MARKETING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY OF ALLAMA IQBAL LIBRARY OF UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays information is considered most important resource by academicians, practitioners and corporate all over the world. Marketing has been a contentious issue for several specialists of information and librarians as well. After thorough data analysis and interpretation, it was concluded as marketing can prove beneficial in managing information resources as well. So, a compulsion was felt by librarians to understand marketing strategies and implement them in marketing of information resources of libraries. IT revolution has open new pathways for information services provided by libraries. And because of this more formats of information services and products are available due to which libraries have become more attentive and competitive as well. This information technology revolution has not spared libraries and exercised tremendous pressure over it. The various issues faced by library professionals are compelling them to adopt various marketing mechanisms of managing library information systems in efficient and effective way. Marketing will help librarians to recognize the service users, and assess their information requirements & demands and creating, designing and delivering suitable services and products. The major focal point of this marketing concept is the user and the ultimate objective is satisfaction of the service user. This research paper will analyze the various marketing strategies that will help in enhancing the brand of a library. This paper will also reflect on importance of information, but in this age there is information overload and what is required is right amount information to right people at right time. So assessing information needs are very essential and proper evaluation procedures are required. Paper will also include areas where Allama Iqbal library of University of Kashmir has used various marketing strategies and will recommend certain other methods that will increase its user base and fulfill their needs. Research paper will also analyze various strategies that university library is adopting for its viable existence. Also, it will explore impact of IT revolution aided with use of marketing strategies that will help university
library to improve its reputation and help service users in providing them with specific information catering to their requirements. It will also add to the existing marketing plan framework of library and will reinforce it. As environment is very dynamic nowadays same is applicable to libraries, so it becomes imperative on libraries to cater to changing demands and shifts in environment. This complexity in environment can be overcome with proper planning and implementation of marketing strategies meant for libraries. This paper will also aid in establishing a framework that will guarantee strong commitment of library in applying marketing tools and techniques to sustain and succeed in today’s competitive market. This paper will throw light on certain e-information service initiatives taken by Allama Iqbal Library for meeting the demands and requirements of its service users and increase to its client base. It will also analyze current collection of resources that the library has provided for meeting demands of its users.

Key words: Marketing, Allama Iqbal Library, IT revolution, information resource


1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries across universities all over the world have witnessed decline in usage over the last few decades and have been exposed to various threats with the advent of information technology.

Nowadays, the information services of libraries and other centers should be proactive and should supply information to its service users at any destination, be it a classroom, the research laboratory, home or any other place. Library and information service centers need to understand ‘who our customers are’, ‘what they want’ and ‘what are their social characters, values, desires, aspirations’. The information technology has not spared libraries and exercised tremendous pressure over it. Libraries used to play a pivotal role in helping business and industrial houses by providing them with the information resources and knowledge that is available in their collection in which crores and crores of money have been invested.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To examine the present marketing strategy used by AIL.
- To unearth the challenges faced by AIL currently.
- Suggestions for improving the client base and usage of services
- Bring to light the e-information service initiatives taken by AIL for meeting the demands of its service users.
- Analyse the current collection of resources that the library has provided for meeting the demands of its users.
- To suggest new prospects of revenue generation
- To promote and publicise information resources of AIL
- Promote congenial environment for research undertaking.
- Suggest a suitable frame work to revamp existing strategy used for marketing of information resources in AIL.
3. METHODOLOGY
After scrutiny, previously published literature; precisely dealing with our objective were used as a base to explore opportunities for marketing of information resources of the library. The objectives set for the study were achieved through Content Analysis Method using:

- Information posted on Kashmir University website www.kashmiruniversity.ac.in
- Individual and group interviews of
  - A sample of users (students, scholars, faculty members) and non-users of library services
  - Professional staff of AIL.
  - Research and project assistants and associates.
- Review of documents
- Visit to different divisions of AIL.

4. MARKETING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

- Application of marketing principles was confined to manufacturing organisations. However in 1930’s, the idea was conceived by S.R. Ranganathan and which later became the basis for the laws of library science.
- Marketing is being interpreted only as promoting products and services but it also includes creating awareness about existing products and services as well as ongoing enhancement of products and services.
- Libraries, in the present scenario, need to adopt marketing approach as per the requirements of library service users. In order to be self sufficient, university libraries need to think not only about recovering costs but also about achieving profits through their services.
- When the library is marketing its collection, in particular, it can publicize:
  a. Availability of new procurements.
  a. Donations of large research collections of potential use to particular disciplinary areas.
  b. New services like development of online thesis submission, e-print archive of organizational research papers, use of anti-plagiarism software.
- The market plan needs to be formulated as the planning will give the direction to library goals and objectives and how to achieve them.

5. MARKET PLAN OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

- Libraries should include 7 Ps of marketing in their marketing plan so that they can achieve success in long run and stay relevant in current dynamic environment. They include:
  - Product.
  - Place.
  - Promotion.
  - Price.
  - Physical evidence.
  - Process.
  - People.
6. ALLAMA IQBAL LIBRARY OF UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

Establishment of Jammu and Kashmir University in the year 1948 marks the establishment of intellectual platform for the state. The aim of the university was to cater to the research and academic needs. In 1969, when the university was divided into two branches, one in Jammu and the other in Kashmir, the resources of the library too were split accordingly. In 1975 after being shifted to its present location, in the year 2002 it was renamed as Allama Iqbal Library after being named as Iqbal Library in the year 1984.

6.1. Facilities

- Fifty-seven (57) Seminar Libraries attached with different Departments, Centres, and the Institutes of the University.
- Collection of above six lac books.
- Special collection for visually impaired students including Braille books, DVDs/CDs, DAISY-Digital Talking Books etc.
- Various local, National and International newspapers
- Through UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium access to a leading Bibliographic Database known as J-Gate plus or J-Gate Custom Content for Consortia (JCCC) providing articles appearing in around eight thousand (8000) reputed scholarly Journals
- The JCCC provides article-level access to journals subscribed by 22 university libraries designated as Inter-Library Loan (ILL) Centres of the INFLIBNET Centre.
- Semi-automatic generation of ILL request directly from user(s) to the INFLIBNET Centre or to one of the ILL Centres as the case may be.
- Photocopying facility
- Internet Access centre in the library comprising of three labs and E-Resources centre with around 80 computers
- Wireless network access (Wi-Fi)
- Remote Access Facility (RAF) to all the subscribed electronic journals and journals accessible via UGC-InfoNet digital library consortium.

7. INFORMATION MARKETING IN ALLAMA IQBAL LIBRARY, KU

As Kotler describes 4Ps of marketing:

- product,
- price,
- place and
- promotion.

He suggested that these four Ps of sellers should be matched with four Cs of customer:

- user convenience,
- customer value,
- user communication and
- user cost.

7.1. Product

Libraries can offer large collection of programmes, services, and materials to its users and these constitute its product. Both tangible (issuance of books, access to internet) as well as intangible services (leading
institution of community, assistance to users) are provided by libraries to their service users. Core business of AIL is to give benefit to service users that provide answers to their requirements. Product constitutes an important component of marketing as the important task of library is to perform tasks and institution’s reason for existence.

- Allama Iqbal Library is gearing towards meeting various requirements of service users. AIL has automated its functions under Library Automation Programme. Database of Bibliography of AIL collection is also made online available having barcodes and digitization of other archival rare data is also accessible to make it available to other scholars all across countries.
- OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue): catalogue of library holdings can be accessed on intranet and web at: http://ail.uok.edu.in/
- Open Access Repository: DOAJ, DOAR, AIL Blog, SC cases online.
- Manuscripts.
- E-Resources.
- Print Journals, Online Journals, Periodicals.
- Trial Resources: Antiplagarism software.
- Education Portal.
- Electronic Theses and Dissertation Portal.
- Guest Book Portal.

List of Digitized collection under the project entitled, “Digitization of Rare and Copyright Free Books available in the State of Jammu & Kashmir” Sanctioned by the Department of Information Technology, Government of India.

- Books: 6,36,000.
- Journals (Back Volumes): 56,513 approx.
- Manuscripts: 415
- Rare Books: 1,442
- Theses and Dissertation: 1,435
- Microfilms: 22
- Digitized Books: 14,500
- Microfiche: 15
- DVD/CD-ROMs: 545
- DAISY-Digital Talking Book : 165.

7.2. Physical Distribution (Place)

Procurement of material and then sending out afterwards for various library service users.

- AIL has procured from different donors various documents as a gift. Collections include contribution from individuals and institutions.
- Filling the void in contributing more towards service users, AIL has maintained exchange relations with Indian and foreign universities.
- Allama Iqbal Library lends resource material to various clients through tangible or intangible ways.
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- Facility of reading room cum browsing section is also available for service users around the clock.
- Library’s collection is not restricted to university students, faculty and scholars but also easily accessible to various departments, centers, directorates and institutions of university main and offshoot campuses.

8. PROMOTION
Allama Iqbal Library of University of Kashmir makes various attempts to promote its services to various sections of society. AIL caters to requirements of faculty members, research scholars, PG students, non-teaching staff, project assistants, research assistants and associates, etc. Different segments have different needs and it becomes mandatory for AIL to inform users accordingly. A notion that awareness about every product/service should be communicated so that when a service user needs any information should think library.

8.1. Promotional tools used by Allama Iqbal Library

8.1.1. Publicity
Users of AIL services and products are informed through several methods like advertising. Such as; local dailies are an important source for disseminating information regarding various library activities and also includes awareness regarding seminars/courses/workshops/extension lectures/book release functions & exhibitions etc. AIL also conducts activities like celebrating Librarians’ Day, National Library week, extension lectures by eminent professors of country, World Book and Copyright Day etc to increase the usage rate of services provided by library and to improve upon the image of AIL.

Publicity regarding Library automation, IT and Networking programmes are given much coverage as these are the recent areas that need to be explored. Sometimes brochures, pamphlets and leaflets are distributed to attract library service users and same information is made available on university website for online users.

8.1.2. Price
- Price is generally expressed in currency terms.
- For library service providers, price is expression of value of information that one requires: a tangible product like fee charged for membership or service or CD-ROM. Various member groups are charged fee as annual membership of library according to the category the user falls in. Small amount is also contributed by photocopying services provided inside AIL.

9. CONCLUSION
As environment is dynamic, so libraries also need to change according to conditions of market. For survival and success of library opportunities of profit potential and cost recovery should be explored. Library services should be improved with introducing design of products and services and develop methods of communication and communicating the service users and improve library service by establishing proper mechanism of feedback. So, for developing countries like India, charging for information is a complex task and university libraries should reflect on what funds can be generated by this process. University libraries should assess various costs and decide on prices that these services will be provided. University libraries should judge accordingly and keep a token price, reasonable proportion of cost for various services and others which are revenue generating.

For library service to improve in these contemporary times, information technology and with proper implementation of marketing approach and strategies can be of immense help that will also improve in building library brand image and reputation of library professionals and services. With almost sixty years of its establishment, Allama Iqbal Library has achieved top position among Indian libraries. NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) of India has appreciated university library and that has
prompted library to work with more dedication, dynamism, zeal and assisted library in attaining higher 
degrees in academic librarianship. Response rate from service users will help AIL in growing and 
advancing in future period in time. University authorities should implement various marketing strategies. 
That will enhance library’s marketing plan. University libraries need to keep alongside each other with 
complex and changing environment and fulfill demands and requirements of service users and that will 
provide university library a strong reason to remain workable.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Vision and Mission
- Establish Brand Name- Intellect meeting hub
- Mandatory accounts for Scholars and Students
- Offers and Concessions for frequent visitors
- Subscriptions open to people from all walks of life.
  - Temporary
  - Online subscription facility
- Online accessibility of all books (read only format)
- Kiosks facility in the library
- Collaboration with state govt. , corporate and other educational institutions (e-infrastructure)
- Information about new services through mail
- Encourage subscribers to use facilities by offering free trial for limited period
- Feedback mechanism- (quarterly, monthly)
- Tie-ups with other universities outside the state
- Include 3 more P’s of marketing
  - People
  - Physical evidence
  - Process
- AIL should have a blog on Marketing of Information Products and Services.

REFERENCE

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