

**PRESENT SCENARIO AND FUTURE PROSPECTIVES OF STATE
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN UTTARAKHAND: A STUDY**

Abstract

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

In the evolving landscape of higher education, libraries play a crucial role in shaping academic success and fostering research innovation. In India, and specifically in Uttarakhand, state university libraries are integral to the educational ecosystem, offering resources that facilitate learning, research, and scholarship. However, these libraries face a multitude of challenges that hinder their effectiveness, including limited funding, outdated technology, and a lack of trained personnel. As Uttarakhand strives to enhance its educational infrastructure and produce skilled graduates, understanding the current state of university libraries becomes essential.

The unique geographical and socio-economic context of Uttarakhand further complicates these challenges. Many universities are situated in remote or hilly regions, making it difficult to attract qualified library staff and maintain comprehensive collections that meet contemporary academic demands. The increasing emphasis on digital resources and technology in education amplifies the need for libraries to adapt and innovate, yet many libraries remain under-resourced and struggle to implement effective information and communication technologies (ICT).

This study aims to assess the present scenario of state university libraries in Uttarakhand, focusing on their operational status, user satisfaction, and the effectiveness of current policies and practices. By examining aspects such as collection development, service delivery, and barriers to technology integration, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the strengths and weaknesses of these libraries. Also explores future prospects.

Through this exploration, the study not only addresses the immediate needs of university libraries but also contributes to the broader discourse on higher education in Uttarakhand. Insights gained from this research can inform policymakers, library administrators, and educators, helping to create a more robust and responsive library system that aligns with the region's educational goals. Ultimately, this study aspires to lay the groundwork for future advancements in library services, ensuring that they continue to serve as vital resources for academic achievement and intellectual growth.

Statement of the Problem

Uttarakhand, formed in the year 2000 set apart from Uttar Pradesh, strives to become an educational hub in North India. However, its unique geographical challenges require a targeted approach to meet the specific needs of its educational institutions. Libraries are essential in supporting universities' missions to provide quality education and access vital information.

Despite their significance, there is a notable lack of comprehensive studies on state university libraries in Uttarakhand, particularly in the context of recent shifts towards virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to assess the current status of these libraries, identifying challenges and opportunities for improvement, thereby contributing to their future development. The title, “Present Scenario and Future Prospectives of State University Libraries in Uttarakhand,” encapsulates this dual focus on evaluation and enhancement.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To study the historical development of the State University Libraries.
2. To assess the present status of the university libraries in Uttarakhand.
3. To evaluate the collection development policy.
4. To explore users' satisfaction with the resources and services of the State University Libraries.
5. To identify barriers or challenges about the application of ICT in the library scenario.
6. To know the disaster management plan of the university libraries.
7. To explore plans to cope with future development and suggest solutions for the development.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were tested:

H1: The majority of users visit the library to borrow and return books.

H2: The majority of the libraries have a collection development policy.

H3: KU's library has the highest ICT infrastructure facilities available among all libraries.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is confined to the state universities established by the Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly. While these institutions are integral to higher education in the region, the research does not extend to private or deemed universities, which may present a different set of challenges and successes. This limitation is acknowledged, and the focus remains on providing a detailed understanding of the state university libraries' current status and future needs.

Here is the list of State Universities in Uttarakhand under study:

1. Doon University, Dehradun
2. G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pant Nagar
3. Kumaun University, Nainital
4. Soban Singh Jeena University, Almora
5. Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Dehradun
6. Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani
7. Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar
8. Uttarakhand Technical University, Dehradun
9. Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University of Horticulture & Forestry, Pauri Garhwal

Research Methodology

This study employed a survey method. A structured questionnaire was distributed to library staff and users at the selected state universities to gather data on user satisfaction and resource availability. The quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tools, and results were illustrated through bar charts and pie charts. This comprehensive methodology allowed for a nuanced understanding of the current status of university libraries in Uttarakhand, facilitating well-informed conclusions and recommendations.

Organization of the Study

The study is systematically organized into several chapters, each addressing specific aspects of the research topic. Below is a detailed breakdown of the organization:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the research topic, outlining the significance of libraries in higher education and providing context about the higher education landscape in Uttarakhand. It presents the statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, and the scope of the study, setting the stage for the research.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

In this chapter, a comprehensive review of existing literature is presented, focusing on studies related to university libraries, their roles, challenges, and the impact of information technology. This literature review highlights gaps in current knowledge, particularly concerning the state university libraries in Uttarakhand, justifying the need for the present study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the study. A structured questionnaire was administered to library staff and users to gather data on their experiences and satisfaction levels. The collected data were analyzed using statistical tools and presented through graphical representations such as bar charts and pie charts, ensuring clarity in the findings.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the data collected through questionnaires. It employs various statistical tools to interpret quantitative data. Findings are presented through graphical representations such as bar charts and pie charts, facilitating a clear understanding of user satisfaction, resource availability, and operational challenges.

Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusions, and Suggestions

In the final chapter, key findings from the research are summarized and discussed in relation to the objectives and hypotheses. The chapter concludes with actionable recommendations

for improving library services and addressing identified challenges. It also suggests areas for further research to continue the exploration of university libraries in Uttarakhand.

Major Findings

Diversity in Library Services:

The study highlights considerable variation in library resources among the nine state universities in Uttarakhand. GBUAT stands out with 280,510 items in its collection, while VCSGU's collection is significantly smaller at just 5,233 items, underscoring a critical need for balanced resource distribution.

Staff Composition and Gender Dynamics:

A notable gender imbalance exists among librarians, predominantly male, which may influence user interactions and the overall library environment. While fundamental services like lending and reference are generally offered, advanced services, including OPAC and digital literacy programs, are inconsistently available.

Infrastructure Limitations:

Basic facilities are generally sufficient, but advanced technological resources are notably absent, particularly in libraries such as UTU and VCSGU. With only one-third of libraries fully automated, there are significant opportunities to enhance operational efficiency and user accessibility.

Need for Modernization:

A strong majority (88.89%) of library staff recognize the necessity for modernization to keep pace with emerging trends. However, varying levels of familiarity with innovations like RFID and AI indicate a need for focused training initiatives.

User Demand for Improvement:

Feedback from users is overwhelmingly in favor of modernization, with all respondents advocating for enhanced services. Desired upgrades include RFID technology and remote access capabilities, providing clear guidance for future enhancements.

Engagement and Satisfaction Levels:

The survey, with a high response rate of 91.55%, indicates robust user engagement, as 67.96% visit the library daily for borrowing purposes. However, satisfaction with non-print resources remains low, suggesting that libraries need to evaluate and broaden their service offerings.

Access Challenges:

Users have identified various obstacles, such as difficulties in locating information and insufficient support from library staff. These issues point to the urgent need for enhanced training for library personnel and the creation of more user-friendly information access systems.

Conclusion

This study highlights the critical importance of state university libraries in Uttarakhand while exposing significant disparities in resources, infrastructure, and user satisfaction. The findings reveal an urgent need for equitable resource distribution and modernization to meet contemporary academic demands across the nine universities.

The strong consensus among users for enhanced services—particularly in digital access and advanced technologies—emphasizes the necessity for libraries to adopt a more user-centric approach. With all respondents advocating for improvements, it is clear that libraries must prioritize integrating modern technologies such as RFID systems and digital platforms to enhance accessibility and user engagement.

Furthermore, the unique geographical and socio-economic challenges faced by Uttarakhand's universities complicate efforts to attract qualified library staff and maintain comprehensive collections. Developing strategic partnerships with local communities and leveraging technology for remote access can help mitigate these challenges and broaden the reach of library services.

In summary, the insights gained from this research provide a roadmap for policymakers and library administrators to strengthen the library system in Uttarakhand. By focusing on modernization, equitable resource allocation, and user engagement, state university libraries can transform into dynamic centers of learning that effectively support academic achievement and

research innovation. This proactive approach will ensure that these libraries remain vital resources for students and faculty, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of higher education in the region.

Suggestions

To enhance the effectiveness and relevance of state university libraries in Uttarakhand, the following recommendations are proposed:

Modernization of Services:

Invest in modern technologies such as RFID systems, digital cataloging, and online access platforms. Libraries should prioritize the integration of these technologies to improve operational efficiency and user experience.

Staff Training and Development:

Provide ongoing training programs for library staff focused on emerging technologies, digital literacy, and user engagement strategies. This will equip librarians with the necessary skills to better serve diverse user needs.

Enhancing User Engagement:

Conduct regular surveys and feedback sessions with users to understand their needs and preferences. Libraries should actively involve users in the decision-making process regarding services and resources.

Promotion of Digital Resources:

Increase awareness and accessibility of digital resources through targeted marketing campaigns. Libraries should offer workshops and training sessions to help users navigate and utilize these resources effectively.

Disaster Management Planning:

Implement comprehensive disaster management plans to protect library resources and ensure continuity of services in emergencies. Regular drills and training for staff should be part of this plan.

Area for Further Research

- Present Scenario and Future Prospectives of Central University Libraries in India: A Study
- A comparative study on current library scenario of north and south academic libraries in India.
- Academic Libraries in North Central Universities in India: Present Scenario and Future Prospectives.
- Challenges and opportunities of state university libraries in Uttarakhand: A Study.
- The Scenario of Library in India: Past, Present and Future Perspectives.