Evaluation and Comparison of Norms and Standards used for library layout in India: an overview

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Abstract: Libraries have a pivotal role in the transmission of information for higher education. They also play important role in supporting research programs of education set-ups as well as their outreach programs designed to educate and inform user groups on social, economic and educational issues and problems. Their evaluation is inevitable to enhance their performance. A variety of measures are available to evaluate library functioning. However standards are more effective to have a valid evaluation. The Library Associations such as ACRL, higher education organizations like CoFHE, the National Standard Institutions, various Educational Committees and Library Committees have developed standards and revised them from time to time. This paper traces out the available standards for measuring the libraries in India, and compares the recommendations made by UGC, India and suggestions made by various committees and experts. On the other side Library policy may also specify the subject areas in which the library is going build its archival collection, if any. Such policy statement on the part of the library ensures continuity and consistency in selection and revision of materials for the Library collections. According to Bureau of Indian Standards provides that a library should have a stack room, a Librarian's room and a reading room having seating capacity of 40 to 120 chairs. The Stack room should be big enough to accommodate between 6,000 to 10,000 books at least. The Library-in-charge would need to plan actual library size and seating capacity of 'reading room" keeping in view the optimum number of members in an education set, the variety of library services it is planning to offer, and the members who would be coming to visit the library for social interaction. An in-depth analysis reveals their strengths and weaknesses. The paper concludes that there are no authentic standards for libraries in India.

Keyword: Space management, space layout, Library building, policy maker.

1. Introduction:

The concept of a library building is continually changing due to evolving methods of providing, managing and delivering information resources to users and the community. Detailed planning needs to take these changes into account.

Space Management is about the accurate recording of space, planning, using space modeling, the application of benchmarks to measure how well space is being used and referencing local, state and national legislative standards i.e. the BCA, to plan for future needs. Obtain an understanding of how well space is being utilized.

- Assist with the equitable distribution of available space.
- Identify areas of improvement.
- Plan space required for Schools, Department, Disciplines and   Positions.
- Plan for future growth of students and staff.

- The general issues of physical planning for libraries and explores alternate plans from the angle of collection, users, staff, etc.

2. What are Space norms and standards?

Space norms are usually expressed as an 'allowance' of non-residential space per users. The allowance is made up of different types of space, such as general purpose and specialist facilities, and other non-teaching facilities, such as offices.

Norms used to be published by the University Grants Committee (UGC) and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC). They were based on observations and assumptions about how students in different disciplines were taught, such as how many hours and what type of teaching activity was needed, staff: student ratios and areas per workplace

Such standards provide assurance of a continuing effort to provide quality and meaningful library services to the users of Libraries. This paper represents an effort to establish a baseline of standards for libraries. The standards are designed to note the minimum level of service for a library. As presented, the standards represent a consensus of professional opinion on what is necessary to provide minimum quality library service.

2.1. According to Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) provides that a library should have a stack room, a Librarian's room and a Reading Room having seating capacity of 40 to 120 chairs. The stack room should be big enough to accommodate between 6,000 and 10,000 books.

The library-in-charge would need to plan actual library size and seating capacity of 'reading room' keeping in view the optimum number of members in an adult education set-up, the variety of library services it is planning to offer, and the members of the adult community who would be coming to visit the library for social interactions.

The library equipments and tools like furniture, fittings and accessories should of standard pattern and design, so that users feel comfortable in using them.

2.2According to tefma on library space:

Overall provision for library space on a campus is typically in the order of .5m² -
1.5m² UFA / EFTSL other parameters, which may help in sizing a library facility, include:

- Open stack space / 1000 volumes 6m² UFA based on standard library book stacks, 5 shelves high + 900 corridor.
- Closed stack space / 1000 volumes 3m² UFA
- Reserve collection space/ 1000 volumes 17 to 18m² UFA
- Private study, reader space and collaborative space 0.1 to 0.8m²
 UFA / EFTSL.
- Additional Specialist reader space (e.g. Law, Medicine) 0.8m² UFA / EFTSL

2.3. In the USA standards for libraries have a long histories starting with the Carnegie Corporation (1929), which prepared 21 Standards for Libraries etc, reprinted from 1929 to

1938, and the ALA (1937 and later revisions). However, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has contributed much in this aspect. An ACRL committee prepared standards for college libraries in 1959, and revised these in 1975 and 1986. These standards were approved as policy by the ACRL. These standards were further revised in 1995 and 1999; the most recent version was approved in January 2000 and published as 'Standards for College Libraries, 2000 Edition'.

2.4. According to UGC and PCFC

Both the UGC and PCFC norms used a series of space standards for given activities, such as for office workplaces and for different teaching activities. As part of the management practice survey HEIs were asked if they used space standards and if so to provide details of what those were. The findings were that 47 per cent of respondents use space standards. Where information was given on the standards being used most relates to office areas or libraries.

3. Definitions:

"Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all is a form of planning." - Gloria Steinem

According to Gareth Morley:

"Opening the Book could see from the start how to make best use of the space, restoring the proportions and aesthetics of the original building at the same time as delivering a modern hi-tech library service. We really enjoyed working together to realize this vision".

1) Need and Purpose:

- Most library space planning begins with focused attention to library operations. At a time when more library services can and should be delivered digitally, traditional planning methods are all too likely to yield poor returns on new investment in physical library space.
- If properly done, library space design situates information in the social context of learning. This synergistic situating of information and learning is the core function of a bricks and mortar library, and it aligns both the library and its building with the basic educational mission of the any library.
- provide a quantitative measurement for each area of public library service;
- Incorporate long-range planning concepts, statistical measures, and other developments in library.
- provide a philosophical context for quality library service;
- define minimal levels of service as well as levels of excellence along with goals for the future; and
- Serve as a partial basis for local and statewide library assessment and development.

2) Importance

The standards are a method by which to assess and to plan for better library service and facility give to users at the local level. With quantitative assessment, library needs can be documented and strong justification can be made for improved funding from both local and other sources. The standards provide a consistent process to be used over a period of time to develop improvements in all library services.

The standards serve as a statewide indicator of current library services and as a guide indicating future planning actions. The standards are viable both as a consulting tool and as a basis for statewide public library planning and development.

It should be noted that the standards are not a measurement of effort or dedication of any local library staff. Indeed, for some libraries, particularly smaller libraries, it can be difficult to achieve even core level standards because of the size of the supporting tax base. Where local funding is low, libraries are encouraged to explore the formation of alliances to increase the resources available to them through cooperative services.

The standards are meant to be incorporated into the management of each library. Library staff members are therefore encouraged to familiarize themselves with the standards and should adopt the standards as both assessment and planning tools.

If the standards are used to assess the current situation in each library and to assist in the development of the library's long-range plans shall be both satisfying and productive. These priority standards are those which should be achieved because of their fundamental importance to the communities served by libraries.

3) Norms and standards for Evaluation of space layout for different libraries in India:

Various measures have been devised to evaluate the functioning of libraries. **Lynch described** three general types of standards that have been adopted and promulgated:

(i)   Guidelines or models against which services are to be compared;
(ii)   Rules for activities which should be applied as consistently as possible;
(iii) Technical standards and specifications for which strict observance is necessary if the sharing of information is to take place.

R.S.R. VARA LAKSHMI of library service is through a generalized representation of operations of a library as seen through the eyes of an evaluator''. He suggested electiveness, cost effectiveness and cost benefit as measures for evaluation, which are in turn related to inputs, outputs and outcomes.
Vickery and Vickery also expressed a similar opinion and provided a framework for performance measurement.
Alemna, after a thorough analysis of evaluation procedures, stated that there are subjective and objective methods. Subjective relates to user surveys while objective is the performance measurement against the goal with measuring instruments.

According to **Kaula,** the standards for library works and services may be diagnostic, based on a model of conditions that prevail in the best of institutions or projective, which are independent of the existing libraries. Thus, there are various methods to measure and assess the performance of libraries based on attainable and practical goals.

4) **Use of norms today: An comparisons**

Despite the length of time since norms were last updated and the policy shift away from them, norms have continued to be used by many institutions. They use them for a range of purposes, primarily to assess space needs, plan new space and as a management tool to assist the allocation of space between users and departments.

As recently as 2003-04, the SMP survey of space management practice across the sector found that some 45 per cent of respondents used UGC or PCFC norms or space weightings, often with modifications. Others had developed their own norms, while 13 per cent of respondents did not use any set method for determining how much space was needed. UGC norms were used more commonly than PCFC norms

As the SMG Phase One report, 'Review of practice', noted, 27 per cent of HEIs use other methods as well or instead of norms and weightings. Institutions that use other methods frequently use norms or weightings as well.

Where sources were given for these, the most common were standards or norms which were developed by the institutions themselves, advice from consultants, external sources, such as Welcome Laboratory Guidelines, and former Department of Education and Science (DES) design notes. In some cases, institutions had developed reference areas, which were institution-specific space norms similar in approach to the UGC formula. In the survey, institutions were asked if they made adjustments to the standards/norms in use. Thirty four per cent said yes.

Figure 1: Types of space norms/standards in use

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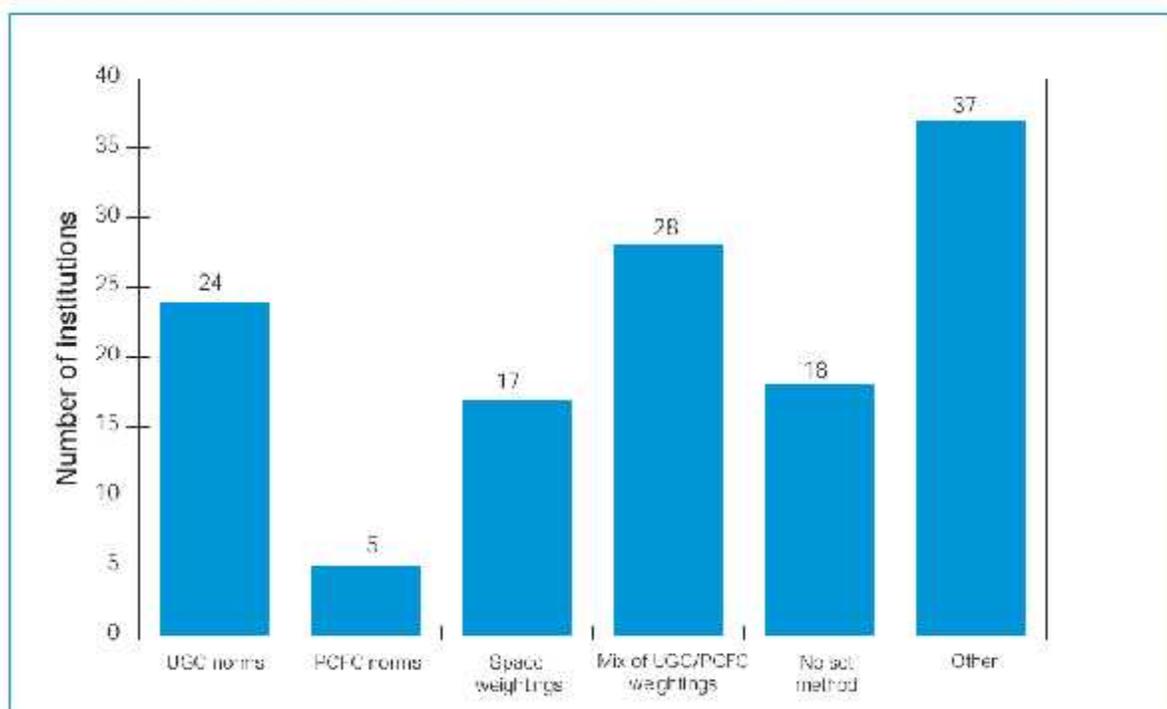
5) Recommendations:

Strategic planning and development of a library Space is guided mainly by the goals and objectives of the parent institution of which the library is a part. In any given adult education set-up, we could frame library objectives along the following lines.

i) Facilitate access to information for knowledge, education, and learning.

ii) Support research activities and programs of the set-up by offering proactive information services

iii) Support outreach programs of the adult education set-up, designed to educate and inform adult user groups on social, economic and educational issues, problems, and opportunities of interest them.

iv) Offer proactive services for effective use of all types of library materials.

v) Store and preserve information of archival nature such as local traditions,

Customs, and locally generated process documentation reports, etc.

vi) Use library as the platform for social, economic, and cultural development

6) For Example:

- *Pictorial layout:*

✓ *Customer flow*

✓ *Capacity*

✓ *Workflow*

At Opening the Book, we have studied the way people move through library spaces, which way they turn, how far they go, where they stop.

We apply this knowledge in our designs not only to ensure smooth transitions and avoid bottlenecks but also to create layouts which entice customers into the space with small discoveries.

⬇ *9.1People flow example:*

Our designs offer different mixes of shelving, computer desks, tables and soft seating to meet the needs of different customer groups. We help you to get the right balance of capacity for different activities.

We include flexible spaces which can accommodate events of different sizes within the layout design.

🔸 *9.2Events example:*

We design an interior layout which is easy to manage for library staff so they can spend more time with customers. We plan the workflow of stock management through deliveries and collections, self-service returns and easy routines for topping-up of displays.

Working with library managers, we advise on the relation of back-office and front-office and the best locations and styles for staff points to serve customers.

Opening the Book offers a wide range of reception desks and small staff pods, all with wheelchair access and bespoke storage.

7. Conclusion:

The purpose of standards is to upgrade libraries by providing yardsticks to measure their performance and up gradation. They offer measures to identify and rectify considerable differences in the quality of services offered and also user satisfaction. Several attempts have been made in India to develop standards for space layout and designing libraries. However, Ranganathan's standards, which are their five laws of library science, are the only authentic ones even in this day and age. Hence the professional bodies have to take the initiative in this regard and have to develop standards suitable to the contemporary academic and information environment.

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