students to live and learn in a world of information for the expansion of their knowledge level (American Library Association, Association of College, & Research Libraries, 2000).

In terms of educational benefits, academic libraries are fully and comprehensively equipped to meet the varying demands of the students for their references and research on all subjects that form part of their curriculum (Melling, 2013). As part of the educational system, the librarian and his/her subordinates disseminate the systematically gathered knowledge, to the needy people to enhance their knowledge level (Somi & De Jager, 2005). The academic library is an undeniable link and an aid in the learning environment which cannot be excluded in the multifarious areas of the university-level education system. The academic library and academic institution always stand as a permanent pillar in preserving and promoting culture and education in society. To provide lively services, both of them have to perform their duties and responsibilities for each other equally (Sennyey, Ross, & Mills, 2009).

Objectives:

The purpose of the library and academic intuition are somehow similar, i.e., enlighten society. Therefore, based on the services offered by both of these two, they are also

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known as sister services offered by them to society. In the absence of one, another couldn't ably perform any kinds of activities, services, or functions effectively and efficiently. To provide lively services, both of them have to perform their duties and responsibilities for each other equally. Academic institutions without a library have no significance and an academic library without its parent institution has no origin. But it is rarely found that these both are named, discussed, analyzed and worked together as a whole.

Thus, this study aimed to find out the academicians' perceptions of the symbiotic relationship between academic institutions and libraries. For the study, the Central Departments of the University Campus, Tribhuvan University, the biggest and oldest university in Nepal was chosen.

Methods:

A quantitative research method was adopted by choosing a survey research design followed by a descriptive method to analyze the data and a purposive sample was applied for this study. To collect the data, Google questionnaire was e-mailed to the thirty-five participants via the official email of the head of the Central Departments of the University Campus (Tribhuvan University, 2023). Among them, only eleven responses were received by the researcher. It seems the significance of the library and mutually beneficial relationship is not well communicated to the executive level because of the empty post of a librarian as a communicator between executive level and libraries as well as its effectiveness wouldn't be highlighted through services, etc.

Discussion and Findings:

Having a long history to run the department with essential fundamentals is very adventurous as well as the challenging side of the department itself. All the departments are found running Masters' and Ph.D. programs simultaneously few of them actively run the M.Phil. program too, having a number of enrolled students up to three-hundred. The number of faculties, including part-time lecturers, shows signs of very insufficient manpower to run the three levels of the programs with research activities, which is the very depressing side of an academic institution.

To run the research-based academic programs successively, various kinds of materials became essential to fulfill their information thirst. Except for the subscription of any online databases by a couple of the departments, it is found that all of the departments are trying to cover verities of forms and formats of information resources physically including; books, journals, reports, theses, etc. as a collection of their library up to seven-thousands collections. Their dedication to establishing a library within the departments was found quite impressive and praiseworthy but the requirements of skilled human resources to run the library scientifically are found ignored.

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Being an indispensable part and functioning as a repository center of the department, it is found that, libraries of each department attempted to offer various kinds of services even in the absence of a professional librarian and well-known scientific system in the library. Some of them are; Document issues, Reading space, Referral services, Computer facility with Internet, etc. As a center of research, this is not enough for the University students and faculties. But “Half a loaf is better than no bread”, means something is better than having nothing.

The way they are functioning the library without having full-time professional staff and enough budget is not an easy task. It proves that they are well conscious regarding the importance of libraries to inculcate research activities and enhance the academic standard at the university level. All of them strongly agree on the effectiveness raised with the help of libraries in higher-level teaching-learning activities. By providing the access to various resources, departmental libraries play an essential role in supporting research at the first door. Librarians are experts in information literacy and can help students and researchers to navigate the complex world of academic research. They can help students and faculties to identify and locate required resources, as well as guide how to evaluate and use information effectively but their roles are excluded from almost all of the departmental libraries in the absence of full-time library staff within the library. These kinds of libraries also serve as a center for collaborative and interdisciplinary research. They also offer study spaces and meeting rooms, for students and faculty to work together on group projects and research at various levels as well as support the academic curriculum and calendar.

The reason behind having no library staff in the departmental libraries is the irregular advertisement for new posts, cancellation of the pre-fixed competitive examinations, inadequate staff in the university, vacant posts of leadership in the TU Service Commission, and so on.

Libraries of today must be able to establish communication between the user and their document without any time gap. The documents suggested by the teachers and students are found acquired for the collection development in the libraries, which is a very frequently followed system to acquire documents, especially in academic libraries. But they also slanted their opinion and future plan as a secondary method to acquire the needy documents suggested by publishers and authors themselves. To fulfill the students’ and teachers’ current information needs and kept up to date information within the library they follow the continuous acquisition procedure. Approximately, they purchased two-hundred documents annually some of the documents are received as a gift and some are their production by teachers and students. But having the vacant post of librarian, they are facing so many troubles in the proper management and functioning of the library to

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fulfill the objective of an academic library, especially within the University. Besides these obstacles, the common output of the study is that, academicians are eagerly waited to establish a collaborative partnership between library and academic institution for their better and more fruitful performances.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the symbiotic relationship between academic libraries and institutions is essential for their better performance. They have a mutually beneficial relationship; each supports the other's existence and helped to fulfill the other's aims. In the absence or less contribution of one, another becomes incapacitated and academicians are agreed with this statement. Almost all departments developed the collection within their premises as per their convenience and named it a 'library' but not found a properly functioning one to meet the criteria of the departmental library scientifically organized. Universities are the center of research to enhance knowledge and expand the branch of knowledge. Being the first door to the search for information by students and faculties, every departmental library should systematize its services and functions to fulfil their immediate information needs. After that, the biggest library in Nepal the Tribhuvan University Central Library is always there for all of them to provide aids for further search and expand their search criteria. TU Service Commission should enroll new librarians to fill the gap of skilled personnel in libraries. Most importantly, all academicians at the executive level need to understand the requirement and significance of libraries within academic institutions for effective academic activities and the prerequisites for their establishment.

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