ROLE OF RURAL ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN ACHIEVING
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG)

Ravikiran Subhash More
Librarian, M. S. Kakade College, Someshwarnagar.

ABSTRACT:

This study explores the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the critical role of academic libraries play in promoting sustainable development in rural India. In the pursuit of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), academic libraries—especially those located in rural areas—become indispensable facilitators of education, equity, and community enrichment.

According to The Council of Australian University Librarians (2019) Academic libraries play an essential role in addressing and advancing the UN 2030 global sustainability challenges as they continue to disseminate knowledge to empower the world through education and research. According to Yap and Kamilova (2019), libraries should provide programs that support the SDGs, especially the ones focusing on gender equality. The study emphasizes the significance of libraries to addressing gender inequality. With an emphasis on their effects in rural Indian contexts, the study examines how academic libraries relate to particular SDGs, such as Quality Education (SDG 4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and Sustainable Communities (SDG 11). It explores the difficulties that rural academic libraries encounter, such as limited funding, infrastructural limitations, and socioeconomic inequality, while also noting chances for these libraries to act as change agents.

KEYWORDS: *Academic Libraries, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Education for Sustainability, Quality Education.*

INTRODUCTION:

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a comprehensive framework that the United Nations designed to solve worldwide challenges by 2030 in the quest of a more equal and sustainable world. The recognition that education is a major factor in sustainable development is at the core of this revolutionary programme. In addition to being essential parts of educational institution, academic libraries are key to achieving the SDGs because they promote critical thinking, community involvement, and information sharing. As indispensable components of educational institutions; Academic libraries play a pivotal role in advancing the SDGs by fostering knowledge dissemination, community engagement, and the development of critical skills. This study investigates the multifaceted contributions of academic libraries in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, and also highlighting their role as catalysts for constructive social transformation.

Academic libraries function as dynamic centers of learning and information who bridge the gap between knowledge and action. Academic libraries directly contribute to various principles of sustainability development goals (SDGs) ; such as Quality Education (Goal 4), Gender Equality (Goal 5),

_____

_____

Decent Work and Economic Growth (Goal 8), and Reduced Inequalities (Goal 10) by coordinating their programmes and services with sustainability principles. Through the promotion of information literacy, giving support to research, community outreach programme and by integrating sustainable practices in library operations academic libraries can contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Through analyzing multifaceted impact of academic libraries we can understand and appreciate the significance of academic libraries as a catalyst for positive change and working collaboratively to build a more sustainable and equitable future.

Key areas of investigation include the role of academic libraries in:
➢ Access to Quality Education:
By facilitating information resources and services for students, faculty, and researchers, academic librarians play a critical role in ensuring access to high-quality education. Here are some ways in which academic librarians contribute to enhancing the quality of education

(a) Curating Collections: Academic resources including books, journals, databases, and multimedia are chosen, obtained, and arranged by librarians. They make sure that the academic community's needs for research and curricula are met by these collections.

(b) Information Literacy: Information literacy classes are led by librarians to instruct students in the efficient search and assessment of information. This involves instructing students on how to use databases, libraries, and other resources that are essential for academic achievement.

(c) Research Support: Librarians offer advice on research techniques, citation management, and literature reviews to help faculty and students with their research projects. They assist users in navigating the large number of academic resources that are available and accessible.

(d) Digital Resources and Technology: Librarians can also manage digital resources, e-books, and online databases and make them available and accessible to the faculty and students. By promoting the Digital Literacy Librarians also helps to integrate technology into teaching and learning.

(e) Collaboration with Faculty: Faculty members and librarians work together to include information literacy into the curriculum. Librarian can collaborate closely with teachers to create tasks that push students to use library resources and foster research and critical thinking abilities.

(f) Reference Services: To assist users with information retrieval, query resolution, and troubleshooting issues related to using academic resources, librarians provide reference services. E-mail, internet chat, or in-person interactions are all possible for this.

(g) Open Access: Librarians support and promote open access programmes that allow the public to freely access intellectual content. This contributes to the democratization of resource and knowledge access.

(h) User Support and Training: In order to make sure that library patrons are aware of and capable of using the resources that are available, librarians offer continuing assistance and instruction. Workshops, lessons, or one-on-one help may fall under this category.

(i) Collection Assessment and Development: When deciding which materials to add or removes from the library, librarians routinely evaluate the collection's relevancy and utilisation. This guarantees that the collection stays up to date and meets the institution's educational needs.

(j) Advocacy for Libraries: Librarians advocate for the value of libraries and their role in education. They work to secure funding and resources to maintain and expand library services, contributing to the overall academic environment.

By carrying out these responsibilities, academic librarians make a substantial contribution to the availability of high-quality education and to the promotion of a research, critical thinking, and lifelong learning culture within the academic community.

➢ Reducing Inequalities:
With their ability to provide information, resources for education, and assistance, academic libraries can significantly contribute to the reduction of inequality in rural India. Here are a few ways that academic libraries can support this initiative.

_____

_____

(a) Access to Educational Resources: Academic libraries, which provide a wide range of books, periodicals, and multimedia items, can act as centres for learning resources. Libraries help to equalise educational chances by providing these resources for rural communities.

(b) Digital Literacy Programs: Libraries can start and maintain digital literacy initiatives to assist rural communities in learning necessary technology skills. In order to close the digital divide, this can involve providing instruction on computer use, online resource access, and an understanding of digital platforms.

(c) Community Outreach and Engagement: Academic libraries can host outreach programmes, workshops, and lectures to interact with the community. These can be health-related, agricultural, career-related, or address other issues that directly affect the lives of people living in rural areas.

(d) Mobile Libraries: Mobile libraries can be utilized in underserved and distant locations with little infrastructure. These mobile units can guarantee that people in rural locations have access to knowledge by bringing books, educational resources, and even internet connectivity.

(e) Collaboration with Educational Institutions: To provide their resources and services to remote students, academic libraries can work with nearby colleges, schools, and other educational institutions. Joint ventures, resource sharing, and support for educational projects are a few examples of this.

(f) Language and Culture Preservation: Local languages and cultures can be preserved in part through libraries. Libraries play an important role in maintaining cultural variety in rural communities by preserving literature, oral histories, and traditional knowledge.

(g) Scholarship and Research Support: Academic libraries can help researchers and students in remote locations by giving them access to scholarly materials, research instruments, and project support. This promotes an innovative and learning-oriented culture in rural areas.

(h) Job Skill Development: Libraries can provide materials and programmes to help people acquire vocational training and work skills. This can enable people in remote areas to improve their employability and make a positive impact on the local economy.

(i) Children's and Youth Programs: Libraries should concentrate on youth and child programmes that encourage reading and education from a young age. This may have long-term consequences for rural populations' academic achievement and personal growth.

(j) Advocacy for Education: Local and regional educational initiatives might be actively supported by academic libraries. Libraries can contribute to the creation of an environment that fosters equitable access to high-quality education by taking part in policy issues related to education.

In conclusion, academic libraries have the potential to significantly impact the reduction of educational disparities in rural India. Libraries may help to create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment by combining resource supply, community participation, and cooperation.

➢ Building Sustainable Communities

Academic libraries can be extremely important in helping to create sustainable communities in rural India by offering tools, guidance, and educational programmes that encourage social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The following are a few ways that academic libraries can help:

(a) Information on Sustainable Practices: Books, periodicals, and other materials on sustainable farming methods, renewable energy, environmental preservation, and other subjects important to rural areas can be gathered by libraries. Making these information available aids in the decision-making process for community members.

(b) Community Workshops and Training: Workshops and training programmes on waste management, water conservation, sustainable farming methods, and other green initiatives can be arranged by libraries. Members of the community gain the knowledge and abilities necessary for sustainable existence as a result.

(c) Promoting Renewable Energy: Information about renewable energy sources, such solar and wind power can be shared through libraries. They can work together with regional associations and

_____

_____

governmental bodies to inform the public about the advantages of implementing renewable energy technologies.

(d) Access to Agricultural Research: Agriculture is a common source of income in rural areas. Access to the most recent findings in agricultural research, crop management strategies, and pest control knowledge can be obtained through academic libraries. This helps farmers make decisions that are both productive and sustainable.

(e) Entrepreneurship and Economic Sustainability: Academic libraries may help rural communities thrive in the entrepreneurship space by offering materials on market trends, financial literacy, and small company development. This aids in the creation of long-term economic prospects for community members.

(f) Advocacy and Policy Support: Local and regional libraries can act as advocates for sustainable policies. Libraries can aid in the creation of policies that support long-term community sustainability by disseminating knowledge and doing research on sustainable practices.

In summary, academic libraries can serve as catalysts for long-term community development in rural India by offering a variety of services such as information, instruction, and assistance. Libraries support the general resilience and well-being of rural communities by tackling social, economic, and environmental issues.

In order to obtain opinions from community residents, educators, and library professionals, the study uses a mixed-methods approach that combines surveys, interviews, and case studies. The study intends to offer a road map for rural academic libraries to successfully contribute to SDGs and support sustainable development in their local regions by identifying effective practices and creative ways. The purpose of this investigation is to highlight the potential of academic libraries as vibrant centres of learning, community development, and empowerment. This will help to establish the libraries' importance within the larger framework of attaining sustainable development in rural India.

REFERENCE:
1. Dei, D.-G.J. and Asante, F.Y. (2022), "Role of academic libraries in the achievement of quality education as a sustainable development goal", *Library Management*, Vol. 43 No. 6/7, pp. 439-459. https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-02-2022-0013
2. M M Mashroofa (2022), "Contribution of academic libraries towards sustainable development goals",Annals of Library and Information Studies, Vol. 69, pp. 51-58.
   http://op.niscair.res.in/index.php/ALIS/article/view/56234/465480426
3. Yap, J.M. and Kamilova, Y. (2020), "Toward becoming an inclusive library: Integrating Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the library agenda", *Library Management*, Vol. 41 No. 2/3, pp. 53-66. https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-08-2019-0057
4. Bangani, S., & Dube, L. (2023). Academic libraries and the actualisation of Sustainable Development Goals two, three and thirteen. Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006231174650
5. Thorpe, C., & Gunton, L. (2022). Assessing the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals in academic libraries. Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 54(2), 208-215. https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006211005528
6. Mansour, E. (2020). Libraries as agents for development: The potential role of Egyptian rural public libraries towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals based on the UN 2030 Agenda. Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 52(1), 121-136. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000619872064
7. Bangani, S. (2022). Academic libraries' contribution to gender equality in a patriarchal, femicidal society. Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006221127023

_____