

Best Practices in Library of Indira Gandhi Senior College (IGSC), Nanded**--Kailas N. Wadje**

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The global changes particularly the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have impact on the functioning of academic libraries. Government of India, UGC and NAAC are seriously concerned regarding how to improve standards of education and establish best practices in the universities and colleges and their libraries. In the process of institutional accreditation, libraries play a crucial role. Library is the fulcrum of support for the entire range of academic activities on an educational campus. It is true that libraries largely support learning, teaching and research processes in institutions. In this paper researcher tries to take review of these best practices adopted by IGSC Library.

Keywords: Practices, Academic, Library, NAAC, UGC, Digital, Services.**Introduction:**

The global changes particularly the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have impact on the functioning of academic libraries. The developments in ICT have changed the users' expectation from the academic libraries in different ways. The ways to build collection and services to the end users vary from the recent past practices. To meet the end-users demands effectively, the academic libraries need to identify and adopt good practices and benchmarks. A huge number of academic institutions in India it needs efforts to bring quality in library services immediately. Higher education experts are much concerned about quality of education provided by the universities and colleges in India. There is apprehension that education received in these institutions is not commensurate with the fees charged from the students. Education experts feel that this is cheating with the people. It is because of this reason Government of India, UGC and NAAC are seriously concerned regarding how to improve standards of education and establish best practices in the universities and colleges and their libraries.

In the process of institutional accreditation, libraries play a crucial role. The services of the libraries have been expanding as they contribute significantly to the learning process, particularly the e-learning process. Library is the fulcrum of support for the entire range of academic activities on an educational campus. In today's high-tech learning environment, the library as a learning resource is taking up increasingly more academic space and time in the life of a learner. In times ahead, this will be even more so. All this play up the need for scientific evaluation of a library so that its role as the

centerpiece of academic development is protected and enhanced. It is true that libraries largely support learning, teaching and research processes in institutions.

Best Practices:

Definition: Best practices in the development of infrastructure and learning resources sustained practices leading to continuous improvement of infrastructure and learning resource development to create an optimum learning ambience.

ODLIS (Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science) describes best practices as follows: “In the application of theory to real-life situations, procedures that, when properly applied, consistently yield superior results and are therefore used as reference points in evaluating the effectiveness of alternative methods of accomplishing the same task. Best practices are identified by examining empirical evidence of success.”

Concise Oxford English Dictionary describes ‘Best practices as quality of most excellent or desirable type or most appropriate, advantageous, highly improved, outstanding, par excellence services or the customary or expected procedure or way of doing something that is usual or expected way in a particular organization or situation, guidelines for good practices. In this process of developing best practices we take action rather than good ideas, and we improve our skills.’

National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) and Best Practices:

University Grants Commission created a higher education body (whose job is to assess the quality of university and college institutions) in 1994 in Bangalore on the recommendation of National Policy of Education (NPE) in 1986. This is National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) which strives for quality and excellence in higher education and advocates for enhancing the role of library and Information Services in improving academic environment. Document prepared by NAAC for “Best Practices in Academic Libraries says : “Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solves a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations. “NAAC developed a set of best practices followed in academic libraries and presented under the following four broad areas:

1. Management and Administration of Library.
2. Collection and Services.
3. Extent of User Services.
4. Use of Technology.

College libraries need to have facilities that promote effective and interactive access and use of information resources for all users. In the area of physical facilities, the libraries need to offer safe, comfortable, well-lighted, clean space, with adequate and appropriate seating arrangements to ensure effective use of the library's resources including digital resources. Also, college libraries are required to consider study space needs, while allocating the seating space, with special attention being paid to reserve collections and the hostel environment of the institution. The libraries need to prepare well-framed rules and guidelines with regard to hours of access, circulation policies, and other regulations to offer better services to the users.

Best Practices For College Libraries

A database of documented practices is available on NAAC website and they assure that regular updating will be made with consultations on contributing institutions. For college libraries NAAC has developed the listed below are some of the best practices that can enhance the academic information environment and usability of college libraries.

1. Computerization of library with standard digital software.
2. Inclusion of sufficient information about the library in the college prospectus.
3. Compiling student/teacher attendance statistics and locating the same on the notice board.
4. Displaying newspaper clippings on the notice board periodically.
5. Career/Employment Information/ Services.
6. Internet Facilities to different user groups.
7. Information literacy programs.
8. Suggestion box and timely response.
9. Displaying new arrivals and circulating a list of those to academic departments.
10. Conducting book exhibitions on different occasions.
11. Organizing book talks.
12. Instituting Annual Best User award for students.
13. Organizing competitions annually.
14. Conducting user surveys periodically.

Case study: Indira Gandhi Senior College Library, CIDCO, Nanded.

Indira Gandhi Senior College Library adopted NAAC developed set of best practices followed in academic libraries and worked under the following four broad areas and their respected best practices:

A. Management and Administration of Library:

Listed below are the best practices adopted by the Indira Gandhi Senior College (IGSC) Library in management and administration of the library system. An effective management of library supports excellence in the students, supports divergent research needs on and off campus, continues to adopt changes, and contributes in strengthening the academic life in the campus of the college.

1. Observation Of Other Library Practices By Institutional Visits:

The IGSC librarian visited other Colleges/Institutional libraries (i.e. Yeshwant College; Nanded, MGM's Engg. College; Nanded, SRTMUN Library; Nanded, SGGS Engg. College; Nanded, Rajashri Shahu College; Latur, Dyanand College; Latur, BAMU Library; Aurangabad, Jaykar Library; University of Pune, IIT Library; Mumbai, IGM Library; Hyderabad, Osmania University; Hyderabad, etc) to study their functioning, the purpose being to refresh them and also make them aware about the best practices followed elsewhere.

After the visiting various libraries IGSC library advisory committee adopted book collection, periodical collection and purchasing policy with recommendation of the librarian. It also decided that to automate the library services and functions for smooth administration of library.

2. In -Service Program:

Training of the library staff in use of new systems and techniques has to be arranged. Library staff members are given the opportunity to familiarize and expertise with library automation, e-library services by arranging in-house and external training programmes. By rotation of library staff at various sections, on - job training is also given. The morale of the library staff has been increased due to the training and expertise in recent areas of library operations. E-skills such as web hosting, automation have been acquired by the professional staff. As the out come, the quality of library services and usage has been enhanced.

IGSC Management has given the opportunity to librarian for attending training from YASHDA, PUNE for e-Granthalaya library automation software and also from

TISS, Mumbai on digital software's for digitization of library. At present, college library is fully automated with digital resource collection.

3. Maintenance of Service Areas:

Library is a place where many users visit to read, consult and borrow reading materials. Inviting, clean and tidy atmosphere is necessary in and outside the Library. Maintenance of silence is very much required for concentrated reading and searching of materials.

IGSC Library concentrated to achieve this to provide the users clean and green environment including dust free environment in the stack and reading areas. IGSC staff maintained cleanliness in/outside the library punctually. Library Users appreciate and cooperate the library efforts in keeping the entrance, reading and stack areas neat and clean.

4. Library Science as Optional Course/Paper:

Library science optional course is offered by IGS College as a semester course for Arts students at the graduation level. The curriculum includes basic knowledge of library management that helps the students in getting a general understanding of the importance and use of libraries in different contexts. A positive impact is seen, in that these students have opted for full-time formal course in library & information science after their graduation.

5. Student Internship Programme:

Library & Information Science course is available for the B.A. students as an optional subject in IGS College. To provide practical training in the different sections/subjects of the library & library and information science, students were posted for internship in the various library sections and thereby get a clear understanding of library mechanics. A brief orientation of the work in different sections was given before the starting the practical. After the completion of every practical, a hand on demo was taken from student. Finally oral feedback was ensured. The practice provided hands on demo to students and thereby they could get a clear understanding of the functions/activities in each various library sections.

6. Student Participative Programme:

The LIS students are involving in the activities of maintenance and up keep of the IGSC library. They helping to library staff for maintain shelf order of stock, shelving of collection as per classification scheme, processing of forwarding & recommendations

receiving from users, acquisition process as well as maintenance of various library sections. Staff is benefited by the assistance of students.

7. Library Advisory Committee:

IGSC Library formed the library advisory committee with an equal representation by faculty and students, and the role of the committee and its functions in developing the library services are to be well defined. In this committee Principal is the chairman, Librarian is the secretary and one head of the department, one lecturer, one male & one female student & accountant is works as a member of committee.

B. Collection and Services

Listed below are the best practices followed in selected libraries in the area of collection and information services.

1. Dead Stock of less used/Outdated Reading Material:

In the IGS College library, the process of separating less used/outdated collection is done with the help of circulation data and the suggestions of Faculty and Students. These less used/outdated books are being stored in the dead stock unit. As all these books are already in the automated/digital database, their location will be shown on dead stock. The user searches the OPAC and demand for any of these less used/outdated collections from dead stock. The Library staff can find and supply the required book and replace after its use. The major problem of less used/outdated books can be reduced to zero. User's time in retrieving the documents also is saved.

2. Collection Development in Different Formats:

IGSC Library focuses on accessing the materials in digital formats together with the other collection. IGSC library developed the digital/hybrid library with the acquisition of digital collection/non book material (CD's, DVD's, VCD's, Film's, Map's, Globe's, e-books, etc) with the print collection. IGSC library evaluate the resources on the web and integrate URL link to OPAC for the users to access filtered and appropriate information. Licensing agreements as well as free browsing/downloading with unlimited access facility enable the users to consult the materials 24/7.

3. Library Book Exhibition:

IGSC Library arranges book exhibition from time to time of book with the help of publishers and distributors. The motive behind is to bring awareness among the students

on the latest books available in their subjects as well as to enable them in book selection process.

4. Extended Library Opening Hours:

IGSC library remains open from 08.00 a.m to 05.00 p.m. Its extended library opening hours is two (2) hours per day than their regular working hours in a day. Hall remains open with 100% occupancy.

5. Collection Enhancement in Hybrid Library:

IGSC library organize the CD/DVD/VCD/Film/ Non-Book Material collection in ideal way. All this type collection collected in library uploaded in digital form on the server of library network. This collection is made available online with help of intranet and WEBOPAC of the library network. This is one of the solutions to made digital library. Users are oriented towards the use of collection. By providing free internet/intranet facility to users, collection browsed & downloaded free of cost. The collection usage was increased.

C. Extent of the Use of Services

New skills and approaches are required for assessing the user's specific requirements. Continuous user promotion and information literacy programs had been launched with novel ideas to enhance the use of services. Besides the traditional user education and feed back of the users, there are a few user education and use measurement practices which are essential for academic libraries. Some of the best practices followed in measuring and enhancing the use of services in IGSC Library are outlined below:

1. User Education:

IGSC Library organized orientation programme periodically for the newly enrolled library user to the facilities and services provided by the library. It's very useful to raise awareness about the services & to optimize usage of the library. Library staff assists to guides in accessing electronic databases to faculty, scholars & users. Helps in precisely enunciate the information needs of the users.

2. Initiation to Fresher:

IGSC Library has been conducting Orientation Program to the new students admitted every academic year. Library has drawn formal orientation classes in the library.

Students attend the program according to the time-table drawn by the library. First 15 days, a formal request is made to the Heads of Departments, encourage the students to attend the orientation program as per schedule. Students are explained about the resources, facilities, available services in the library. They are taken round the library apart from training them in searching the library database, e-journals, e-mail and Internet/Intranet browsing etc. The schedules are drawn based on the subject/discipline to go into the details in 60 minutes duration.

3. Preparatory Course for Students' Projects:

Guidance in groups and individuals is imparted in preparing assignments and project reports. Instruction on literature search, compilation of bibliographies, citation of references, etc. is provided by the IGSC librarian. To users Serves as an excellent orientation to research report writing especially in organization of references.

4. Library Use Statistics:

IGSC Library is captured Data through registers maintained at all services points. Main register is kept at the entrance to capture data on footfalls in the library on day-to-day bases. And internet service point separate register is maintained to know the use of internet by hours/time. The data captured is analyzed periodically. The findings will then be fed into the decision making process. It is found that 245 users visit every day and 45% of them use internet and WEBOPAC. Internet, periodical and theses units have the maximum usage as evident from the statistics.

5. Library best user award:

IGSC Library announced **Library Best User Award** to attract more students to visit the library and use the resources. Data is gathered through visitor register maintained in the library. Usage data is compiled through circulation of library items. Based on the above data and the observations of the library, one Best User Award, in form of a **Reference Book** is given to the student who has made maximum use of the library.

6. Promotional Scheme of books for Scholars:

IGSC Library implement promotional scheme of books for scholars. Those are first & second in rank of their annual exams in Art's & Science faculty classes, IGSC Library issued two extra books for those ranker students than they borrowed regular books. This facility carried out regularly. Users will be tries to comes under this scheme they increased their result in exams.

7. User Feedback Practice through Different Formats:

In IGSC library, User feedback is collected on all aspects of library services formally through suggestion box, feedback forms and library services evaluation forms. Appropriate actions are initiated regularly on the suggestion received from the users. Book recommendations boxes are also kept at stack room, reference and reading halls and users are encouraged to recommend books for additions to the library. Necessary action is then initiated and user is kept informed.

8. Information aids:

IGSC Library Orient to fresher on use of facilities and resources is given as part of user education. Promotional materials on various products and services are made available to the users. Through regular displays of new additions user are kept up-to-date on the additions made to the library. Instruction on use of Internet and web resources is also provided. Due to start of this service Increase in percentage of use of periodical, reference, circulation and reprographic sections. Appropriate use of web resources also increased. Optimum utilization of textbooks and other relevant materials in departments also witnessed.

D. Use of Information Technology in Libraries:

Library Services need to reach to the user desktops with the use of Information Technology (IT). It uses technology in library with specific goals and objectives. Some of them are the process adopted the impact of the practice on the end user and the resources and skills that require using technology etc. These are some practical examples for the IGSC library, wish to adopt in library with suitable modification based on requirements.

1. On-Line Information Retrieval:

Access to current and comprehensive information is important to improve teaching and learning activities. For this purpose, IGSC Library, provides six computers with broadband connection of 512 kbps is created exclusively under NME scheme of UGC to the Staff, students and researchers with a free of cost for unlimited access online information resources. Library staff members monitor this service during the working hours of the Library. Within a short span of time, it became one of the most utilized services of the library.

2. Free browsing/Downloading Unit:

Large numbers of resources are available in the Web and students need to be provided with the required facility to access the same. IGSC Library provides for e-mail,

browsing/ downloading Internet, accessing e-journals, databases, institutional repository, Web OPAC and accessing other libraries etc. with six computers with Internet connectivity is created for free unlimited use by the students/users during working hours. Librarian and library staff members are guiding them in searching the relevant topics and also taking printouts.

3. Library homepage for Information dissemination:

IGSC Library Regularly display information about the latest additions and other current information like job opportunities, fellowships, training, student placement, academic; research and scientific news are displayed on the notice board as well as the library website. A good number of faculty and researchers regularly use this service and make effective use of their academic and research interests. Timely and wider dissemination made effective use and recognition of Library & Information Services and number of logs to library website increased.

4. User feed back through library homepage:

IGSC Library WEBOPAC is linked to online feed back form. The page layout is user friendly with all the useful information organized logically. Feed-back enabled the homepage to be user friendly with ease of access to useful information resources.

5. Web OPAC:

IGSC Library to make the library retrieval tool WEBOPAC on the Web for wider access. Library collection availability and its status are very important for the users. The card Catalog is converted into machine-readable format to make it available for access over the Internet. On this WEBOPAC attached various useful links.

6. Multi lingual, integrated, web enabled database with complete automation of in-house services:

Library database has over 3123 records with 5143 holdings, 107 e-books, 84 non book material including multi-lingual scripts on Intranet (LAN) connecting in the form of WEBOPAC. The automated environment facilitates integrated library services & training sessions for the library users. IGSC Library's WEBOPAC service will be made available online on World Wide Web very soon.

Conclusion:

In this paper researcher confined that as per NAAC guidelines Indira Gandhi Senior College Library adopted various best practices in its administration, management, collection & services, Extent of the Use of Services and use of technology. IGSC Library

implemented the Information literacy and user awareness programs with normative practices through best practices. In its effective implementation that make significant change in enhancing the use of information sources/services and users satisfaction level. The documentation on the best practices followed in the IGSC Library will initiate other libraries to opt for the ideal way of managing the libraries and services of academic institutions. In all, concerned areas of library, services and users, IGSC Library worked with full concentration.

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