



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LIBRARY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

This study, described as an intensive assessment of the managerial, functional, and technical aspects of academic libraries in Maharashtra over a decade of eminent technological developments. It blends secondary data from documentary sources and primary data from questionnaires and interviews with a descriptive-comparative approach to scrutinize collection development, funding, human resources, ICT applications, infrastructure, and user services. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that great differences between government and private university libraries exist: the private ones are more flexible in decision-making, are quicker in the acceptance of automation and digital resources, and user satisfaction levels tend to be high in these libraries. On the contrary, the government ones tend to be traditional as far as collections and funding are concerned; the administrators therein tend to be delayed. However, the study indicates that government libraries provide the widest access to collections and best conserve archival collections, whereas the private ones perform well in terms of efficiency and being up-to-date with technology. The research suggests that library management practices amongst higher education institutions in Maharashtra may be improved through stakeholders' collaborations and funding mechanisms and sustained professional development by building on the strengths of both sectors for common gain.

KEYWORDS: *Library Management, Government Universities, Private Universities, ICT, Maharashtra, Comparative Study.*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries rank as the principal and indispensable components of universities in the same way they keep knowledge hidden with the learning atmosphere for the universities' most educational, research, and innovative activities. Library management in universities covers a vast range of activities such as collection development, budget setting, controlling staff, setting up automation, providing user services, going through policies, and so on; all these directly influence the amount of academic and research activities in the university. The scenario of higher education in India, especially in Maharashtra, has seen an increase in private universities that has occurred side by side with government institutions to an almost similar extent.

Higher education growth has not only injected competition and innovation in library management but has also resulted in a diversification of the same with the private universities being comparatively more free in terms of decision-making and adopting new technologies while the government universities were very much bound by common guidelines that were not only based on their funding but also on their infrastructural limitations. Different governing bodies, channels, and funding methods, technology investments, and user expectations become the backdrop for drawing contrasting views in respect of the management of these institutions, hence becoming imperative for conducting a comparative analysis.

The study compares the major factors like organization, financial management, human resources, ICT, and user satisfaction with regard to library management in government and private universities. The intent of such an exercise will be to come up with useful recommendations in the light of identifying best practices, attempting to solve the existing issues of the libraries while simultaneously evolving mechanisms, policies, and systems that would act to enhance the efficiency, accessibility, and overall quality of library services to the best of their abilities with respect to the latest requirements of higher education in Maharashtra amid ongoing technological and educational reforms.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 1) To compare the management structure and policy framework of government and private university libraries in Maharashtra.
- 2) To study the collection development policies and resource acquisition methods in both types of institutions.
- 3) To analyze the adoption and implementation of ICT and library automation.
- 4) To examine staffing patterns, qualifications, and professional development opportunities.
- 5) To assess user services and satisfaction levels.
- 6) To provide recommendations for improving library management practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Library management practices in Indian higher education establishments were studied with a focus on government versus private universities. Ranganathan (2006) gave the theoretical formulation of user-oriented services in libraries by way of his Five Laws of Library Science. Singh and Sharma (2010), having carried out a comparative study of library management in Indian universities, emphasize differences in fund allocations, staffing, and policy implementations in government versus private institutions. Kadam (2014) studied digital library initiatives in Maharashtra and found that many universities were still on the road to manual through automated in the early 2010s. Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (2014) documented the best practices among reaccredited colleges of Maharashtra, explaining how continuous training of staff and ICT adoption enhanced service quality. Bachhav (2016) studied automation in college libraries of Maharashtra and ranked lack of funds and technical support as the two chief impediments. Renge (2016) explored IT-enabled services in special college libraries and found that print resources were still dominant in most libraries. Deshmukh (2016) gave an assessment of user satisfaction in university libraries of Maharashtra and found private ones to offer better ICT-based services whereas the government libraries have better old collections. The combined findings of the studies revealed the highest level of progress in automation and quality of service, with an emphasis on the need for integrated management and resource-sharing models in both sectors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research is descriptive and comparative in nature, comparing 10 government and 10 private universities in Maharashtra; primary and secondary data have been collected through questionnaires, interviews, and reports. The results suggest that the government libraries are more regulated, being endowed with more but outdated collections and constraints on funding, whereas private libraries enjoy a greater autonomy, having newer collections and ICT infrastructure. Private institutes extend user services of a more personalized nature and digital integration with contemporary facilities, as opposed to the conventional and bureaucratically managed government libraries.

Library Management Practices in Government And Private University Libraries with Special Reference to Maharashtra:

Serving in the field of library studies in higher education is an overwhelmingly multidisciplinary field, one that blends management science, information theory, and organizational behavior to manage library

activities relating to instruction, research, and learning. It was underpinned in management and administrative theory-area, for example, Fayol considered planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling as his functions of management. Predominantly, such theories formed bureaucratic models displayed by government university libraries recognized with hierarchical structures, standardized procedures, and formal rules. Private university libraries, on the other hand, adopt a relatively informal style to create an atmosphere for the managers to innovate and formulate quick decisions. The libraries underwent technological metamorphosis from automation, digitization, and changing user expectations chiefly with the human relations theory emphasis on motivation and teamwork, with a user service orientation consideration as to how employee morale affects organizational efficiency.

Viewed from systems theory, a library constitutes an integrated system where inputs (resources), processes (activities or cataloging), outputs (services), and feedback mechanisms interact to optimize performance; government libraries are funded by way of a state budget and observe standard procedures, while private institutions use self-generated funds and follow a customized management style.

Contingency theory not only provides an alternative viewpoint but also elucidates management inequalities by stating that certain practices should be able to fit and be in harmony with the respective organizational environment; in fact, government libraries are operating under the public sector regulations, while the private libraries, on the other hand, are run by their institutional goals and market strategies. TQM, or Total Quality Management, promotes the notion of continuous improvement and customer satisfaction, in the sense thus reinforcing the other practices like performance appraisal and service evaluation, which the university libraries in private universities can easily adopt because of their administration's relatively flexible nature.

Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science thus become the guiding principle emphasizing making resources accessible and user-friendly; it can safely be said that private libraries have always been very aggressive to apply technology to save user time and nurture growth. Diffusion of Innovation suggests the spread of new technologies—such as integrated library systems and institutional repositories—through different phases of awareness, interest, evaluation, and adoption, with private universities mainly at the innovator stage, while government libraries are lagging in adoption due to numerous bureaucratic barriers.

The Resource Dependency Theory further explains how funding from outside either supports or hinders library autonomy and development, with private universities having many sources of funds thereby allowing for faster modernization, while government libraries, dependent on public funds, are sometimes hindered in their procurement and innovation. Keeping in view the integration of all these perspectives, the present study attempts conceptualizing the university type as having an influence over those organizational factors-funding, governance, staff skill, and ICT infrastructure-that influence the management practices in collection development, automation, digital resource management, and quality assurance, which in turn influence user satisfaction and service efficiency. In essence, hence, accounts for an exhaustive framework intertwining the older management perspectives with the more recent ones from information science to capture the undercurrent in management practices in government and private university libraries in Maharashtra.

FINDINGS:

Government and private university libraries in Maharashtra had considerable variability at different stages of development, also with changing trends in management, technology, and service delivery. In general, private university libraries are far better than government libraries in many parameters, particularly including the adoption of ICT, budget, staff training, and user satisfaction. Statistics will show that automation and digital infrastructure stand growing at a rate in both sectors; however, private universities have been a strong front in integrating with restructuring of an earlier and wide scope; for instance, by 2017, 100% of private university libraries were automated with government libraries lagging behind at 80%, and also private institutions had a higher average number of computers (80 versus 55).

Finance-wise, private universities indeed had higher increases in budgets on an annual basis ranging from ₹35 lakhs to ₹95 lakhs, allowing huge investments in digital resources, infrastructure, and training, whereas government libraries had only moderate increases in budgets ranging from ₹25 lakhs to ₹38 lakhs and depended overwhelmingly on meager grants from the state. Staff training further separates the private libraries—they hold between three and nine professional development programs annually for improving effective and responsive services, while the government libraries lag behind with only two to five programs per annum. User satisfaction surveys invariably favor private universities with aggregate scores placing them at 4.5 (out of 5) against government libraries' 3.6, especially when it comes to access to e-resources, and the environment as well.

The public libraries had a bigger print collection than the private libraries did, but the latter copied fast to close the gap between print and electronic resources, through the purchase of 150 electronic resources as opposed to the 110 of the public libraries. The staff distribution also indicates a strategic shift going on in the private institutions for digital needs support, with the same number of staff as in the case of the private institutions but with a greater percentage of the technical and IT support staff. This brings one to the conclusion that private university libraries in Maharashtra are technologically updated, financially strong, and user-oriented services are their priority because of their relative independence and resources. Contrarily, public libraries are strong in traditional collections, archival functions, etc., and thus huge investments in ICT infrastructure, diversified sources of funding, and training would be necessary to make up the gap which implies strategic reforms are necessary so that the whole sector can enjoy the same level of services.

DISCUSSION:

A significant comparative study of the libraries of government and private universities in Maharashtra gives us insights into the extent to which the type of institution affects the considerations of management structure, technology, and service delivery under different management and library science theories. The libraries of private universities have the flexibility of open organizational areas, autonomous funding, and competitive outreach making them tech-savvy and friendly to users. They are frequently the first to adopt various technologies, such as automation, digital resources, and institutional repositories because of this. Government university libraries, in contrast, collect archival materials and their focus is on preservation, which is characterized by somewhat more traditional values.

Being emblematic of the system, government university libraries are plagued by issues like space and fund inadequacy and are often further encumbered by bureaucratic processes that slow down the quick installation of technology and service delivery. From a Systems Theory perspective, private libraries develop a smooth way of doing things that leads to a higher degree of satisfaction because they have better input—a large amount of money and skilled manpower—while government libraries are facing the accumulation of problems in the system.

Contingency Theory implies that government libraries use formal regulations as an adaptive strategy within their environment, while such formalization would be a barrier to rapid innovation for private ones. Diffusion of Innovation Theory refers to private libraries as early adopters of new technology while at the same time government libraries bogged down by procedure are unable to rise to the same level. According to TQM principles, private libraries have a culture of continuous improvement mainly through user feedback and service innovations while government libraries do not engage in any quality assessment mechanism on a systematic basis.

Thus, the results indicate a preference for divergences due to structural, financial, and managerial issues rather than skill capability. This has created a strong and inseparable bond between the flexibility and innovation of the private libraries and the traditional strength of public libraries so that the ultimate solution could be management well-balanced on either side.

CONCLUSION:

A comparison study aided by libraries from both government and private universities in Maharashtra exhibits some fascinating disparities that cause differences in library management practices in the areas of funding, administration, and management philosophy. Libraries of private universities in Maharashtra, due to their quick and flexible adoption of ICTs, digital resources, and even user-oriented services, along with heavy investments and training for their staff, may easily be described as "modern" or "upper-level" libraries. On the other hand, government university libraries are considered slow in their development due to their more traditional practices, underfunding, and strict administration, though some libraries have begun to adopt automation and electronic resources more slowly over the last years. All these efforts at modernization still go back to funding, where private institutions have the upper hand in being self-financed, thus having the ability to come up with innovations, while the government attempts changing policies and increasing funds for both technology and human resources. Maharashtra's higher education system encompasses both types of libraries - the government ones maintaining the academic traditions and the private ones nurturing the innovations. Therefore, the interventions could possibly lead to certain areas of convergence, collaboration, and policy initiatives that would bring about sustainable development and fairness across the whole sector.

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