

## Chapter 14

# Pivotal Role of the Library in Higher Education Reforms: A Critical Look

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter presents a reflective study on academic libraries' roles in reforming higher education systems. This chapter focuses on several aspects of academic libraries in improving higher education in universities and describes the impact of decolonization in higher education, emphasizing National Education Policy 2020 and democratization of higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide. This study focuses on the mediating role of academic libraries in supporting teaching, learning, research, and innovation in HEIs in term of collection development, positioning university library as a research hub, positioning as a hub for students' learning and success, technology integration and implementation, foster diversity and inclusion, open access advocacy, accreditation and quality assurance, library collaboration and partnership, organizational development, and employee excellence. Further, this chapter discusses how academic libraries matter in accreditation and quality assurance in HEIs.*

### INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have seen a change in social, organizational, structural, functional, and critical thinking. Of late, the growing trends in students' enrollment in higher education have multiplied, and the financial challenges, quality teaching, learning, ranking, and quality education have also

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appreciated sharply. These changes have been driven by some internal and external drivers which force higher education to re-think, re-invent and re-orient their role in transforming the higher institutions in terms of policy interventions, quality infrastructure, teaching, learning, research, innovation, and administrative perspectives. The need is that education must have a tectonic shift from less content to a more learning approach with vocational and skills-oriented delivery. To ensure it, a reformative approach is highly essential. At this juncture, decolonization in higher education is quite a significant interest among intellectuals for the social reproduction and the creation; legitimization of knowledge in social movements and scholarly development; and quality assurance across the globe (Stein & Andreotti, 2016). India's higher education system has witnessed a drastic change in recent decades. The government's realization to transform the Indian education system into skill, vocational, and self-dependent learning. Dreaming of a 'knowledge society' without having quality education is a distant dream (Tilak, 2012). The government and policymakers should strengthen higher educational institutions by reforming all components connected to higher education through an evidence-based, innovative approach and creative mindset. Furthermore, the teaching pedagogy must evolve to reform education to make it more holistic, experimental, inquisitive, critical-thought provoking, innovative and enjoyable.

Teaching and learning must translate into inculcation and cultivation of skills and competencies amongst the learners to develop the citizens into a skilled workforce. The gap must be analyzed by undertaking significant reforms in terms of quality, equity, and integrity into the system "from early childhood care and education through higher education." The National Education Policy-2020 is the major reformative step adopted by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, to reform higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **PURPOSE**

Accreditation and quality assurance are vital aspects to ensure that quality standards have been met for teaching, learning, research, and innovation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). There are several aspects of academic libraries which are vital for accreditation and quality assurance in HEIs. The policymakers have to give due attention to those aspects to maintain standards in HEIs. This study reflects academic libraries' role in reforming higher education systems in the context of accreditation and quality assurance. This chapter describes the impact of decolonization in higher education, emphasizing National Education Policy-2020 and democratization of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) worldwide. The purpose of the study is to explore the mediating role of academic libraries in supporting teaching, learning, research, and innovation in HEIs in terms of collection development, positioning as academic libraries as a research hub for stakeholders of the University, technological innovation, foster diversity and inclusion, open access advocacy, accreditation and quality assurance, library collaboration, and partnership, organizational development, and excellence are pretty significant to achieve an institution's success.

## **BACKGROUND**

Academic institutions should not remain static in this changing scenario of higher education. The higher educational institutions can play a vibrant and dynamic role in providing a conducive learning environment for teaching, learning, research, and innovation. The Indian National Education Policy-2020 highlights

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