

Designing Specialized Libraries: A Case Study of the Tantra Foundation Library Collection

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Abstract: *A special library can be defined as a library that is not academic, public, or national, it is developed by any organisation to serve its specific goals or objectives. This kind of library provides very specialised services to its parent organisation. Because these libraries have some particular goals their development is difficult and complex. To design such libraries, one needs to craft your implicit knowledge and reflection should be on your work. Such an experience is not easy because it is not the information you read somewhere and compiled in one place. This paper tries to compile the output of almost one year which developed a small but special library in its wide and varied collection. This paper discusses the design and development of a special library and the profession of a librarian. For the first time during the internship, I understood the work of a library professional in a real sense. At the same time, I came to understand a library and its various sections, holdings, working areas, librarianship, and the real soul of a library, which is “to guide your user.” This paper describes all the steps taken to develop a special library for a non - governmental organisation in Delhi “Tantra Foundation Library (TFL)” and also discusses the experiences and challenges of a library professional. The young, enthusiastic, and curious library and information professionals will benefit from this documented knowledge.*

Keywords: Library Design, Knowledge Organisation, Special Library, Library Development, Policy Frame & Implementation,

1. Introduction

English poet, **Walter Savage Landor** once said “*Nothing is pleasanter than exploring a library*”. I would say nothing is pleasanter than designing and shaping a library for a library professional. He not only creates a library but also develops a place where a user’s future takes place to a new high. Libraries have been a very important part of our society for a long. From ancient to modern civilisation and with time, libraries played a very crucial role in every aspect of human activities and overall human development. In ancient times when paper was not invented, human beings used to write on papyrus, palm leaves, birch barks, silk cloth, and copper plates, and as time grew, humans started writing on paper and compiling them. This is very important to mention that the form of ancient libraries was not as of today, and the user was also not the same as now. The same thing was with the founder of the libraries. In ancient times, generally, the emperor, otherwise rich person in the society or a Scholar used to set up libraries. The same trend can be seen now. In most cases, the Government is directly or indirectly involved in the set - up and development of libraries otherwise private organisations, great scholars are doing it. In ancient libraries, library access was very limited. The user was almost the elite class of society and the public was not allowed to access them but now today public libraries are developing their collection to keep an eye on the common man society. (Raju, 2007).

Any idea of a new library set - up starts with the construction plan of the library building. It should be in written form which is very useful for organisations, library staff and for future reference. It needs to be prepared by the librarian and other library staff with the consultation of domain experts, and an architect.

The TFL has a collection of over 7000 books (primary and secondary sources) and archival documents devoted to the literature of the Tantra study. This library organises knowledge related to Tantra and its allied domain. It also has

a mission of making this library a resource centre for this subject. The materials of this library hold subjects like; world religion, philosophy, and Vedic science and are related to the living culture of our past. Nowadays every institution has their website. According to Wikipedia “*A website is a collection of web pages and related content that is identified by a common domain name and published on at least one web server*” (wikipedia, 2023).

The TFL can be accessed at <http://www.tantrallibrary.com/> which gives a glimpse of the collection of the library. The URL is. Through the inter - library loan services, this library is serving its users and also has the plan to share its resources for maximum utilisation of the holding resources.

The designing and developing of any library benefits by organising knowledge, which is the best part of the library because sometimes we are unable to accumulate and consolidate the existing documents, collection, or any other information due to a lack of such library set - up initiatives.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) The main objective of this paper is to share the challenges of developing a library.
- 2) To study of need and development of library infrastructure.
- 3) Disseminate the information gained by personal experience.
- 4) To examine the requirements of ICT equipment for modern libraries.

2. Review of Related Literature

Ritu Shrivastava et al., focused on the basic need of a library for an institution. The library holds a collection of books and the library building is a house for that collection. In the past, libraries were typically located in palaces or temples. Much attention was paid to the aesthetics, material quality, dimensions, shape, utility etc. Library buildings are created

and designed differently based on their functions, available resources, and target audience on their functions, available resources, and target audience, library buildings are created and designed differently. Given the fundamental idea that a library is the hub of an Organisation that keeps the entire system running, authorities need to recognise the significance of well - planned, functional structures for libraries. (Shrivastava, 2018).

E. Kgaladi Kekana, in her study, says how a library that started from a single room with few staff expanded to a huge library which is now serving its services to approx.14, 500 users. She also says that “The library is the heart of any institution”, its collection is the centre of it. She through some light on a little conflict between the librarian and the faculty in selecting the library materials. To give the best and most satisfactory services, libraries have to be very balanced and adequate during the selection of books (Kekana, 1999).

According to **Derek Law**, “Collection development relates to the selection and acquisition of material for an expanding collection and decision on materials to be included in the collection. Collection management may subsume this, but also includes the allocation of book funds, and the balance between books, journals and conservation; the disposition of stock between open and closed access, between different media and between branches of library and store; and finally, the monitoring and encouragement of collection use” (Law, 1991).

Construction Features

Modern libraries are based on modern technologies like the green library building concept. This concept is focused on the utilization of renewable materials, and maximum utilisation of natural lights, keeping in mind that the future extension of the library according to the fifth law of library science “*library is a growing organism*”.

a) Selection of Location/ Place

The selection of a place is very crucial for establishing a library. It should be in the centre of the institution so that all departments can access it without any problem. We got the existing infrastructure for the TFL and we simply redesigned it as per our requirements. The library has 2000 sq. ft., space approx. It includes 600 sq. ft., an area for a book stack, and two reading areas of approx.1000 sq. ft., and around 400 sq. ft., for the office staff respectively.

b) Requirement of furniture, Computers, and electronic devices

A newly formed library required furniture for staff, users, and resources. It includes tables, chairs, Almirah, racks, etc., which a library has to purchase at a time. Also, the following electronic devices are needed for a new establishing library - Desktop computers, Printers, a Scanner, LAN for networking, a router for Wi - Fi, a Barcode printer, Data storage devices, pen drives, stationery items etc.

c) Development of policy for the library

A clear and concise library policy needs which cover issues like borrowing, access rules, copyright compliance, use of library resources, general library policy, technology and internet usage policy, and code of conduct that outlines expected behaviour within the library premises to

maintain a conducive and respectful environment for all user’s behaviour within the library premises, etc.

Selection of Resources

The development of a collection in any library is a major task. Based on the collection scope, every library needs to acquire resources that align with the needs of the users of the library. It required to collaborate with publishers, vendors, and subject matter experts to build a diverse and comprehensive collection. In the case of the TFL, as already discussed, the main collection consists of literature on Indic studies and this library focuses on organising literature related to the Tantra domain, world religion, philosophy, ecology, etc.

Major Sections of the Tantra Foundation Library (TFL)

A library typically consists of several major sections, each serving specific functions and catering to different aspects of the library's operations. The major sections of TFL include:

Acquisition Section

This department is solely responsible for acquiring library resources in both physical and electronic formats. It places an order of library resources from all over the world. After receiving them, it catalogues them, follows up to ensure a match of the order, ensures payment of bills/ invoices for all library purchasing, and establishes and maintains access to electronic resources acquired by the institutions.

Other than the above, the acquisitions department also sets up and maintains approval plans, subscriptions and standing orders, and assesses sources of supply, vendor performance and associated services while seeking opportunities to further workflow efficiencies, maintains ethical standards and good customer service with clients, book vendors and other service providers.

Technical Section

Technical Processing Section plays a key role in to function of the library. It makes a bridge between the acquisition of documents to the Circulation. This section of the library also plays a vital role in running the daily functioning of these library services smoothly. The general task of the library technical section is as follows:

- a) Classification of books
- b) Cataloguing of books
- c) Generate barcodes
- d) Stamping and pasting of authority slip, barcode, and spine labels
- e) Keep one copy in the reference section
- f) Make a list of binding, lost books
- g) Generate a list of the new arrivals of books.
- h) Put hardcopy of new arrivals into the 'New Arrival' Display
- i) Updated on the website as new arrivals with bibliographic details
- j) Maintain archive for all books processed and shelved
- k) Keep processed books in circulation to the users

Circulation Section

Circulation is a very useful module of library management. It is a frequent task in any library because its main job is to charge and discharge books, articles, and other library materials for the library members.

Periodical Section

The periodical section is the most important resource. It performs tasks like subscription and management of journals and periodicals, renewal, and cancellation of serials, if necessary, etc. This section develops and maintains journals, volumes, series, and issues available in the library or collected from outside sources for the users.

Book Stack Area

Categorisation and Shelving - The fourth law of library science says "Save the time of the reader". Every library staff have to follow this law but this is possible only when the resources of a library are kept scientifically so that they can be quickly and easily retrieved when reader demand. There are certain principles of shelving in libraries and information science. First, we need sufficient rack and stack areas for shelving. The size and dimensions of the shelf need to be designed according to the library collection. Once the arrangement of the library material is decided, further we need to choose the shelving method of books which can be arranged by titles, subjects, themes, accession number - wise, block classification wise - , etc. We can follow one or more than one pattern as per the variation of the collection. After the success of all the above steps, books are ready to move on the shelves and this is known as the final task as it is very crucial for every library

Frame of Reference Section

The reference section manages all the reference documents including Encyclopaedias, geographical sources, bibliographies, yearbooks, dictionaries, directories, Handbooks and. Related to the above library resources and by the use of the internet, the reference section provides reference and referral services to its users. This section performs all the necessary functions for the users including various information services on demand, provides instructions for how to use the library, organises orientation programs on a regular interval for the new users, and organization of reference materials.

The Library Management Software

DelNet was the first operational library network in India. It was started as a project, with financial and technical assistance from the National Information System of Science and Technology (NISSAT). Since its establishment, data has been updated in its database and it is growing rapidly. All the DELNET databases have been residents on DELSIS, in-house software developed on Basis Plus, an RDBMS, the product of Information Dimensions Inc. of USA which has been provided to DELNET courtesy of National Informatics Centre, New Delhi (Guide, 2023).

To automate a library, there are several Library Automation Software (LMS) available. The selection of LMS for the library is a very important task. Nowadays, the trend is open-source software rather than propriety software. Open-source software for the automation of libraries is - Koha, New Zen Lib, etc., while *Libsys, e - Granthalaya, Sanjay, DelPlus*, etc., are propriety software. After discussion, the Tantra Foundation Library decided to go with the **DelPlus 2.0** software of DelNet which is propriety.

The software is rich and developed to work in all kinds of libraries, Graphical User Interface (GUI) driven features make it easy to handle it. It uses MARC - 21, US MARC formats for cataloguing, Barcode enabled facility, also have backup and recovery option, it is a multi-user facility that connects different sections, report Generation facility identity card generation option also generates the ID card of the user, also provides MARC format which is helpful in import and export of data, report generation option enables to frame reports of various library activities, the advance search option is to trace the library holdings, it has advance budgeting system to frame the library budget, and the article indexing system use for indexing the articles of the institute.

Major modules of DelPlus software

The DelPlus LMS has several modules. Acquisition, Cataloguing, OPAC, Circulation, Serial control, and System Administration are the main modules of them.

3. Conclusion

The planning and setup of a library give new learning and experiences of its kind. One has to start this task from basics where you need to work on the library infrastructure, frame plan and policy, rules and regulations, terms and conditions, code of conduct, development of a committee for the collection development etc. From building architectural plans, and collection development policy to the library staff, you have to work in all dimensions which completes a library professional. The outcome of this article will help those professionals who encounter similar challenges in the library field. The planning of the library building, selection of library resources and dealing with the resource person are major tasks that need to be handled carefully. The design and development of a Special library is an ongoing process. Continuously reassess the library's effectiveness and adapt to changes in user requirements and technological advancements. Learn new technologies, strive for new information resources, and ensure the library user and make the library relevant and quickly responsive to its users.

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