



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Prerequisite of Electronic Governance in University Libraries of Andhra Pradesh: A Study

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Abstract

University libraries of the present decade afford some Lakhs of rupees towards electronic resources, yet many of them are underutilized and unknown to users. It is very legitimate on the part of librarians to know whether the higher education community is using the E-Resources optimally. Consortium has revolutionized the access of scholarly information in the form of E-Resources to all without any discrimination. The availability of E-Resources in university libraries and its effective utilization contribute to all round development of individuals. At higher education level every one need advanced and scholarly information to improve the quality of study, teaching and research. Internet, E-mails, E-Journals, E-Books and CD/DVD ROMs are considered as some of the important E-Resources. The present article depicts the role of e-resources in the governance of higher educational university libraries of Andhra Pradesh.

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INTRODUCTION

The dawn of the 21st Century has brought with tremendous potential for further raising our standard of living due to the advancement in production and exchange of information. Alvin Toffler¹, termed information technology as “the ultimate technology” and his phrase comes out to be true, even today where there has been a great upheaval in the world of information. Libraries are no longer, as Socrates² would have us believe, shrines for worship, but delivery rooms for the birth of new ideas. The library is center to the responsibilities of a university and to the functions of a college at all levels of learning. University library is a library or a system of libraries, established, supported and administered by a university to meet the information needs of its students, scholars, faculty members, etc. and support its instructional, research extension and services programmes. Resources in the library are collected in order to enable the university to achieve, preserve and disseminate knowledge among the educated from them. Ensuring constant availability of information and knowledge for students, scholars and teachers is one of the prime objectives of the university.

University Library – Definitions

According to Wilson and Tauber, the well-administered university library³ directs its activities towards the fulfillment of the functions of the university. By accumulating and organizing books, manuscripts, journals, and other materials, the university library serves as an invaluable source for the conservation of knowledge and ideas and as an active force in the teaching, research and extension programme of the university. Thomas Clarye’s has stated⁴ that, “The true university is collection of books” is an encouraging, even if it is a simplified starting point. Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, former presented of India, while inaugurating the World Book Fair in 1988, observed

that ‘a library is more important than a university because a library can function without a university, whereas a university cannot do without a library.’

Objectives of University Library

- To enable the service personnel to meet the instructional and research needs of students and faculty members.
- To help the users especially research scholars, faculty members, and post-graduate students, to be abreast of the current development in their respective areas of interest.
- To inform users from time to time about the latest additions of documents to the library.
- To provide an exhaustive list of documents with or without abstracts/annotations on specific topics to research workers, faculty members and post-graduate students on request.

Functions of University Libraries

The basic function of a library is educative, B.N. Chatterjee states, “the role of library⁵ is not merely to provide stimulus to reading by variety of ways. They are to king more and more active part in the attainment of the educational goals of the university”.

- To acquire, process, organize and make available varied types of reading materials for meeting the needs of different level of users.
- To guide research scholars and provide them resource useful for enhancement of research projects.
- To keep the faculty members informed of the updated progress in their fields of specialization.
- To establish information centers in library and render reader advisory service as to enable them to make use of library resources.
- To adopt new technology e.g. computerization in certain areas with a view to provide purposeful services in minimum period.
- To keep authorities informed of the achievements and literary output of the university, in order to seek support and financial assistance.

Commissions and Committees of University Libraries

For academic university libraries, Education Commission⁶ made observation that the library is the heart of all the university’s work directly. For the humanistic research, the library is both library and laboratory and therefore, a first class library is essential in a university. Various Commissions and committees are developed in university libraries, mentioned in table 1.

Table1: Commissions and Committees of University Libraries

S.No	List of Commissions and Committees	Year of Establishment
1	Radha Krishnan Commission	1948-1949
2	University Grant Commission	1953
3	Ranganathan Commission	1957
4	Kothari Commission	1964-66
5	Gajendragadkar Committee	1969-1970
6	Review Committee on University Grants Commission	1977
7	Review on Social works Education in India	1981

The UGC being all agency of the central government has to function as an all – India body, and all its activities have to promote national internets in the first two years of its existence, it had no great difficulty on seeking to coordinate the work of universities and the increase in movement of students and teachers among different states. But after the reorganization of states and emergence of distinct “linguistic states” a new centrifugal force came into play and some disintegrating tendencies became apparent. Despite of the built-in difficulties, the UGC has patiently endeavored to carry out the tasks of promotion, coordination and advancement of higher education in India.

Electronic Era in University Libraries

Information Technology brought crucial changes in the way of generating and acquiring knowledge. Perhaps no other profession in the world had gained in so short time by the computer revolution as that of the academic librarianship. The rapid emergence of multimedia and CD ROM materials has in its way defined the change from

analog to digital systems, and this modification had created an increasingly pervasive emphasis on computer based technologies and multimedia design and access. Moreover digital network technology i.e., the Internet, digital satellite systems etc., and the soon to be universal High Definition Television (HDTV), have further radicalized the information field. Nowadays, most of the university libraries remove the physical catalogue and replace OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) to search documents available in the library. Starting from the academic year, orientation will be given to the students showing how to use the OPAC and other library services. E-Resources can be locally owned and controlled or through remote internet subscription and some resources available free on net. E-Resources are normally added to the library catalogue in the same way as print resources. There are various types of Electronic resources viz. E-Database, E-Books, CD / DVD, E- Journals, Web Based Resources.

Table2: E-Governance in University libraries of Andhra Pradesh

S.No	University Libraries	E-Data Base	E-Books	E-Journals	Web Based Resource	CD / DVD
1	Andhra University, Visakhapatnam	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	Vikrama Simhapuri University, Nellore	Y	N	N	Y	Y
3	Dravidian University, Kuppam	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
4	Acharya N. G. Ranga Agricultural University	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
5	Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6	Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur	Y	Y	Y	N	N
7	English & Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8	Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
9	Kakatiya University, Warangal	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
10	K L University, Vijayawada.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11	Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
12	Osmania University, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
13	Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad	N	N	N	Y	Y
14	Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
15	Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
16	Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Ananthapur	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
17	Sri Sathya Sai University, Puttaparthi	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
18	Sri Padmavathi Mahila visva vidhyalayam, Tirupati	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
19	University of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
20	Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
21	IIT, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
22	GITAM University, Visakhapatnam	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
23	ICFAI University, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
24	Nalsar University of Law, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
25	National Institute of Technology, Warangal	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
26	NTR University of Health Sciences, Vijayawada	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
27	Krishna University, Machilipatnam	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
28	Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
29	Telangana University, Nizamabad	N	N	N	N	N
30	Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
31	Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
32	Vignan University, Guntur	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

33	BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus, Hyderabad	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
34	Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeet, Tirupathi	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y –Yes N- NO

In the Table 2, E-Resource facilities in the university libraries of Andhra Pradesh are analyzed based on selected variables of E-Resources amenities like E-Database, E-Books, E-Journals, Web Based Resource and CD/DVD. The Data⁷ were collected based on the information available in the websites of university libraries. The analysis reveals that all the university libraries are providing E-Resource facilities with the consortium created by the association of universities, which provide E-Resources like E-Books, E-Journals, Web Based Resource and CD/DVD. However, the access and availability of E-Books and CD/DVD facilities are not provided in some university libraries. Use of these electronic resources⁸ in university libraries of Andhra Pradesh are represented in figure1 which reveals that Majority of 57% E-Journals followed 21% E-Books, 13% Web Based Resource, 10% E-Database and 9% CD/DVD's are used in university libraries.

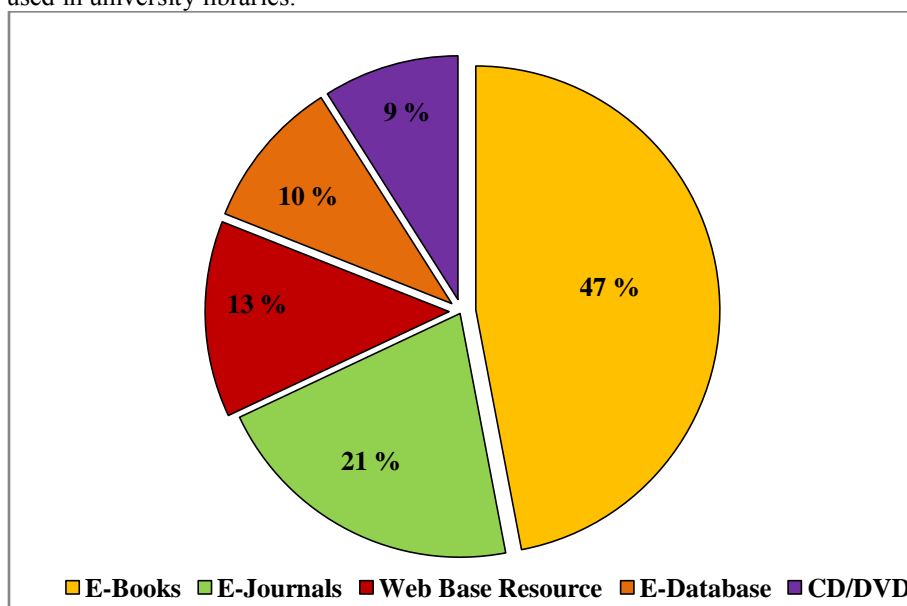


Figure1: Use of E-Resource in University Libraries of Andhra Pradesh

University libraries of the future will not require large buildings as they have today. With further expansion of Internet facilities, the largest libraries of the world are available at one's desk. Information can be drawn to the desktop of computers within a short time from any corner of the world since the limitations of time and space come nowhere in the way. Now seemingly for the very first time librarians are not only selecting text, data, still and moving images and audiovisual materials from various sources near and far, but they are also customizing the resources⁹ for information seekers. There are some practices in the library profession which are losing their significance like classification and cataloguing. The various schemes of classification were promulgated to facilitate the retrieval of documents in view of the limitation of human memory to keep pace with the huge collection of books and also for coordination of concept so that the related subjects may be grouped together. But it is now being substituted by the vast memory, speed and accuracy of computer systems that can retrieve the required segment of information from a huge library collection or online databases.

Library Consortium in Universities

Library Consortium is "Community which have formally agreed to coordinate, cooperate or consolidate certain function" to achieve mutual objectives. It is an association of a group of libraries to achieve mutual the joint benefits. Consortium¹⁰ may be formed on a local, regional, national, or international basis, on a functional basis; or on a subject basis. Library Consortia are growing worldwide¹¹ and increasingly approaching journal publishers for consortium-based pricing for e-journal access for their members. In the current environment of electronic information, undoubtedly it is the best option to utilize electronic resources that are available through Internet for the speedy retrieval of information for scientific research. But the situation is not satisfactory with all the academic community in the Indian Universities as:

- Computerization & Networking programs are not operated uniformly in all the Universities, in spite of the 15 years modernization programs of INFLIBNET¹².

- The problem of digital divide is increasing due to unequal operations in all the Institutions and also the mindset.
- Limited financial resources.
- Subscription of electronic versions of journals and electronic databases, in addition to print, will impart financial burden to individual libraries, since print journals cannot be totally replaced as on today, and also the list price of these in electronic versions is very high.

Electronic consortium are developed as a solution to the above crunch and create new mode of resource sharing across electronic networks; for better handling of the information resources and also enhance the users' access to maximum scholarly information for each individual library. Library Consortia provide more Information to more Users at lesser Price; As popularized & Scientific Organizations have taken part in developing Library Consortia, and the impact appears to be tremendous with the recent involvement of UGC followed by INDEST (Indian National Digital Library in Science and Technology) operations in promoting Resource Sharing, funded by Ministry of Human Resource Development, which is set up at the IIT, Delhi and open to any Private/Government funded Engineering/Technological/Educational Institutions/Universities.

E-services in University Libraries

University Libraries of Andhra Pradesh are extensively involved in using Internet, web surfing and Internet training. They are extending their library catalogues to distant uses through increasingly sophisticated library websites. The library websites are ranging from Static to dynamic web sites. They contain subject gateways. They bring external content to the intranet desktop such as Databases, e-journals, e-books, software, and free content. Libraries are expert in metadata handling. Since libraries are very much involved with classification and thesauri construction, libraries are called upon to participate/handle internal content management. Electronic services offered by university libraries of Andhra Pradesh are represented in Figure 2.

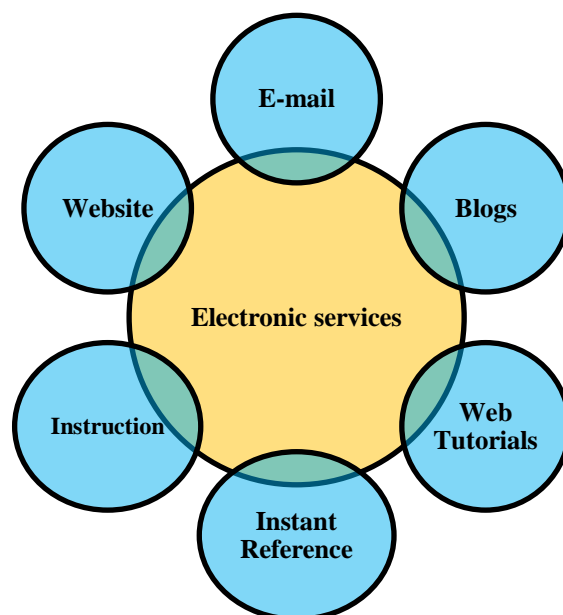


Figure 2: Types of Electronic Services of University Libraries

➤ **Library website**

The library website is indispensable for e-learners. Students can access library information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The website contains important information such as library hours, a toll free number if one is available, and links to inter library loan information, tutorials, the library catalogue and electronic resources. Students should not have to search through the website¹³ to find links to reference services. These services could include, an online chat service, e-mail reference, online tutorials, guides to evaluate internet resources and forms to request documents that are available through the electronic resources. It is important that the website is well maintained, kept updated and the services offered on the site are truly available when the site says they are available. Screen Shot of Osmania University Library¹⁴, Hyderabad is cited in figure 3.

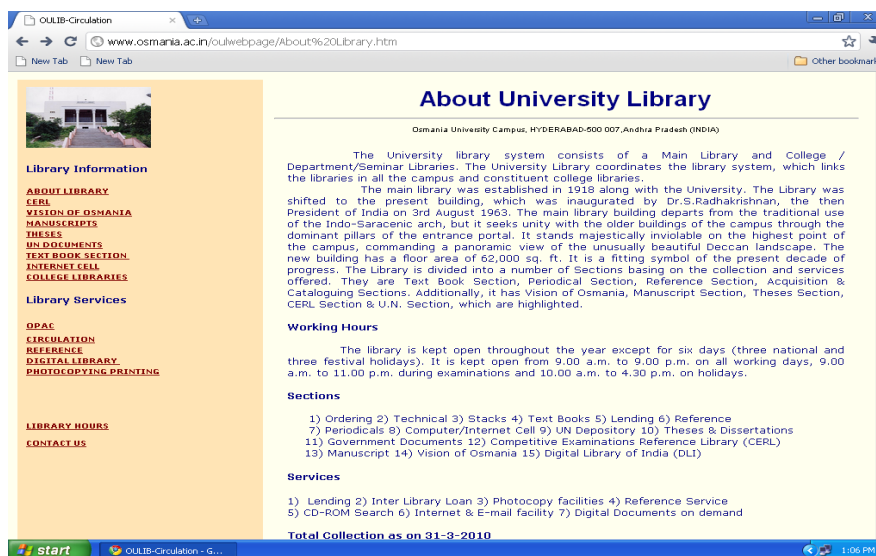


Figure3: Screen shot of Osmania University Library, Hyderabad.

➤ E-mail Reference

E-learners require more access to e-resources. Traditionally a reference librarian acted as an additional type of resource, one who could be counted upon to provide expertise in the working of library systems, research tools and to offer a helping hand in research process. In the transforming scenario, reference service can and has to be enhanced and supplemented with additional technologies. On the website itself some opportunities for reference assistance are given. A means of achieving this is by offering e-mail reference. It is crucial that the person responsible for handling e-mail reference is well qualified. It is important to let know students how long it will take to receive answers to their requests. Most students do not need any answer immediately, but they need to know they can expect the answer. Benefit of e-mail reference is that it gives the student 24 hour service without having to 24 hour librarian. It also provides an opportunity for the student to ask questions on locating, retrieving, evaluating and utilizing information. One of the disadvantages about e-mail reference service is their impact on the traditional face-to-face reference interview, particularly the absence of the verbal and nonverbal cues that assist a librarian in effectively responding to a question.

➤ Instant Reference

Instant reference can be enhanced with “chat service” which is very popular with internet users. Instant messaging also provides distance students, who often feel isolated in their academic experiences, a sense of comfort and encouragement. Providing instant reference service has its own difficulties. Difficulties may arise due to insufficient staff and budget constraints. Libraries must consider whether they have enough staff members and can afford to pay for additional working hours required to run the service effectively. If the service cannot be run effectively, then library should not provide it. Having an instant message service that students cannot rely upon is disappointing for students and results in negative publicity for the library.

➤ Instructions

E-learners are silent and invisible as they search and explore a library’s online resources, and they do not have the same access that on-campus learners have to formal library instruction sessions. With the whole lot of digital resources available to them and with different tools, “information literacy” skills are must for e-learners. Information literacy refers to competencies with information sources in a variety of formats. An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed.
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently.
- Evaluate the information and its sources critically.
- Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base.
- Use information effectively to accomplish specific purpose.

➤ Web tutorials

Web tutorials are a gateway of providing higher education. Web tutorials are best fit for distance education¹⁵ students because they can be accessed at any time and allow students to work at their own pace. Another benefit of web tutorials is that unlike in classroom instruction, the web tutorial can be revisited to clear doubts and for

reference purpose. Figure 4 depicts screen shot of Andhra University Library website¹⁶ which offers variety of distance education courses.

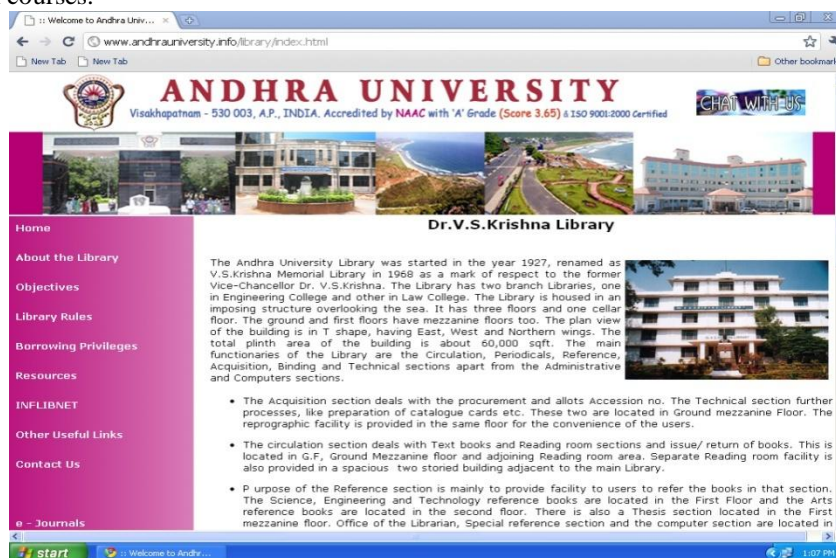


Figure 4: Screen shot of Andhra University Library Website

➤ Blogs

Blogs are innovative means of providing higher education. The advantage of blogs is that they are relatively inexpensive and quick to produce. Blogs are also great means of building a community and encouraging collaborative learning. Blogs would be a great way to get distance education students involved. To have each posting to the blog automatically generate e-mail to the librarian enables the former to assist the students.

Role of librarian in university libraries

The question of role of librarian in University libraries has been addressed by a number of authors. On one hand, it has been postulated that librarians would play a more dynamic role than at present as guides to the information seekers in an exploding universe of information. In another way, the rise of digitized information is an opportunity to elevate the role of librarian¹⁷ and leads to the emergence of a new breed of librarian: “the Cyber Librarian “or “Cybrarian” – a specialist in locating information on the Internet (Hathorn, 1997). At the extreme of the spectrum, on the other hand, total obsolescence and eclipse of library professionals in a scenario where knowledge base is diversified and wide and the developments in the fields like Artificial Intelligence, Neural Networks result in powerful, cost effective user-friendly¹⁸ search strategies and methods (Boride, 1995).

Librarianship is one of the oldest professions¹⁹ in the world and the times call for a new breed of librarians, those who understand and model (Drake, 1996). However, to sustain in the field of librarianship, librarians need to equip with technical skills. Role of Librarian in Internet such as knowledge of HTML, programming languages, knowledge of hardware basics and troubleshooting, understanding of software programs²⁰, and the skill to search, display, and retrieve data effectively in a variety of information retrieval systems (Morris, 1999).

Librarians to become knowledge managers or Professionals should possess variety of talent and perform the work with high level of skill and expertise. They should be able to extract, filter and disseminate vital external knowledge, and work side by side with users in collecting and analyzing strategic intelligence throughout the organization. The role of librarians is continuing to evolve with the adoption of Internet and world wide into the profession of librarianship. Though it is difficult to predict with certainty how active the role of librarians would be in this evolving scenario, it can be said with confidence that their services cannot be dispensed with because they have the necessary formation needs of the seekers.

Conclusion

University libraries in Andhra Pradesh had a glorious past. A glance at the development in the last century shows that they not only grew in number exponentially but also the services being provided by them were recognized internationally. Dr .S. R. Ranganathan made a great contribution to the field and proved that the Indian techniques²¹ of dealing with the knowledge and information were not inferior to that of any other country in the world. The present university system was designed by the previous generation of librarian in response to the prevailing conditions of that time. The system responded to the situation very well but it needs changes in the present perspective when a number of IT gadgets have emerged during the last one decade. E – Resources are

becoming more and more popular since they provide multimedia information, full text searching, reference linking and flexibility in searching and browsing. The application and use of information technology in the emerging electronic environment in universities libraries definitely help in improving the quality and productivity of library and information service.

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