
Academic Librarians - Where Do We Fit? Teaching, Research or Administration

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Abstract

This study highlights the serious concern over parity of working Librarians and Teachers in the academic environment and justifies the significant role of librarians as a strategic leader in handling multitasking activities within academic institutions, focusing on their involvement in various administrative and academic initiatives such as IQAC, NAAC, UUCMS, PM USHA (RUSA), IT, NSS and other coordination particularly in Karnataka state. This study explores the current situation of Librarians in handling multitasking activities with reference to Kalyan Karnataka Region of Karnataka state.

Keywords

Academic Librarians, Parity – Teachers, Library
Discrimination, Library Skills

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INTRODUCTION

Working Librarians in the Universities, Government Degree and aided Colleges are considered as “Teachers” (Non-Vacational) as per UGC (1998) and the Librarians play significant role in imparting education/ instruction to strengthen the academic and research temper of the academic community with its rich information sources both print and electronic sources to support the curriculum, teaching, research and extension activities. The qualifications of Librarians are the same that of Teachers in terms of qualifications, academic status and pay scale and hence, we would be grateful and make a history in the annals of libraries by including “Librarians” working in the university under the definition of “Teachers”.

Unfortunately, even after the pursuit and agitation by the Library Associations in India, including librarians in the definition of “Teachers” is still pending. It is important to understand that, by doing so, there is no financial burden on the respective Governments, and the advantages are numerous. The first and foremost advantage is that whenever there is a recruitment of Teachers, automatically, the enormous young graduates would get an opportunity for employment and further, unlike teaching faculty in Colleges, there is only one Librarian in the entire College system managing the activities and services. Besides, parity with promotions, retirement age and speculations to become Vice Chancellor, Registrar or Registrar Evaluation would be set right.

As per the Karnataka Regulation of Pay and Pension of Teachers in Higher Educational Institutions Act, 2020, published in the Karnataka Gazette Extraordinary on the 22nd day of April, 2020, it may be noted that under the definition of Teachers, the Librarians are included and if this is implemented in true spirit, the discussions in this paper would not have arised. On the contrary, the Government machinery interprets or misinterprets the inclusion of Librarians in the definition of “Teacher” as applying only to Pay and Pension, not to other benefits, raising serious concerns about the parity of working librarians with Teachers.

LEGACY OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP

Academic libraries have historically been central to the Indian Knowledge System, as evidenced by ancient institutions such as Nalanda and Takshashila. These centres thrived as hubs of learning, driven by well-organised libraries and the expertise of their

custodians. However, in recent times, academic libraries face declining significance due to undervaluation, inadequate policies, and the absence of a robust strategic framework.

Academic libraries were once pillars of intellectual progress, preserving manuscripts and supporting research. UGC should prioritize libraries as an essential part of higher education and the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). Regulations should emphasize aligning academic libraries with NEP 2020 goals, fostering the revival of indigenous knowledge traditions. The "One Nation, One Subscription" (ONOS) initiative offers a transformative opportunity to ensure equitable access to knowledge resources.

Librarians play a pivotal role in managing, curating, and disseminating these resources, ensuring maximum benefit for students, researchers, and faculty and also to ensure ethical policy to guide and curb Anti-Plagiarism research support to the research community. Oyelude (2020) discussed the multitasking role of librarians in the academic environment to support users and this is very much evident among librarians particularly in Karnataka state wherein librarians are handling multitasking activities within academic institutions such as IQAC, NAAC, UUCMS, PM USHA (RUSA), IT, NSS etc. Strengthening the framework for libraries and recognizing their indispensable role will help elevate higher education standards and restore the rich legacy of India's academic institutions.

Chigwada (2025) investigated the perceived roles of academic liaison librarians within the context of Education 5.0 in public universities in Zimbabwe and revealed that academic liaison librarians were engaged in various tasks, including information literacy instruction, research support, faculty liaison, collection development and marketing. Additionally, the study highlighted that the transition to Education 5.0 has presented librarians with new challenges, necessitating the redefinition of their roles and the acquisition of updated skills to demonstrate value to stakeholders.

Good leaders are made not born. If you have the desire and willpower, you can become an effective leader. Good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience (Lumor, King,2015). The need for library leadership in the academic environment plays a vital role in today's technical education system. This

leadership typically involves overseeing library operations, managing 'resources, implementing policies and promoting library services to support the educational needs of students and faculty.

In today's hectic workplace, professionals face the challenge of completing a large number of unavoidable tasks within a limited time frame. If you focus on one task at a time, it can be seen as low productivity, and most organisations/Educational Institutes consider this unacceptable. Thus it is important that every individual learns to perform and accomplish more than one task at a time. In other words, every person should learn to multitask. The concept of multitasking has its own pros and cons. However, if done properly, it can be quite beneficial. In today's competitive era, librarians often serve as heads, supervisors, or coordinators of other departments within the college. Additionally, Librarians also serve as coordinators for activities like NSS, Scout and Guides, Admission, Examination, IQAC, NEP, RUSA, NAAC, UUCMS and IT. They consistently stay updated on developments in library science, technology, and pedagogy to enhance library services and adapt to evolving educational trends.

ROLE OF LIBRARIANS IN MULTITASKING ACTIVITIES: A Study with reference to Kalyan Karnataka Region

Librarians play a crucial role in multitasking activities, serving as leaders in various capacities such as UUCMS, NAAC, IT, RUSA, NEP, and Scouts and Guide Coordinator in college settings. Their expertise in organizing, managing information and facilitating research makes them valuable assets in these roles. Additionally, librarians often possess excellent coordinate and lead diverse initiatives within the institution. Furthermore, their commitment to fostering a culture of learning and engagement aligns with the goals of these programs, making them natural leaders in promoting educational excellence and community involvement.

- **Librarian as IQAC/ NAAC Coordinator**

Librarians in the colleges are entrusted with a additional responsibility as IQAC and NAAC Coordinator in Kalyan Karnataka region comprising of seven districts of Karnataka state and its status is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Librarian as IQAC/ NAAC Coordinator in Kalyan Karnataka Region

Kalyan Karnataka Region	Total Available	Vacant	Librarian as IQAC/ NAAC Coordinator
Kalaburagi	31	11	4
Bidar	24	9	3
Yadgir	9	5	2
Raichur	15	9	3
Koppal	17	13	2
Bellary	14	10	2
Hospet	07	2	1
Total	117 117-59=48	59	17 (35.4%)

Table 1 shows that there are 117 degree colleges in the seven districts of the Kalyan Karnataka region, of which only 48 have Librarians. Among the 48 Librarians, 17 (35.4%) hold additional responsibilities as IQAC/NAAC Coordinators, indicating the professional edge of Librarians in the academic setting.

• **Librarian as RUSA Coordinator**

Pradhan Mantri Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) was a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to fund States/UTs institutions, with the vision to attain higher levels of access, equity, and excellence in the State higher education system with greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. The strength of College Librarians in Kalyan Karnataka region can be understood from the fact that, only two colleges have received PM USHA funding i.e.

Table 2: Librarian as RUSA Coordinator in Kalyan Karnataka Region

Kalyan Karnataka Region	Total Available	Vacant	Librarian as PM-USHA/ RUSA Coordinator
alaburagi	31	11	4
Bidar	24	9	4
Yadgir	9	5	1
Raichur	15	9	1
Koppal	17	13	2
Bellary	14	10	1
Hospet	07	2	1
Total	117 117-59=48	59	14 (29.1%)

In recent days, PM-USHA/RUSA has been a strong support for colleges and universities in building infrastructure, and for this, Librarians are entrusted with the responsibility as PM-USHA/RUSA Coordinator. This can be elicited from Table 2, which finds that 14 (29.1%) are holding the post of PM-USHA/ RUSA Coordinator among the 48 Librarians in the Kalyan Karnataka region.

• **Librarian as IT Coordinator**

The impact of ICT extends its reach to every profession including librarianship, leading to an explosion of information and increasing user expectations. Library and information professionals are forced to adapt to these evolving societal needs and work styles. The ever-changing landscape of technology requires library professionals to continually update their technological awareness to deliver the best possible services to their users. Most of the Principals/ higher authorities are of opinion that Librarians have an advantage in IT field as well because of their LIS curriculum and exposure and hence, Librarians serve as IT Coordinators in the Kalyana Karnataka region

Table 3: Librarian as IT Coordinator in Kalyan Karnataka Region

Kalyan Karnataka Region	Total Available	Vacant	Librarian as IT Coordinator
Kalaburagi	31	11	7
Bidar	24	9	5
Yadgir	9	5	2
Raichur	15	9	1
Koppal	17	13	1
Bellary	14	10	0
Hospet	07	2	1
Total	117 117-59=48	59	17 (35.4%)

Table 3 shows that among the 48 Librarians, 17 (35.4%) hold additional responsibility as IT Coordinator, indicating the ICT proficiency of Librarians in the degree colleges of the Kalyan, Karnataka region.

• **Librarian as Scout & Guides Coordinator**

The enduring impact of the Bharat Scouts and Guides is the cultivation of a lifelong learning spirit. Through diverse activities and the pursuit of proficiency badges, scouts and guides internalise the idea that learning is an ongoing adventure. This mindset is invaluable in a world where adaptability and the ability to acquire new skills are critical for success. The Colleges/ organizations, deeply embedded in the fabric of India, has been silently but profoundly contributing to the nation's skill development story and the librarians are entrusted with additional responsibility to serve in the Bharat Scouts and Guides as Coordinators.

Table 4: Librarian as Scout & Guides Coordinator in Kalyan Karnataka Region

Kalyan Karnataka Region	Total Available	Vacant	Librarian as Scout & Guides Coordinator
Kalaburagi	31	11	3
Bidar	24	9	2
Yadgir	9	5	1
Raichur	15	9	3
Koppal	17	13	0
Bellary	14	10	1
Hospet	07	2	0
Total	117	59	10 (20.8%)
	117-59=48		

Table 4 shows the role of Librarian as Scout & Guides Coordinator in Kalyan Karnataka Region. This can be seen in Table 4, which shows that 10 (20.8%) are holding the post of Scout & Guides Coordinator among the 48 Librarians in the Kalyan, Karnataka region.

DISCUSSION ON LIBRARY CONCERN – WHERE DO WE FIT?

Library and Information Science education has been offered for more than 100 years in India, yet the clarity of working Librarians as Teachers in the true spirit remains a big question. Recently in Karnataka State, a notification for the post of 'Principal' was notified during 2025-26 for the Government Degree Colleges and accordingly, six of the Librarians are qualified for the post of Principal and they were shortlisted, but later, the Librarians qualified for the post of Principal were rejected on the contention that, they are non-teaching. Not only this, even University Librarians are not considered as Professors/Vice-Chancellors/Registrar(s)/Registrar (Evaluation),

subject to exceptions, though the Karnataka State University Act declares University Librarians as Statutory Officers. All these leads to big question, where do we fit whether the Librarians are treated as Teaching Staff, if not, administrative staff of if not Research staff. Leaving aside all these, let's work to advance the professional development of libraries so they can serve users with utmost care and diligence. Besides, the additional role undertaken by the Librarians as aforesaid, the Librarian also plays other important roles in the Institutions:

- Remedial Classes Coordinators
- SWAYAM Coordinator
- Data Manager
- Curriculum Development Coordinators
- Time-Table Coordinators
- Alumni Coordinators
- Department Webpage Coordinators
- MOODLE Coordinators
- AISHE Coordinators
- MYTRI Coordinators
- Training & placement Coordinators and
- Internal Exam coordinators

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