

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN BANGLADESH: AN EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an overview of the university libraries and explains in detail their various organizations, management, collections, functions, systems, and services as a whole. It also profiles careers in library work, the education of librarians, and several professional organizations for librarians. Academic libraries function almost as the hearts in the academic activities of the University. The libraries perform their functions properly, a body of knowledge has been developed and incorporated within the scope of the training programs in library management. That's why a qualified librarian is needed to meet up such requirements. It is quite impossible to control the entire library in pen and paper where there are a huge amount of books for the librarian. A librarian (he/she) has to serve not only a single job, but also multiple jobs simultaneously. That's why it is difficult to keep track of those jobs. Library management is the theoretical concepts of managing such a library efficiently. Finally, the article describes contemporary library management in various university libraries in Bangladesh.

Key words: Librarianship, Library Program, Library Administration, Automation, Library System, Research Organization, Library Management, Library Function, Library Service, Survey.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The library is a key to the knowledge of the world. The importance of the library in higher education a university must have a well-equipped and functional library so that it becomes an intellectual hub of the institution both for students and teachers.

An academic library is a library that is attached to a higher education institution and serves two complementary purposes; to support the curriculum and to support the research of the university faculty and students (en.wikipedia.org).

An academic library is a library associated with a college or university which supports the mission of the institution and the research needs of its faculty, staff, and students. (igi-global.com).

A library is the storehouse of knowledge. The mission of a library is to collect, organize management, preserve and provide access to knowledge and information. In fulfilling this mission, libraries preserve a valuable record of a culture that can be passed down to succeeding generations. Libraries are an essential link in this communication between the past, present and future. Whether the culture record is contained in books or electronic formats, libraries ensure that the record is preserved and made available for later use. Libraries provide people with access to the information they need to work, play, learn and govern. Libraries are now recognized as important social institutions. The library is one of the most important parts of social life at any time. It satisfies our thirst for the unseen and the unknown. No educational institute is complete without a library.

The conventional function of academic libraries is to collect, process, disseminate, store and utilize information to provide service to the university community. However, the environment in which academic libraries operate today is changing. Academic libraries are part of the university and its organizational culture. As a result, the role of academic libraries is changing to provide a competitive advantage for the parent universities. The success of academic libraries depends on their ability to utilize information and knowledge of its staff to better serve the needs of the academic community. This requires academic librarians to reappraise their functions, expand their roles and responsibilities to effectively contribute and meet the needs of a diverse university community. Knowledge management is a viable means in which academic libraries could improve their services in the present knowledge era.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The university library has its own aims and objectives to render smooth services to its clients and to fulfill these, the library requires necessary staff, satisfactory collection, own building, sufficient budget, etc. Information technology has brought drastic and dramatic changes in the functioning of the libraries and render services. This study highlights the concept of librarianship, challenges of the profession, function of the library, administration, book collection, staff, and finance, physical plan the status of organization and management practice university libraries of Bangladesh. The objectives of the article are as follows:

- a. To exploit the concept of the librarianship;
- b. To study the challenges of the library profession;
- c. To know the function of the library;
- d. To know the library administration and use of library resources effectively;
- e. To identify the problems faced by the readers as well as by the library professionals;
- f. To know computer use in library management;
- g. To adhere to international standards in terms of library management.

3.0 LIBRARIANSHIP

Presently there is a radical change in the library profession. A university library has to be organized and administered on a scientific basis and by the

latest trends in library science. The profession of librarianship in our country is of recent growth and has yet to become a “discipline” at par with the professions of medicine and law. The administrator perhaps does not still know that Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of library science in India has involved the following laws those are now applied to the technical processes of purchasing and preserving the books:

- a. Books are for use;
- b. Every reader has book;
- c. Every book its reader;
- d. Save the time of the reader; and
- e. Library is a growing organism.

Librarianship is a combination of both an art and a science and the job of the librarian is no longer electrical or mechanical in nature. It is technical in relation to the organization of the library on scientific lines and is intellectual in relation to the “Reference Service” to a reader and the teaching staff. The administrative duties involve scientific principles of management of the library. The reader and the service to him/her through reading materials in the library is the fundamental objective of library administration.

4.0 LIBRARIANSHIP IS A CHALLENGING PROFESSION

Librarianship is a challenging profession and use of books is the real test of a librarian’s overall success. To increase the usefulness of the books the university librarian has to play the following four rules:

- 4.1 *As a collector*, he should constantly reinforce the existing collection by seeking out and acquiring materials which expand their usefulness.
- 4.2 *As a bibliographer*, he should devise the scheme of cataloguing and classification to make books more useful to his clients.
- 4.3 *As a teacher*, he should provide reference services and group instructions, enabling readers to exhibit more effectively.
- 4.4 *As an administrator*, he should adopt many measures to increase the accessibility of books and thus enhance their usefulness.

To achieve all these aims, the librarian must have a specialized library personnel who should assist him in providing a smoothly integrated service. It is impossible in the 21st century for these functions

by himself in view of the growing size of the library. The variety of undertakings, and the professional and administrative duties entrusted to him through are growing needs in a prosperous library.

5.0 LIBRARY PROGRAM

The library is one of the units of a university, of which it is a part indeed. The library program is mainly concerned with the teaching of the students who use the library to meet the institutional need and to improve their assignment of works. It is felt that the libraries have not been effectively organized and much thought has not been given to the following matters which are essential for making the library a great educational force on the university campus.

- a. Planning, organization, and equipment;
- b. Book selection and acquisition of periodicals;
- c. Librarian and the library staff;
- d. Library service;
- e. Library hours;
- f. Issue system;
- g. Stock verification;
- h. Bibliographical work;

In some of the technical institute and university, the administrators are no doubt taking a good deal of interest in developing the library program, but lack of funds, library staff, and support of faculty members are some of the bottle-necks which hinder their progress. Most of the universities also do not process highly-trained librarians who understand the problems of teachers and students in the use of library books and bibliography and assist the faculty members in carrying out the objectives of the university [20].

6.0 FUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF THE LIBRARY

“Library is a growing organism”, so says the fifth law of Library Science. With its steady and rapid growth, it becomes necessary that a library should be well organized and managed. This work calls for the study of principles of administration as applied in a big business area.

The general theory of administration is equally applicable to the field of library science. The latest techniques of management have been involved and

employed for the full utilization of human and material resources. For rationalization of work and simplification of routine work to avoid delay and red taped in the top management.

Materials and processes have been standardized to facilitate the flow of work on most smooth and economical patterns. In the modern age of machinery, it has become obligatory to streamline the administration and to unify all the details, involved in library administration.

By formulating the five fundamental laws of Library Science Ranganathan has helped in the elucidation and classifying “the thought both in the General Theory of Administration and in its application to the field of Library Science”, and his monumental work, “Library Administration” lays down the details of the daily administration of libraries. These provide a handy manual for planning the work of library staff in each section of the library. It also helps in functional basis and for scientific management of the library.

7.0 LIBRARY SYSTEMS

‘Systems’ means a totality of many a system inter-related to achieve some goals or render a service an analysis of which would detect, locate and identify problems confronting an organization. Systems analysis is no solution to problems, but it does suggest alternative solutions to problems. It is designed to help the management to bring structural changes in the organization to adjust to changes in the environment.

Since here we are not concerned with the analysis of library systems-since we refer to systems analysis only to point out how innovation can be inducted into library administration-we shall present a simple total library system and then see how we may identify the problems in the library organization by charting the workflows that make processes and systems in the library organization.

The following systems make a simple total library system:

- A = Acquisitions System
- P = Processing System
- C = Circulation System

Each system in the total library system can be analyzed in terms of the following flow process charts:

1) Acquisitions Process: S→O→R→A = SORA= Acquisitions System

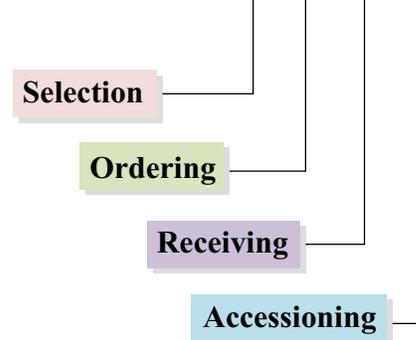


Fig 1. Acquisitions Process

2) Processing Process: C→C→PC→L = CCPCL= Processing System

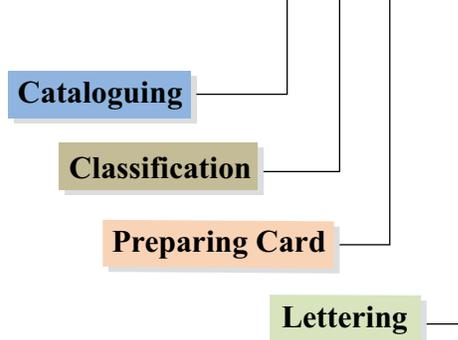


Fig. 2. Processing Process

3) Circulation Process: IB→IR→RB = IBIRRB = Circulation System

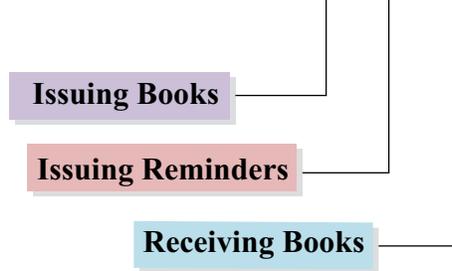


Fig 3. Circulation Process

Referring to the above flow process charts we may say that in most of the modern libraries accessioning and cataloguing can be eliminated to reduce the volume of works.

8.0 LIBRARY FUNCTIONS: PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

Every organization functions, both administrative and managerial, directed to achieve some particular

goals would form some systems when taken together. Individually, each function in each system is but a process.

To render library services we have to perform three main functions, namely, acquisition functions, processing functions, and circulation functions. Each of these functions is a process, and because each of these processes begins one after another we may also say that they together make one continuous process.

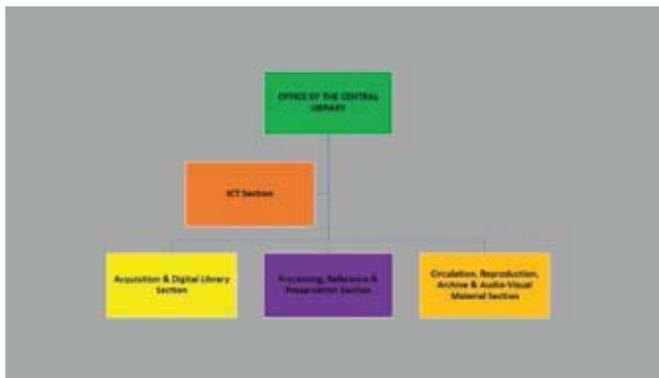


Fig 4. Library Organization

The library functions in terms of processes and systems we mean library management and when we speak of library functions in terms of planning, organizing, staffing and controlling library systems we mean library administration [20].

The following figure will illustrate the distribution of administrative and managerial functions among the librarians at different hierarchies.



Fig. 5. Library Administration

9.0 COMPUTER USE IN LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

The importance of information is a vital resource in today’s society and cannot be overlooked. There are many activities associated with handling information such as manipulation, location, modification, and production. The technology associated automating many of these information processing activities is known as information technology (IT). Computers have greatly facilitated automation processing.

Computers are used in almost every field and

profession to perform a large number of useful activities. Technology innovations over the last two decades have not only increased the range of technically feasible applications, but they have also reduced costs so that computers provide a cost-effective solution to a far wider range of problems than they did before. In Business, banks to transfer funds electronically from one location to another by using computers. Computers are used to control inventory, and computerized robots are used to weld parts together, paint, and much more activities.

With office automation, the computer is used for word processing, electronic mail, voice storage, and forwarding, facsimile, and teleconferencing. In science and engineering, computers are helping to unlock the secrets of our universe. In health care, computers are used to keep people in shape. In the military, computers are used the plan war strategies. With artificial intelligence and expert systems, computers are used to help people locating oil and diagnosis of medical problems.

Except for all applications listed above, there is another major area where computer application is not so matured as they are i.e. in library management. From the ancient time, libraries are playing a vital role in collecting and storing information. The functions of a library are to acquire documents related to the user’s need, to organize and display them efficiently in various ways, and finally to make them available to the users. These functions are dictated by the objectives of the library described in considerable detail by Prof. Ranganathan in 1931 when he presented his five laws of library science. In the fourth law i.e. “save the time of the readers”. Ranganathan recognized an object relating to the internal efficiency of the library. In the corollary to this law, he further argued that while a library has objectives to maximize time loss to the user, the library management has an objective to save the time of librarians. This can perhaps be achieved by increasing the internal efficiency of the day-to-day work within the library. It is in the context of the fourth law that automating some, if all the functions of libraries are most relevant.

An efficient library management system is required to improve control over collection, to have an effective control over the entire operation, to improve the existing services as well as to introduce

new services, to share the resources among various libraries in region effectively, to avoid duplication of work and to use the services of the existing staff effectively.

In the present day context, adoption of the manual method restricts the libraries from their better utilization. Recently the Committee on Research Libraries of the American Council of Learned Societies reports “research” libraries are in serious difficulty arising from shortage of space, staff, and funds in the face of greatly increased demand for services, resulting in increased complexities in the obligations of library management. From the managerial point of view, the chaotic operational conditions caused by a combination of these problems become subject to systematic scrutiny. The solution may lie in simply adjusting present procedures or in a combination of procedural adjustments that calls calling for the application of the technological aids including the computer.

10.0 STANDARDS AND SERVICES

There should be setting standards for libraries to be followed at the planning and setting-up stages and for providing effective service.

10.1 Physical Standards

The following are considered major characteristics of a good library in regard to its physical arrangement:

10.1.1 The library building should be designed and equipped with functional purposes point of view. When a new building is to be constructed, the librarian should be invited to work with the architect or engineer at the time plans are drawn for such a building.

10.1.2 A centralized library offers the best arrangement for such an institution.

10.1.3 The physical arrangement should, as far as possible, comply with the minimum standards prescribed by the authorities and, if feasible, exceed them.

10.1.4 There should be a separate room for the comfort and convenience of the library staff. The restroom should be equipped with easy chairs and be sufficiently segregated to permit quiet and relaxation. The library should have a room for the use of students and faculty members. It should be well-furnished and equipped with suitable chairs, tables, and reference bookshelves.

11.0 LIBRARY EVALUATION

If there are any prescribed or set general standards of university library service, it becomes easy to apply them to facts in a particular library situation to make a fairly accurate evaluation of its conditions and need. The procedure for evaluating the service of the university library may be considered under six headings,

- (1) Administration,
- (2) Book collection,
- (3) Staff,
- (4) Finance,
- (5) Physical plant, and
- (6) Library use.

11.1 Administration

For a survey of library administration the following questionnaire may be used:

- a) What is the attitude of the head of the institute towards the library and the librarian?
- b) Is the staff adequate to help individual students and the faculty in providing the purposes of instruction?
- c) Does the library follow the basic principle of good administration, and is there a clearly expressed policy of library management?
- d) Is the work of the library systematically organized with proper delegation of responsibility and authority to staff members for different phases of the work?
- e) Has there been a sincere and genuine effort to assign clerical duties to clerical and student staff and to reserve the trained librarian for professional work?
- f) Is the library getting the most from its investment in bookbinding and procurement fund?

11.2 Book Collection

The total number of holdings of a university library cannot be a good measure for the appraisal of the book collection. Selected periodicals and reference checklists can be used with advantage to measure the quality of the collection. The evaluation should also take into account the inability of the library to supply books for which requests were made at the loan desk either by acquisition or inter-library loan system.

11.3 Staff

The following questionnaire may be used for evaluating library personnel:

- a) Is the size of the staff adequate for cataloguing, circulation and reference work?
- b) Is the library given adequate recognition in the academic staff of the university?
- c) Is the librarian professionally trained; if not, has he got in-service training.
- d) Is the staff morale high or low?

11.4 Finance

The following criteria will help to measure the financial support for the university library:

- a) The ratio of library expenditure of the university.
- b) The per-student expenditure for library services and
- c) Comparison with the expenditure of libraries in the university of similar size and programme.

11.5 Physical plant

The following factors may be considered in judging building and equipment:

- a) Size.
- b) Work and reader space.
- c) Provision for expansion.
- d) Arrangement of readers and materials.
- e) Work-room and librarian's office.
- f) Space for lavatory etc.
- g) Lighting, ventilation, and sound-proofing.
- h) Comfort and variety of furnishing mechanical equipment.

12.0 LIBRARY SERVICE EVALUATION

Evaluation is necessary for the education process. The principal as well as members of the faculty to know whether the students make effective use of books and other materials in the library and whether there is an effective library service. It is also necessary for the university administrator to assess from time to time the value of the library in the teaching program of the university. Evaluation of service of the library is necessary to discover the extent to which its resources and services support the objectives of the university and the extent and manner in which students make use of library materials and services [20].

Standard treatise on university library administration, states the following basic principles in evaluation:

12.1 To define closely the specific purposes of the library and their relationship to the educational aims and the central objectives of the university itself.

12.2 The evaluation process should be a university standardized system and not just a library process.

12.3 The evaluation process must be a continuous process of appraisal and improvement of re-evaluation and re-improvement.

The continuous evaluation is necessary to measure the effectiveness and performance of the academic libraries. The following evaluation criteria are maintained of the academic for better performance.

- a) Building a library collection;
- b) Service evaluation;
- c) Measurement of user satisfaction;
- d) Human resource management;
- e) Environmental and safety system;
- f) Special service for disabilities;
- g) Various external and internal auditing related to-
 - i) Annual stocktaking;
 - ii) Library expenditure and income evaluation;
 - iii) The perfection of task completion and achieving the target;
 - iv) Performance evaluation of the employee;
 - v) Documentation and filling;
 - vi) Knowledge management;
 - vii) Software Selection;
 - viii) Use of IT in housekeeping operations;
 - ix) Library annual report.

13.0 STANDARDS FOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The libraries in the universities are intellectual centers organized to serve both the students and the facilities. The committee on standards for university libraries may be formulated for the following matters:

- (1) Functions of the library
- (2) Government and administrative machinery
- (3) Budgetary matters
- (4) Staff duties
- (5) Library collections
- (6) Library services
- (7) Modern technology use for the library
- (8) Inter-library co-operations

A modern librarian is an administrator of books as well as a reader's advisor. An expert reader with plenty of time to spare and spend in the library may find the books and information he requires without

much difficulty. The average reader is usually in a hurry and will hesitate to make inquiries from the librarian or his assistants. He will, at the most, consult the catalogue and get a book that may or may not supply the necessary information.

14.0 SURVEY OF LIBRARY USE

Survey of library use may be conducted to collect statistics on the use of books issued on loan for home reading on the use of books and other materials inside the library building. A questionnaire may be given to each library user entering the library on that date and he may be asked to complete it and return it to the attendant before leaving. The evaluation made on the basis of data thus collected and statistics available in the library would indicate the quality and amount of library use by students and members of the faculty and other staff in the university. After the evaluation has been made in this manner, the evaluator should suggest as to how to improve library service and to make the library more useful [1].

The following factual data should also be collected and recorded:

- 14.1** Number of staff employed in the library.
- 14.2** Number of books and periodicals.
- 14.3** Number of books circulated for a month.
- 14.4** Number of collection of library books and whether they reflect the current studies and interests of students.
- 14.5** Number of students for which the reading room or library room can manage to seat at one time.
- 14.6** Book procurement funds or annual budget allotment for purchasing of books and other printed materials.

The evaluation data so collected and records should be analyzed and interpreted and conclusions arrived at with reasonable findings. Such evaluation would reveal the condition of the library and its working and enable the administrator to know whether he has achieved the objectives and, if not, what the shortcomings are in the functioning of the library. If answers to all the above questionnaire are in the negative, this means a huge waste of money spent on buying, the librarian's time and maintaining university space and furniture. In that case, it will be better to have no library at all than to have an ill-used and ill-maintained one. But if the results are satisfactory, he will know what degree of satisfaction

has been obtained and what further improvement in the functioning of the library is necessary to fully achieve the objectives. This evaluation will further give the administrator and the librarian an opportunity to understand their weakness and strength and be clear about the steps to be taken to vitalize the library and make the services effective. The use the students make is the ultimate test of its effectiveness [1]. Practical recommendations should be made by the evaluator basing on the utmost use of the library.

15.0 LIBRARY POLICY OF THE UNIVERSITY

In Bangladesh, there is no uniform library policy in the matter of administration, control and operation of the university library, until and unless a definite policy is laid down in respect of these matters, the problems in the area would continue to create difficulties and remain unsolved.

There should be a set code of library policy which covers the following points:

- 15.1** A clear definition of the physical plants of the library.
- 15.2** A statement concerning library budgets and finances.
- 15.3** An advisory library committee functioning with maximum effectiveness;
- 15.4** A clear distinction between staffs and professional members of the library who perform their daily duties.
- 15.5** A positive role in contributing to the universities educational programme by making the library a real teaching agency.
- 15.6** A record of research or professional accomplishments comparable to those of faculty members.
- 15.7** A complete understanding between the staff and the individual administrative members on the policies and programmes of the library.
- 15.8** The maintenance of proper balance in the workload of each employee in the library.
- 15.9** A code of ethics for librarian and staff of the university library as well as a set of library rules to the government the conduct of the students and the faculty members.

16.0 THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

A library committee is necessary for the interest of the smooth running of the library. It serves both as a coordinating and a policy-making body. For a university library, the Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor should head the library committee and some Wings Heads and Heads of the Departments should be incorporated as its members. The Librarian is the member secretary of the committee.

17.0 THE FUNCTIONS OF THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

The library committee is mainly concerned with executive planning of the administration of the library, supervision of the work of various sections of the library and solving their various problems. Its main functions are as follows:

- 17.1 To formulate library policy and objectives.
- 17.2 To frame rules and regulations for the use of the library.
- 17.3 To check the implementation of library policy by the librarian and the library staff.
- 17.4 To check library expenditures and approve estimates of anticipated expenditures, to allocate the funds to the library.
- 17.5 To find out ways and means for additional funds required for extension of library services and management.
- 17.6 To consider proposed of the librarian which require backing him up in the matter of safety in the building and property.
- 17.7 To maintain discipline and prevention of theft cases or losses are in the jurisdiction of the librarian and his staffs.
- 17.8 To consider and study the annual report submitted by the librarian.
- 17.9 To select and appoint the librarian and his staff in defining their duties privileges and other conditions of services staffing issues.
- 17.10 To oversee the work of the library and to promote its usefulness for students and teachers in fulfilling the objectives of the library.

The functions of this committee should be purely advisory, and not administrative. The committee should discuss in its meeting about the library policy and offer advices. The following library matters may be discussed:

- a) Policy on the purchase of multiple copies of books for text-book or reserve sections;
- b) Library's role in handling audio-visual materials;
- c) Allocation of book funds to departments;
- d) Supporting the library demand for additional funds;
- e) Planning extension and remodelling of the library building or planning a new library building;
- f) Library participation in interlibrary loans in the region;
- g) Staff status to be discussed in form of the equalizing within the universities periphery;
- h) Rules and regulations regarding the functioning of the library;
- j) Methods of promoting library use by students.

18.0 CONCLUSION

Knowledge, skill, and aptitude are key factors in the quest for sustainable human development. Bangladesh has to be a part of this quest. Universities are a mirror of a nation and the tool to measure the depth and quality of knowledge. Unfortunately, many public universities in Bangladesh have fallen below regional and international standards. These institutions are faced with multifarious problems. A library is the main problem in universities in terms of knowledge sharing.

In view of the importance of the library in higher education. A modern university in the home must have a well-planned and functional library so that it becomes an intellectual hub of the institution both for students and teachers. Such a library will then become a temple of learning with the librarian as its priest, who must invite in that temple seekers of knowledge to enjoy an intellectual feast in a calm and serene atmosphere from the choicest collection of books and periodicals arranged systematically in open shelves.

Librarianship is now both an art and a science and the job of the librarian is no longer clerical or mechanical, it is all about technical and intellectual, and administration in nature. It is technical in relation to the organization at set up and it is intellectual in relation to the "Reference Service" to readers and the teaching staff. The administrative duties involve scientific principles of the library where it is different than the administrative aspects of other institutions.

19.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

19.1 Book selection systems in the universities should be standardized. The responsibilities of the library staffs and the faculty members should be clearly spelled out. The librarian should bring publications to the notices of the faculty members. The faculty members should recommend their purchase considering the needs of the students.

19.2 To ensure proper selection of books, a survey of reading tastes and needs of the students should be considered.

19.3 To avert students from using cheap assistance and notes the university library should provide numerous copies of textbooks.

19.4 To incorporate group discussions, our teaching methods should be modernized. For this reason, the libraries should be equipped considering the requirement of the students.

19.5 To generate an interest in books and other reading materials, the students should be enabled to participate in the realm of education.

19.6 Our teachers should recommend the books written in easy language to wipe out the difficulties of students in understanding books that are written in difficult English.

19.7 Library materials like an encyclopedia, dictionaries, bibliographies, and other reference books should be organized in such a way so that it creates interest among the readers in using the library.

19.8 To foster the utmost use of books, the library should be sufficiently crewed in light of rules and regulations of the University Grant Commission (UGC).

19.9 To allow free access to books and journals, the library should be perfectly organized and assistance may be rendered in university libraries.

19.10 To infuse library culture among the students; the librarian and faculties should work relentlessly to instigate the listed items in the classrooms.

19.11 To popularize new books among the students and faculties; reviewed books should be exhibited on display board or may be published in universities journals and magazines.

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