

A survey of college library systems in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Saeed Ullah Jan

Assistant Professor/HoD

Department of Library and Information Science,
Sarhad University of Science & IT, Peshawar, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the current status of government college libraries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The major areas covered are: total collection of the college libraries with percentage of collection used per annum, the annual budget allocated to libraries, visits of the library users' per day, number of colleges in which library science is being taught as an optional subject and attitude of the librarians towards library automation. The paper also highlights the views of librarians about various limitations in government college libraries of the province. It is concluded that the standard of government college libraries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not up to the mark. The rate of flow of users to the libraries is very alarming. The collection used per annum is minimal. There is acute shortage of basic resources like collection, finance, human resource and space. The situation can be improved by taking some serious steps towards the betterment of libraries in colleges.

Keywords: College Libraries- Pakistan; Library system-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

INTRODUCTION

Generally there are two types of colleges in Pakistan: general education colleges and technical education colleges. A general college is an educational institution where two years (intermediate), four years Bachelor of Science (BS), two years Bachelor (BA/BSc) and post graduate courses (MA/MSc) are offered to the students. The library providing to such a college is called college library. A college library is considered as an integral and dynamic part of curriculum. The motto behind the existence of a library is to make the learners of various categories able to cope with the challenging needs of modern era. The learners' community of a college is composed of intermediate, graduate, and post graduate level students, teachers, ministerial and other supporting staff. The libraries attached to professional colleges contain collections on specific subjects mostly relevant to the curriculum of the institution. These include Law college library, Engineering college libraries, Agriculture and Forest college libraries, Elementary college libraries, Polytechnic and Commerce college libraries.

In Pakistan, a Government college is affiliated to a degree awarding institution / university but it has no authority to award a degree on its own. The college provides teaching, accommodation and co-curricular facilities to the students and the university conducts examinations and awards degrees. There are two types of government colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: degree colleges and post graduate colleges. These

Jan, S.U.

colleges vary in size, strength of students, staff members and facilities. There are separate male and female colleges. They fall under the thumb of Ministry of Higher Education, Archives and Libraries, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the last decade or so, government colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have undergone a mushroom growth due to increasing awareness among the public and which raised the graph of literacy.

The college library in Pakistan especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has not yet become the hub of educational activities. The students and teachers make little use of library resources and services. The basic reason for this being lack of library culture and user education. Most of the colleges' principals are not aware of the academic role and value of the college library in supporting the teachers and students in achieving educational goals and objectives. There is a dire need to educate the teacher community along with students.

In a developing country like ours, where students and teachers are unable to buy personal books and reference materials, the role of college library is becoming more challenging and important.

Objectives of the study

1. To calculate the ratio of library users with the total strength of the college
2. To assess the total collections of these college libraries
3. To examine the annual allocated budget
4. To determine the number of colleges involved in teaching of library science
5. To know the attitude of librarians towards automation of college libraries.

METHODOLOGY

The survey method had been adopted to accomplish the objectives of the study. A questionnaire was designed and distributed to 196 librarians of government college libraries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for data collection. Phones, Short Message Services (SMS) and emails were used as follow-up tools. Being a part of College Library system (librarian) in Department of Higher Education, Archives and Libraries, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it was painless for the researcher to contact the librarians as most of the respondents were personally known to the writer. As a result, 165 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was recorded as 84%. The collected data were tabulated and processed. The inferences were drawn from the analyses. Conclusions were made based on the results of analyses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many printed and online sources were consulted for the review of related literature. These include library and information science journals published in Pakistan and abroad,

e-journals, Pakistan Research Repository (PRR), HEC Digital Library and search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Vista.

There is a dire need for changes in the selection and recruitment policies of the college librarians (Qutab and Shafique, 2011). Libraries are built to acquire, preserve, process, access, retrieve and disseminate information to their patrons. It is also stated that no change has occurred in the objectives of the libraries (Gopinath and Pathak, 2001). Majority of the college libraries suffer from grossly inadequate book stock, annual library budget, unsatisfactory physical facilities and lack of recognition of their important academic role (M.Bavakutty, 1986). The success of any library depends on the quality and quantity of its resources and services (Rani, 2008). The high ups, principals and librarians of the colleges must initiate automation in order to facilitate the users in effective manner. Librarians also need to improve their skills in a far better way to cope with modern challenges (Bansode and Perier, 2008). There is acute shortage of library halls and big reading rooms in most of the colleges in India. There is no proper system of lighting and cross ventilation in college libraries (Kumar, 1978). Lack of clerical workers is a great issue in college libraries. A lot of time and energy of the librarians are wasted in performing clerical duties (Rowland, 1963).

ANALYSIS OF DATA

There are 196 government colleges in the Department of Higher Education, Archives and Libraries, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The gender-wise distribution is as under:

Table 1: Gender-wise distribution of government colleges

College type	Total	Male	Female
Degree Colleges	176	111	65
Post Graduate Colleges	20	15	05
Total	196	126	70

The analysis of Table 1 indicates that there are 176 (90%) degree colleges and 20 (10%) postgraduate colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is also shown that 126 (64%) are boys' colleges while 70 (36%) are reserved for educating the girls. About two third of the population are imparting education to the male community of the province. It is reflected that more attention is needed for the promotion of the female education at college level.

Library users are important asset to the college library system as the whole library setup is built for the facilitation of library users. For better library services, it is necessary to know the existing flow of library clientele. These facts and figures will be useful tool for the further improvement of the system. For this purpose, librarians are asked to provide a daily user statistics.

Table 2 presents the percentage ratio of potential library users with total strength. It was computed that majority 155 (94%) out of 165 respondents have given the figure,

Jan, S.U.

the average result (5.5%) of which lies in the percentage ratio 1-25. Only 6% have provided the data which exhibits the ratio lies in 26-50.

Table 2: Ratio of library users with total strength of the colleges

Ratio in percentage	No. of colleges
1-25	155
26-50	10
51-75	00
76-100	00

Table 3: Total collection of the college libraries

Collection	No. of colleges	Percentage
Below 5000	127	77
Between 5000 and 25000	30	18
Between 25000 and 50,000	08	5
Above 50,000	00	00

Library collection means all the learning resources available for reference. These include books, journals, reference materials, newspapers, text books, maps, CDs, material in digital format and other non-book material. The standard of a library can be determined from the quality of their collection. The respondents were asked to report about the quantity of the resources available in the library.

The analysis of Table 3 reflects that majority 127 (77%) out of 165 government college libraries have less or equal to 5000 library collection. A total of 30 (18%) out of 165 libraries have more than 5000 and less than 25000. Only 8 (5%) college libraries claimed more than 25000 library books.

The collection of the library is said to be standard and up to the level of the readers if it has a reasonable usage. For this information, the librarians were given a question "collection being used per annum". The responses of the librarians were recorded in Table 4.

Table 4: Collection being used per annum

Collection used (%)	No. of colleges	Percentage
1-20	135	82
21-40	30	18
41-60	00	00
Above 60	00	00

Table 4 shows collection being used by the college libraries per annum. A total of 135 (82%) out of 165 college librarians reported that only 13% of the total collection being used by the users per annum. Only 30 (18%) of the libraries reported between 21 to 40 % of the total collection used per annum. The analysis shows a crucial situation of collection not being used by the readers.

Table 5: Allocation of budget per annum

Allocation of budget per year	No. of colleges	Percentage
Below 50,000	22	13
Between 50,000 and one lac	00	00
More than one lac	00	00
Irregular	143	87

Table 5 reveals that majority 143 (87%) out of 165 college librarians reported that there is no regular system of reservation of annual budget for government college libraries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A few 22 (13%) were of the opinion that they receive less than Rs 50,000/- annual budget for building the collection of their respective libraries.

Finance is the backbone of any institution. A question was asked from the librarians “whether they are satisfied with present allocation of budget to college libraries or not?”. They were also given the query to opt for annual budget. The responses of librarians in this connection were recorded in Table 6.

Table 6: Satisfaction with present allocated budget

Attitude of librarian	No. of colleges	Percentage
Satisfied with present budget	03	02%
Not satisfied	162	98%

Table 6 elucidates that majority 162 (98%) of the college librarians are not satisfied with the present allocation of library budgets. They preferred a regular average 100,000/- (0.1million) annual budget for the collection.

Teaching of Library Science in colleges

Teaching of library science in colleges provides a base to the students to know their libraries’ services and resources in depth. The librarians were asked to report “whether the subject of Library Science is being taught in colleges or not?” The feedback of this query was tabulated as follows.

Table 7: Teaching of Library Science in Colleges

Status of library science	No. of colleges	Percentage
Yes	40	25
No	125	75

Table 7 reported that only 40 (25%) out of 165 college librarians were teaching the subject of library science at intermediate level. Majority 125 (75%) of them have not yet started the teaching of library science at their colleges. A good number of the librarians reported that they are teaching other subjects to the students.

Attitude of Librarians towards library automation in colleges

Library automation is the cry of the day. The situation regarding automation in college libraries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is dismal. There is acute deficiency of this trend. An effort was made to know the attitude of librarians toward library automation in colleges. The responses are recorded in Table 8.

Table 8: Attitude of Librarians Towards Library Automation in Government Colleges

Attitude towards library automation	Yes	No	%
In favour of Library automation	165	00	100
No need of this practice	00	00	00
I don't know about automation	00	00	00

Table 8 shows that all college librarians were in favor of library automation. They stressed that modern facilities in college library is very important for the fulfillment of changing demands of the users.

Response of college librarians towards an open ended question

The respondents were given an open ended question for the expression of their views about college libraries. The suggestions and demands of the college librarians can be summed up as follows:

- The post of Library Assistant/Clerk may be introduced in all colleges of the province.
- Periodic refresher courses/trainings on modern library technologies may be conducted
- Separate library building with appropriate reading rooms is also the demand of a good number of college librarians.
- Librarians may be given the status of teaching faculty of the colleges.

Findings of the study

1. The ratio of library users with total strength of the college is 5.5%.

2. Majority of the college libraries have less than 5000 library collections. Only 13% of the total collection is being used per year.
3. A large number of respondents reported that there is no regular annual budget for college libraries. The college librarians were not satisfied with allocation of budget for college libraries by Higher Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
4. Majority of the college librarians are not involved in the teaching of the subject of library science at college level.
5. All respondents were in favor of library automation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The standard of government college libraries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not up to the mark. The rate of flow of users to the libraries is very alarming. The collection used per annum is minimal. There is acute shortage of basic resources like collection, finance, human resource and space. The situation can be improved by taking the following suggestions into consideration:

- Introduction of user education program for the students, teachers and other supporting staff. This practice will create library awareness among the users. As a result, rate of potential library users and use of collection will be increased.
- The provision of library budget may be enhanced. There is a dire need of regular budget for this important segment of colleges. It is demanded that Rs 100,000/- may be allocated per year regularly for the purchase of library materials with a reasonable increase.
- Refresher courses, trainings, workshops, seminars and conferences should be arranged to equip the college librarians with latest trends in librarianship. Pakistan Library Association (PLA), Higher Education Commission (HEC), Higher Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and eminent library scientists of the province can play a leading role in this chain.
- The post of library assistant should be created for each college library because there is no attendant and assistant in most of the college libraries in the province. It is also suggested that college librarians should be given the status equivalent to a college teacher.
- The subject of library science should be introduced at all levels of college education. There is a great demand by the students to start this subject at degree and Bachelor of Science (BS) level as well. For this purpose, Department of Library and Information Science University of Peshawar (being the mother institution of the subject) should take the initiative and can play a vital role in this direction.
- To cope with modern challenges, library automation is the need of the day. The libraries of government colleges should be provided necessary technology-based infrastructure to facilitate their users in a more effective way. Networking of all college libraries should also be established to share their resources and services. Internet connections should also be provided to the college libraries to access e-resources, HEC digital library and other online databases.

REFERENCES

- Bansode, S. Y., & Periera, S. 2008. A survey of library automation in college libraries in Goa State, India. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Retrieved from: <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/bansode-periera.htm>
- Bavakutty, M. 1986. College Libraries in India: A case study. *Library Management*, 7(1), 2-47.
- Gopinath, S., Pathak, A., Kumar, M., & Sreekumar, M. G. 2001. Fourth generation libraries: From independence to interdependence. In: R. L. Raina & I. V. Malhan (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 3rd National Convention of Management Libraries Network (MANLIBNET)*, 31-32.
- Kumar, S. 1978. Physical Facilities in the Library. *New Frontiers in Education*, 8(3), 27-31.
- Qutab, S., & Shafique, F. 2011. Job Descriptions of Government Librarians in Pakistan. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Available online from <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/qutab-shafique.htm> [Last Accessed on 26 Dec 2011]
- Rani, S. 2008. Minority Degree College Libraries in Andhra Pradesh: A Study with Special Reference to NAAC Standards. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 225.
- Rowland, A. R. 1963. Cataloging and Classification in Junior College Libraries.