

Marketing of Library and Information Services In The Higher Educational Institutions: A Case Study in Jorhat District of Assam

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ABSTRACT

Libraries and information centres in Academic Institutions play a vital role in providing information and related services to researchers, scholars, students, teachers and non-teaching staff of the parent institution. In this paper, a modest attempt has been made to find out the marketing mix in the college library and information centres and to evaluate the present condition and standard of library and information centres. In addition, the paper also tries to find out the common problem faced by the college library and information centre users to access the information Jorhat district of Assam. The paper which is exploratory in nature is based on both primary and secondary data. In conclusion, it is suggested that the librarian and library management committee should use marketing tools and techniques to make effective plan by which a library can fulfil the user's needs and demands.

Keywords: Marketing, Library Service, Information Centre, Higher Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Library is essentially a service institution. The traditional function of library service involves a variety of activities on the part of the library. To achieve its goals and realize its policies, a library undertakes various services. The academic libraries are no exception to this. The library service can broadly be studied under two heads: 1) Work behind the screen or 'Technical Service' : It is an indirect service involving book acquisition, classification, cataloguing, binding and reproduction of documents etc. 2) Work with the readers or 'Readers Services': It is a direct job which involves circulation techniques, reference and bibliographical services, reprography service, documentation and information services. The introduction and application of Computer Technology in the services of library functions like automation of the library, information storage and retrieval, automation of the library office and resource sharing networking enables libraries to provide efficient and specialized information services to its user community.

Academic Library: A library and Information Centre attached to any educational institution is known as

academic library and Information Centre. The main function of Academic library is to function as an auxiliary to parent institution in carrying out its teaching programme effectively. Library and Information Centre is an important intellectual resource of the academic community and helps to an academic library's members for their 'self-development' to fulfil the curriculum requirements and to promote students research.

Marketing of Library and Information Services: Library is not only dissemination of information; but to promote its product and services. Marketing of library and information service is an integral part of Library Management 'Marketing includes optimum use of its resources, access users' needs and service performance, examine organizational objectives, plan for using new technology, implement various information services, programme for further development, increase more user by convert non-users into regular users, create and stimulate the desire for good reading, extend the library service to those who are away from the library, develop and train man power, forecasting about the market environment and pricing of product and service etc.' All

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these expected to help to promote an Academic Library in a right direction and improve the image of the library and information profession in the society. Therefore, it is necessary for a librarian or administrators to adopt the marketing strategies without exception.

‘Marketing’ as a concept and practice, still seems unnecessary to many libraries and information personnel. Within the profession, there is a residual feeling that marketing is somehow inappropriate for a public service institution such as academic library. Some librarian till now hold this view and see no room for such practice in not-for-profit profession like academic librarianship, though knowingly or unknowingly do the marketing activities in the organization.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Alemna, Anaba A. (2001),¹ there is an importance of marketing and total quality management in libraries. They are of the view that the conditions which challenged libraries in developed countries to adopt marketing and total quality management strategies are very much prevalent in Ghana at present.

Lee, Chang C (1992)² opines that few academic library directors consider using marketing strategies to attract more users, to make a better image, and even to obtain more financial support from their administrators. Most academic libraries deem that students and faculty members will automatically and continuously use libraries. He further opines that the university of Central Florida Library has applied the three basic marketing strategies—exhibits/displays, new releases, and publications— for years. As a result, the Libraries statistical figures in circulations, interlibrary loan, and reference questions answered have been significantly increased and the image of Library and Librarians is amazingly high.

Dabas, K.C. (2008)³ explains with a view to raise awareness level of library and information professionals about the wonderful body of knowledge and opportunities

and challenges posed by information technology and build confidence among them to play a proactive role in the service of the end users. The book deals with (i) information handling activities and technological stage of mankind, (ii) Information and knowledge measurement and management (iii) Access to information and (iv) Library automation and quality oriented strategies.

Coughlan Annet T., et al., (1996)⁴ focuses primarily on how to design, develop, and maintain effective relationships among channel members so that sustainable competitive advantages can be achieved for their respective firms, both individually and collectively. Emphasis is on how making certain that products and services are available for consumption by industrial, commercial, and household end-users. The final result of effective marketing channel management is the assurance of end-user satisfaction via the provision of time, place, and possession utilities. The focus of the text is on the way in which marketing channels can provide customer service, both for the end-user they serve and the organizations that comprise them.

In a study conducted by Gupta, Dinesh Kumar (1996)⁵ on the Library of Parliament of India and libraries attached to State Legislatures, it was found that the small size of neglected conditions but important group of libraries and information services to legislators; he further opines that recommendation for creation of National Coordinating Centre will help in formulating norms for this group of libraries and may bring uniformity in their work pattern to develop the required

Raina Roshan (1998)⁶ justifies the absorption of marketing approaches in the information context as a means to help the Libraries and Information Centre (LICs) achieve their basic objective of providing right information to the right user at the right time and at a right cost. It also advocates that by bringing in marketing orientation in the LICs, Libraries and Information Managers(LIMs) will ensure (i)increased information awareness or consciousness among their clientele;(ii) optimal utility of the rich learning resources base of their LICs; and (iii) sustained development of their LICs, through revenue generation.

1 A. Anaba Alemna, (2001) ‘The need for marketing and total quality management strategies in libraries in Ghana’, *INSPEL*, Vol.35,

2 Chang C. Lee, (1992) ‘Marketing Strategies For The Academic Library’ *Journal of Educational Media & Library Sciences*,

3 ‘K.C. Dabas (2008) *IT Applications for TQM And Library Marketing*’, Ess Publication, New Delhi,

4 Annet T. Coughlan, et al, (1996) ‘*Marketing Channels*’, Prentice press, New Delhi.

5 Dinesh Kumar Gupta (1996) ‘*Legislature Libraries In India*’, Aalekh Publisher, Jaipur.

6 Roshan Raina (1998) ‘*Marketing in the Library & Information Context*’, *DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology*, Vol.18, No.3.

By discussing about the challenge of coping with the changes in social, technological, economical environment that forced the Libraries and Information Centres (LICs) to change their time honoured old practices, Ganguly S. & Kar Debal C.(2002)⁷ opine that pressure for accountability and the emergence of enterprise culture has led the library and information professionals to take aggressive actions for financial self-sufficiency. Hence, in the present era, the Libraries and Information Managers (LIMs) will have to think of producing an information product and project it in the market for potential users which will help to generate revenue. TERI-LIC contributes in different products and services which are generated in-house. These wide ranges of products and services are marketed and disseminated to the end users through an effective marketing strategy and also in coordination with separate, marketing service area.

Fisher, Patricia and M .Pride, Marseille (2009)⁸ provided a framework in creating and implementing a marketing plan may help libraries make a compelling case and address both issues-attracting funding and customers by focusing on specific needs. 'Blueprint for your Library marketing Plan' offers a step-by-step program to get any library speed up activities.

Dabas, K.C. (2008)⁹ while presenting a resultant impact on total Quality Management (TQM) and Marketing of library and information services discussed many new and relevant issues being faced by the librarians and information technology and build confidence among them to play a proactive role in the service of the end users in this insecure and unstable era.

According to Gupta, Dinesh K.(2003)¹⁰ marketing is widely applicable in library and information environment. Marketing of library services is the effective execution of all the activities involved in increasing satisfaction of

users by providing maximum value to them. It is a total solution for library and information centres. There have been enormous developments in marketing of library and information services around the world. He also further opines that marketing of library services as a new academic subject in the library and information education on the Indian experience.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Libraries and Information Centres in Academic Institutions play a vital role in providing information and related services to researchers, scholars, students, teachers and non-teaching staff of the parent institution. All these libraries spend a very large amount of money on the purchase and acquisition of printed materials, electronic information resources and other library materials and invests sizeable amount in automation of library systems, buildings, equipment and man power training with support from UGC and State government. However, it is difficult to justify whether these investments are cost affective or worthwhile. Hence, a modest attempt has been made:

1. To find out the marketing mix in the college Libraries and Information Centres in Jorhat district of Assam.
2. To evaluate the present condition and standard of library and information centres in Jorhat district of Assam. .
3. To find out the common problem faced by the college library and information centre users to access the information Jorhat district of Assam.

4. METHODOLOGY

Area covered for the Study : For the study , nine colleges of Jorhat District affiliated under Dibrugarh University, Assam have been selected. They are: (1) Devicharan Barooah Girls College (DCB), Jorhat (2) Bahona College, Bahona (3) Teok Chandra Kamal Bezbaruah (Teok CKB), Teok, (4) Chandra Kamal Bezbaruah Commerce College (CKB Com.), Jorhat (5) Jorhat Law College (JL), Jorhat (6) Kakojan College, Kakojan (7) Jagannath Barooah College (JB), Jorhat (8) Nakachari College, Nakachari and (9) Mariani College, Mariani.

Data Used: The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

7 S. Ganguly and Debas C. Kar, (2002) 'Marketing-A Critical Policy for Today's Information Centre', *DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology*, Vol.22, No3,

8 Patricia Fisher and M.Pride. Marseille(2009) '*Blueprint: For your Library Marketing Plan*', , Ess Publication, New Delhi,

9, K.C. Dabas (2008) '*IT Application For TQM And Library Marketing*', Ess Publication, New Delhi.

10 Dinesh K. Gupta, (2003) 'Marketing of Library and Information Services: Building a new discipline for Library and Information Science Education in Asia. *Malaysian journal of Library and Information Science*, Vol.8, No.2

Mode of data Collection: Primary data is collected by direct contact survey. The survey is based on data collection from the 9 nos. of college libraries under Dibrugarh university through a schedule. A schedule was prepared to collect various information regarding infrastructure, resource, management techniques, staff, future plan and problems faced by the library and information centres.

The secondary data relevant to the objectives of the study have been collected from both government and non-government sources, viz., State Government of Assam-Education Department, University Grant Commission, Dibrugarh University, All Assam College Library Association, INFLIBNET¹¹, etc. All the secondary data is used purposefully for a comprehensive analysis of the study.

Study Period : 2010-2011.

Nature of Paper: Exploratory

4.1 Main Findings

1. It is seen that not a single college library provides Current Awareness Service, Selected Dissemination of Information Service, Inter Library Loan and

Digital Resources Service due to lack of human resources. DCB College is the only college who provide e-journals to its users and a few college library provide Career Counselling and bibliography services. It is clearly shown in Table 1.

2. From the study, it is also found that out of 9 colleges, only two colleges have foreign journals. J.B. College has 2 nos. and C.K.B. Commerce has 4 nos. of foreign journals in their library. The Table 2 shows the clear picture of nature of subscription of journal, periodicals, etc.
3. Users of the library are also varied from 10% to 23.5%. The percentage of users of CKB Commerce is higher than any other colleges. There are different types of professional course in the CKB Commerce College and this may be one of the reasons of higher percentage of users. In the same time, the percentage of Nakachari college is very low, i.e. 10% due to low library space, lack of manpower and internet facilities.
4. Out of 9 college libraries, only 6 colleges have internet facilities for their users. J.B. College has 7 computers with internets and DCB, CKB Commerce and Jorhat Law College has 2 numbers and Kakojan and Mariani College has 3 nos. computer with internet.

¹¹ Information and Library Network, head office Ahmedabad.

Table 1: Services available in the College Libraries of the study area

Services	Bahona	CKB Teok	CKB Com.	J.L.	Kakojan	J.B.	Nakachari	Mariani
Reference	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Circulation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
CAS ^{1*}								
SDI ^{2□}								
ILL ^{3□}								
Reprography(Xerox)	√	√	√		√	√	√	√
Internet	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
E-journal	√							
OPAC ^{4□}	√		√		√	√	√	√
Reading Room	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Book Bank	√	√	√	√			√	√
Career Counselling			√	√				
Bibliography			√		√			√
Display/Notification	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

* Current Awareness Service (CAS).

□ Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI).

□ Inter Library Loan (ILL).

□ Online Public Access of Cataloged (OPAC).

Table 2: Numbers of Journals, periodicals and newspapers keeps in the college library

College	Journals		Periodicals			Newspapers		
	National	Foreign	Regional	National	International	Regional	National	International
D.C.B.	20	0	12	30	0	7	1	0
Bahona	7	0	8	9	0	5	2	0
Teok C.K.B.	5	0	9	16	0	5	1	0
C.K.B.Com	15	1	6	8	4	3	5	0
Jorhat Law	0	0	4	6	0	4	0	0
Kakojan	10	0	20	12	0	14	2	0
J.B.	34	2	14	10	0	7	7	0
Nakachari	2	0	8	1	0	3	1	0
Mariani,	3	0	6	11	2	3	1	0

Table 3: Number of Library users

College	Total enrolment (2010-2011)	Nos. of Library User	% of library users
D.C.B.	1,940	330	17%
Bahona	960	168	17.5%
Teok C.K.B.	1,509	176	11.5%
C.K.B.Com	950	223	23.5%
Jorhat Law	320	48	15%
Kakojan	1,351	275	20%
J.B.	2,500	256	10%
Nakachari	411	76	18.5%
Mariani,	1,462	190	13%

5. It is also found that t J.B. College has 9 nos. of sanction post which is the highest in number, while Jorhat Law College and Kakojan College library has 1 sanction post each. Except J.B. College in their library, other colleges do not have computer expert. The clear picture of sanction posts is shown in Table 4.

6. From the study, it is clearly found that that yearly library membership fees for student vary from

college to college from Rs. 50.00 to 200.00. Most of the colleges charge Re. 1.00 for per photocopy. Only one college takes Rs. 2.00 per photocopy.

7. The main source of library is government and UGC grant. The fixed assets of the library are purchased either from government or from UGC grant. Contingency expenditure such as Stationary, electricity, newspapers, magazine etc. is paid by yearly

Table 4: Number of sanction posts in the library

College	Librarian	Asst. Librarian	Library Asst.	Computer Operator	Library Bearer	Others	Total
D.C.B.	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
Bahona	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Teok C.K.B	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
C.K.B.Com	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Jorhat Law	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Kakojan	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
J.B.	1	1	1	2	2	4	9
Nakachari	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Mariani	1	0	1	0	1	0	3

members' fees or some other revenue collection.

8. It is seen that except J.B. College (i.e. 42 Sq. Feet

per student), all the college libraries and information centres have average space of reading room for per student is 10.5 Sqr. feet. Some of the col-

Table 5: Sources of Revenue

<i>College</i>	<i>Yearly membership fee</i>		<i>Hourly Internet fee</i>		<i>Photo copy Per page.</i>
	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Students</i>	
D.C.B.	0	200	0	0	2
Bahona	0	80	No Service	No Service	No Service
Teok C.K.B.	0	100	No Service	No Service	1
C.K.B.Com	0	100	0	0	1
Jorhat Law	0	200	0	0	No Service
Kakojan	0	50	0	0	1
J.B.	0	100	0	0	1
Nakachari	0	100	No Service	No Service	1
Mariani,	0	60	0	0	1

lege libraries use desk and benches for their users in the reading room where 5 students sit altogether on a single bench.

9. All librarians agree that there is no sufficient provisions of notification and display of library resources and services in the college campus. There is also lack of information regarding the college

library in the respective college website. Another pertinent issue that was found from the survey is lack of suggestion box. Out of 9 colleges, only 2 colleges have suggestion box. The opinion of the librarian regarding the suggestions of the users evaluated by the library committee is shown in Table 7.

Table 6: Distribution of space in Sqr. feet.

<i>College</i>	<i>Total Space of the library</i>	<i>Reading Room Space</i>	<i>Nos. of Setting Capacity</i>	<i>Sqr. Foot per Student</i>
D.C.B.	1500	600	65	9.2
Bahona	1950	800	100	8
Teok C.K.B.	2000	500	65	7.6
C.K.B.Com.	2700	900	55	16.3
Jorhat Law	1800	400	30	13.3
Kakojan	2000	800	100	8
J.B.	10000	5000	120	41.6
Nakachari	1000	400	50	8
Mariani,	2000	600	45	13.3

5. SOME SUGGESTIONS

There are two kinds of resources in a library and information Centre such as tangible assets and intangible assets. They are interrelated and interdependent. Failing one may fail to reach the objectives of any library. These are:

1. Urgent call for Improving Library Services in the Study Area : Academic library basically is a service organisation. Therefore, college library always try to develop its collection of documents and materials. It may have been built through purchase of materials, through exchange of publications, or through gifts, but its value lies in its range, relevance and up-to-dateness.

Table 7: Librarians' opinion regarding suggestions of users

<i>Very high</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Very low</i>
		√		
		√		

- (a) It is found that hardly any library is providing Current Awareness Service (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information Service (SDI), Inter Library Loan Service (ILL), and Audio Video services (AV). Only the library of C.K.B. Jorhat is providing e-journal and three colleges are providing career counselling and bibliographic services to its users. Therefore, the librarian and library management should have to give much interest to fill-up the gap of above mentioned services.
- (b) The internet facility of college libraries is in infant stage. Till now, 2 college libraries have no single computer with internet for its users. There is no computer operator in the college libraries of Jorhat district, except J.B. College. This is one of the reasons that college libraries are failing to provide this service to its users. Therefore, government and UGC should take initiative to solve the problem by creating new posts of Computer Operator and related facilities.
- (c) Journals and magazines bear much value for college libraries for development of users upto date knowledge, new research and project works. But it is seen that library and information centres of Jorhat district are very poor in the case of journals, e-journals and international newspapers. College library and information centre can acquire e-journals by becoming member of INFLIBNET. Moreover, College authority and Library Management Committee must concentrate to acquire journals for each department.
- (d) Reprography Service is one of the important services of College Library. But, it is seen that 2 nos. of college libraries, out of 9, have not this service. Therefore, at least one Xerox machine should install in every library.

2. More Funding for Improvement of Libraries : Library collections, development, management and its services depend upon its funding system. An academic library depends to a great extent for funds on its parent organisation though it can raise some of its own fund by

way of membership fees, late fine of books, photocopy (xerox), use of internet, printing, etc. The amount generated by these sources makes contingencies expenses such as office stationers, maintenance etc.

It is found that most of the libraries fails to provide some of its basic services to its users due to inadequacy of fund. Libraries of provincial colleges are welfare institutions and they cannot take much money from its students in comparison to private institutions. Out of 9 librarians, 7 librarians agree that the membership fees should not increase and use of internet fee should be free of cost. Therefore, a proper plan of government and government agencies regarding fund can make college libraries successful. Moreover, the government and UGC should give grant for some of the special services such as hiring expert for career counselling.

3. Increase Human Resources In the Libraries: The greatest and richest resource of any library is its staff. The staff provide services and make planning for the organisation. The services of a college library fully depend on its staff strength. The staffs build or destroy the image of a library. The sufficient, trained and motivated staffs are invaluable asset of any library. It is seen that—

- (a) The entire college library, at least, has one contact basis employee. Basically they are working in grade-IV. Except J.B. College, no other college library has computer operator in their colleges.

The college libraries of Jorhat district highly need at least one Assistant librarian and one Computer expert to promote some of the important services, which are not available till today in the college libraries and information centres. There is much opportunity to increase user by introducing some of the new services in the college library and information centre. Without, these two nos. of man power, a library and information centre cannot fulfil its objective truly.

4. Need for Improvement of Building, Furniture and other Equipments: The library building, furniture and equipment enhance the servicing capacity of the staff and utilisation capacity of users in the library. A capacious, lighted and

airy library building, located in congenial environment, internal as well as external with modern equipment and furniture can attract more users in the library. It is seen that college library of Jorhat district—

- (a) The average space per student in the reading rooms is 14 Sqr. feet and it is not a healthy environment for a reading room. Therefore, the average space per student in the reading room should increase to 40 sq. feet for easy movement in the reading room.
- (b) Most of the college use desk and benches in their reading room where five students sit altogether on a single bench. It will be better if college library use tables and chairs in place of desks and benches.
- (c) The computer room should be separated from the reading room.
- (d) There are no sufficient provision of notification and display of library materials and information in the college libraries and information centres. Library is a growing organisation. Therefore, sufficient provision of space should make for present and future needs of library users.

5. Status and goodwill: A library builds its status and goodwill over a number of years by the combined efforts of all the above-listed resources. It cannot be measured in terms of collection or building or any other tangible possession of the library. It is a phenomenon in which shadow becomes larger than the substance. To achieve this is the ultimate librarianship. The suggestion and complains of users can play an important part to build goodwill. It is seen that —

- (a) There are only two college libraries which have suggestion as well as complain box. Suggestion as well as complain box is highly required in the college library because it is a very good technique and procedure to know users' needs and wants.
- (b) The suggestions as well as complains of the users implements at average level due to financial crisis. The entire college library is not in a position to implement all the suggestions at the highest level.
- (c) The entire college librarian strongly agreed that college libraries need advisement in the college magazine, prospectus, website etc. to attract more users in the library.

6. CONCLUSION

The Libraries and Information Centre has a significant role in promoting higher education. A good library in an academic institution is considered as the nerve centre of the institution. The National Education Committee in 1964-66 (Popularly known as Kothari Commission) has recognized the important of libraries in Colleges and Universities and stated that no new university, college or department should be started without adequate provision for its library.

Promoting of library and information service is an important task for library management to fulfil the objectives of its parent's institution. A successful library service depend upon a successful marketing mix where a dependent variable in not influenced by a single variable, but more than one variable. Therefore, the librarian and library management committee should use marketing tools and techniques to make effective plan by which a library can fulfil the user's needs and demands.

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