

Role of University Grants Commission in Promoting Library Services

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Abstract: *University Grants commission (UGC) is a statutory organization established by an act of parliament in 1956. This is a national body for the co-ordination determination and maintenance of standards of university education. The UGC serves as a vital link between the union and state governments and the institutions of higher learning. In addition to its role of giving grants to universities and colleges the UGC also advises union and state governments on the measures necessary for the improvement of university education. It also frames regulations such as those on the minimum standards of instruction and qualifications of teachers on the advice of subject specialists and academicians with whom it frequently interacts in connection with the formulation evaluation and monitoring of programmes.*

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1. Introduction

The commission being an apex body in maintaining higher education in the country is playing a major role in promoting library and information services in these universities and colleges. Besides it has also established and constituted a number of libraries/information centers/study centers and committees to provide quality education and service in the field of library and information activities. Some of these are:

- i) Financial assistance to university and college libraries.
- ii) Curriculum Development committee (CDC) on library & information science.
- iii) Establishment of national information centres.
- iv) Establishment of INFLIBNET
- v) Modernization of university libraries and
- vi) National review committee on university and college libraries.

1) Financial assistance to University and college libraries

Financial assistance is given to universities and colleges including central universities state universities Deemed universities and Government and affiliated colleges which receive grants for building up libraries so as to meet the demands of the students teachers and research scholars. The commission provides substantial grants for the acquisition of books and journals. For other infrastructural facilities also like library buildings furniture and equipment grants are given in every five-year plan period it also introduced a scheme of book bank in colleges and universities by providing grants to acquire multiple copies of costly text books recommended in all the disciplines. The objective of this scheme was to provide text books to poor needy and deserving students for home study on long term basis by charging nominal deposits. This scheme is no longer in operation by UGC support.

2) Curriculum Development committee (CDC) on library and information science

The UGC constituted CDC on library and information science in 1990 to restructure the courses of studies. The committee in its recommendations framed

guidelines for LIS schools covering admission policy students and faculty strength instructional methodology teaching aids and application of information technology etc. Besides it also constituted a committee called UGC panel in library and information science to suggest the changes to be brought in the education and training of LIS courses.

3) Establishment of national information centres

The objective of establishing national information centres in specialized areas is to provide improved access to information and to provide bibliographic support to teachers and research scholars in their respective fields. Three such centers have been established and they have developed computer databases to render reference and information services, documentation services and current awareness services.

4) Establishment of INFLIBNET

The UGC established an information and library network (INFLIBNET) programme with headquarters at Ahmedabad as a project of the inter university centre for astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCA), Pune in April 1991. The INFLIBNET programme aims at the establishment of a national network of libraries and information centers in institutions of higher learning including universities colleges R & D institutions and national organizations like CSIR, ICMR, ICSSR, ICAR, DOE, etc. It is a computer-communication network of libraries and bibliographical information centres and is a co-operative network programme for pooling sharing and optimisation of resources facilities and services of libraries and information centres in the university system as well as in the R & D complex. It provides access to information to students academics and researchers in rendering various information and documentation services such as a) catalogue- based service b) database service e) document delivery service d) collection development and e) communication – based service.

5) Modernization of university libraries

Recent advances in information and communication technology and its utility have forced the university libraries to computerize their services and connecting

themselves to various network programmes like INFLIBNET so as to provide fast efficient and reliable computerized information service to its users. The UGC has also provided special financial assistance to central university libraries and other university libraries established during last few financial years for updating their library facilities. The main objective was to computerize their library activities and connect them to INFLIBNET programmes. The utilization of the fund provided for the purpose is to meet the following expenses.

- a) Purchase of computer system monitor, printer, terminals software etc.
- b) Computer, furniture and electrical fitting and air-conditioning
- c) Mode, telephone line and connection to nearest communication mode.
- d) Appointment of information scientist
- e) Support for data entry work
- f) Purchase of books, journals, audio-visuals and their processing
- g) Data entry conversion (modernisation)
- h) Staff training and
- i) Other contingencies etc.

6) National Review Committee on University and College Libraries

The purpose of constituting such a committee is to review the utilization of grants to central universities and some state university libraries of Rs. 2 crores and Rs. 50 lakhs respectively secondly to prepare a status report of university and college libraries in India, and thirdly to prepare a strategy plan/guidelines for the future for smooth functioning of these university and college libraries.

2. Conclusion

Recently UDC in 2003 took a big decision to implement UGC INFONET programme. In this programme each university will be provided internet connectivity through various modes e.g. VSAT link Radio link or satellite link etc. Depending upon the geographical conditions of the university where it is situated. After linking free access to e-journals will be provided to them. This will be a big change in the library services. Some of the universities have already been provided this facility and rest are in the development phase.

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