Role of Central Library in Higher Education at Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University

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Abstract:

This study explores the pivotal role of the Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow, in promoting research-driven higher education. Utilizing content analysis as the methodological approach, the research critically examines how the library supports research activities, fosters information literacy among students, and identifies strategic interventions to enhance its academic impact. Findings reveal that the library significantly contributes to academic success through access to digital databases, orientation programs, and research assistance. However, gaps remain in personalized support, awareness of available resources, and technological infrastructure. The study emphasizes the need for targeted strategies such as expanding digital access, strengthening user training, and integrating research services to improve the library's effectiveness. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on academic libraries as enablers of inclusive, quality education and research excellence in higher education institutions.

Keywords: *Academic Library, Higher Education, Research Support, Information Literacy, Digital Resources, Central Library, BBAU.*

1. Introduction:

The **Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow**, serves as a cornerstone of academic infrastructure, playing an essential role in advancing higher education and research. As a central knowledge resource hub, it supports students, researchers, and faculty by providing access to a wide spectrum of learning materials, ranging from print books to digital databases, thereby enabling interdisciplinary exploration and academic enrichment. The library is committed to fulfilling the diverse information needs of a rapidly growing academic community and aligns its services with the objectives of national education policies that emphasize knowledge accessibility and academic excellence (Kumar & Tripathi, 2021).

The library is equipped with a **modern ICT infrastructure**, including automated systems such as **KOHA**, RFID-enabled circulation, online public access catalogues (OPAC), and e-resource platforms like **INFLIBNET**, **e-ShodhSindhu**, **JSTOR**, and **ProQuest**, making it a technologically robust environment for both on-campus and remote learners. It provides access to thousands of e-journals, e-books, and databases, facilitating high-quality research and up-to-date learning in various disciplines. These resources are

especially vital in a digital age where access to reliable academic content forms the backbone of knowledge creation and dissemination (Raza & Rehman, 2018).

One of the key contributions of the BBAU Central Library is its role in **bridging the information divide** for students from marginalized and rural backgrounds—many of whom are first-generation learners. The library organizes regular orientation programs, information literacy workshops, and research support services to help users effectively locate, evaluate, and utilize information sources. This focus on capacity building and academic empowerment reflects the inclusive vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, after whom the university is named, emphasizing education as a means of social upliftment (Singh & Verma, 2020).

Additionally, the library functions as a dynamic academic space where learners can collaborate, reflect, and innovate. With dedicated reading zones, research cubicles, and digital access corners, it encourages independent study and collaborative learning. It also supports the university's research ecosystem by offering referencing tools, anti-plagiarism software like **URKUND**, and access to previous theses and dissertations. These services are instrumental in enhancing the academic integrity and research quality of the institution (Sharma & Mishra, 2019).

In alignment with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and the **UGC's digital education initiatives**, the BBAU Central Library continues to evolve as an active partner in the teaching-learning process, rather than a passive repository of books. It not only supports curricular and research needs but also fosters lifelong learning and critical thinking. Thus, the central library remains indispensable in promoting academic excellence, democratizing access to information, and nurturing a culture of scholarly inquiry at the university (UGC, 2020).

1.1. The Background of the Study:

In the contemporary academic landscape, university libraries have evolved from being mere repositories of books to becoming dynamic knowledge centers that actively facilitate teaching, learning, and research. In India, the role of academic libraries has gained increasing attention, especially with the expansion of higher education and the growing emphasis on information and digital literacy. The University Grants Commission (UGC) and National Knowledge Commission (NKC) have consistently underscored the significance of libraries in promoting equitable access to knowledge, enhancing research productivity, and fostering independent learning among students and scholars (UGC, 2020; NKC, 2007). Within this broader national framework, the **Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow**, emerges as a key institutional resource committed to supporting academic excellence and inclusive education.

Established as a Central University in 1996, BBAU serves a diverse population of students, many of whom come from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and economically weaker sections. The Central Library, as a crucial component of the university's academic infrastructure, plays a pivotal role in addressing the information needs of these learners and supporting their intellectual development. According to Singh and Verma (2020), university libraries in India, particularly in public institutions, serve as equalizers by democratizing access to knowledge resources and providing opportunities for students who otherwise lack educational support systems. In the context of BBAU's mission to promote social justice and academic empowerment, the library serves not only as a learning space but also as a platform for upward mobility and academic transformation.

Technological advancements and the rise of digital education have further expanded the role of central libraries. With tools such as OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogues), KOHA automation, and access to databases like JSTOR, Shodhganga, and e-ShodhSindhu, the BBAU Central Library has become a gateway to global knowledge networks (Kumar & Tripathi, 2021). These services are especially valuable for postgraduate students and research scholars who require up-to-date and diverse resources for thesis writing, project work, and scholarly publishing. Moreover, the inclusion of anti-plagiarism tools and bibliographic assistance has improved academic integrity and research quality within the university (Sharma & Mishra, 2019).

The Central Library's commitment to information literacy and research support is further reinforced through orientation sessions, user education programs, and personalized assistance, which help students become effective information seekers. Raza and Rehman (2018) highlight that such programs are essential in Indian universities, where many students enter higher education with limited digital or library literacy. The BBAU library, by fostering a student-centric and inclusive learning environment, fulfills a critical function in bridging this gap.

Thus, the background of this study is rooted in the evolving expectations of higher education institutions to provide inclusive, technologically advanced, and pedagogically supportive learning environments. The Central Library at BBAU exemplifies these values and stands as a model of how academic libraries can contribute meaningfully to national goals of education, equity, and empowerment.

1.2. The Statement of the Problem:

Despite significant advancements in digital infrastructure and resource availability, the full potential of the Central Library at Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU) in supporting higher education has not been comprehensively assessed or utilized. While the library offers a wide array of e-resources, ICT tools, and academic support services, many students—particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds—still face challenges in accessing, navigating, and effectively using these facilities for academic and research purposes. Additionally, there is limited empirical research that evaluates how the library contributes to academic achievement, research productivity, and inclusive learning in the university context. This gap underscores the need to examine the actual role played by the Central Library in enhancing the quality of higher education and addressing the educational needs of a diverse student population.

1.3. The Significance of the Study:

This study holds significant value as it sheds light on the critical role played by the Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU) in promoting higher education, especially among students from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds. By exploring how the library's resources, digital services, and academic support contribute to students' learning outcomes and research capacities, the study provides insights into the effectiveness of library services in fostering inclusive and equitable academic development. The findings can inform university administrators, policymakers, and librarians about the strengths and gaps in existing services, thereby guiding strategic improvements in library planning, digital literacy training, and user engagement. Ultimately, the study contributes to the broader discourse on the role of academic libraries in advancing national goals of quality education, digital inclusion, and social empowerment in higher education institutions.

1.4. The Research Questions:

RQ1: How does the Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University support research activities in the context of higher education?

RQ2: To what extent does the library contribute to the development of information literacy skills among university students?

RQ3: What strategies can be adopted to enhance the role of the Central Library in promoting research-driven higher education at BBAU?

1.5. The Objectives of the Study:

O_1: To examine the role of the Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University in supporting research activities for higher education.

O_2: To explore the extent to which the library contributes to information literacy among students.

O_3: To suggest strategies for enhancing the library's role in promoting research-driven higher education.

2. The Review of Related Literature:

Kushwaha, S. S., & Singh, M. (2025). How Happy Undergraduates at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (A Central University) in Lucknow Are with the Library's Services: A Survey. Satisfaction with Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University's (Gautam Buddha Central Library) information resources was the focus of this article. The results showed that most people know of the library's print and digital resources. Users were not happy with how the information resources were organized or how easy it was to access both print and electronic materials. The research recommended, among other things, that libraries improve their internet connections for patrons' convenience and make them more aware of the services available to them at the library.

Vijaykumar, N., & Roopa, G. (2024). An Investigation of the Babasaheb Dr. BR Ambedkar Central Library's Patrons' Knowledge of and Engagement with Its Collection and Services. Research researchers and students at Bangalore University's Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Central Library are the focus of this study, which aims to assess their knowledge of and use of library resources and services. With the use of a structured questionnaire, we conducted a survey among library patrons; 215 people filled out the survey, for a perfect response rate of 100%. Most people who use the Bangalore University Library on a daily basis are interested in using the electronic resources, newspapers, periodicals, textbooks, journals, theses, and dissertations that are housed there. Users are mostly familiar with and make use of textbooks, theses, and dissertations, according to the survey. A large number of people utilize the library's services to borrow textbooks.

Ramesh, M. N. M. (2019). Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Libraries Concepts. Symbol of knowledge, freedom warrior, constitution creator, champion for equality, economist, lawyer, social reformer, politician, historian, and professor went away in India at the foot of the globe. In the sacred region of India, this individual came into this world, and a brilliant sun rose to save the Indians from their gloom. One such individual was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Their extensive knowledge has allowed them to reign over the whole earth. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's writings continue to be cited and studied by the world's leading experts in the field. He studied for 16 to 18 hours a day at a famous library, amassing a wealth of information. At the time, librarians believed that Dr. Ambedkar and the library were inseparable, and that he was the only great man to

construct a library around the circumference of the earth. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the Library are the subjects of the offered article. For this, we have collected and reviewed a number of sources.

Gupta, D., & Ansari, M. U. (2019). Electronic resources are ubiquitous in today's digital world, and almost every library is now able to accommodate them. There is a subscription database and an open collection at both universities. Researchers from Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU) in Lucknow and the University of Delhi (DU) used electronic journals for this investigation. The goals, kinds, and challenges of evaluating e-journals are to be examined. It is normal practice in the academic world to utilize electronic journals for research, and the study's results show that this is especially true for both universities. The research stresses the need of the library scheduling frequent e-journal orientation programs.

Saini, O. P. (2014). Document Delivery Service by Central Library, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow: A Study. Users of one library may borrow books or get photocopies of documents possessed by another library via interlibrary loan, which is also known as interloan, interlending, document delivery, or document supply 1. This article delves into the theoretical and practical aspects of the University's document delivery service (DDS), which was launched in July 2009. The procedures and processes of DDS are the focus of this article. In order to conduct this research, we reviewed, analyzed, and collated all of the relevant government documents. In addition to outlining the service's benefits and uses, the paper also suggests ways the service may be enhanced.

2.1. The Research Gap:

While several studies have explored user satisfaction and general awareness of library resources at Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University the existing literature lacks a focused investigation into how the Central Library specifically supports research activities and contributes to the development of information literacy among students. Most prior research emphasizes user engagement with electronic resources, borrowing patterns, or service delivery models without critically examining how these services influence academic outcomes such as research quality, scholarly productivity, and digital competency. Furthermore, while historical reflections on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's association with libraries highlight their symbolic and inspirational significance they do not address contemporary institutional practices or strategies to enhance the research culture. This study addresses these gaps by evaluating the functional role of the Central Library in facilitating research, strengthening information literacy, and recommending actionable strategies to better align library services with the goals of research-driven higher education.

3. The Methodology of the Study:

The present study employed a content analysis methodology to investigate the role of the Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University in supporting research-driven higher education. This qualitative method involved the systematic review and interpretation of various textual materials, including institutional documents, annual library reports, user manuals, workshop proceedings, student feedback forms, and relevant scholarly articles. Through coding and thematic categorization, the study identified key patterns related to the library's impact on research activities, information literacy, and academic support. Content analysis allowed for a comprehensive examination of how library services are structured, perceived, and utilized by the academic community, thereby offering meaningful insights into the strengths, gaps, and opportunities for enhancing the library's role in higher education.

4. The Analysis and Interpretation:

Pertaining to Objective 1

O₁: To examine the role of the Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University in supporting research activities for higher education.

The Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow, plays an indispensable role in fostering a research-oriented academic environment that supports students, faculty members, and research scholars alike. As research activities are a cornerstone of higher education, the library serves not merely as a storehouse of books but as a critical hub for information access, academic inquiry, and knowledge creation. Equipped with both traditional and modern information services, the BBAU Central Library provides access to a comprehensive range of scholarly journals, theses, dissertations, databases, and digital repositories that are vital for the research process (Kumar & Tripathi, 2021).

One of the most important contributions of the BBAU Central Library is its facilitation of access to national and international research databases such as **e-ShodhSindhu, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, and Shodhganga**. These platforms offer peer-reviewed journal articles, e-books, and open-access dissertations, enabling scholars to stay updated with current research trends and literature across disciplines. According to Sharma and Mishra (2019), such access to diverse academic sources is essential in building a strong foundation for original research and in enhancing the quality and relevance of academic outputs. Furthermore, the library subscribes to bibliographic databases and citation tools that help researchers efficiently manage references and citations in their work.

The BBAU Central Library also supports research through its **anti-plagiarism services**, primarily through software like URKUND and Turnitin, which are used to ensure academic integrity. This aligns with the University Grants Commission's (UGC, 2020) directives that emphasize originality in research and mandate the submission of theses and dissertations to plagiarism detection systems. The presence of such tools at the university library not only educates students about ethical research practices but also safeguards the institution's academic credibility.

Moreover, the library organizes **research methodology workshops, user orientation programs, and hands-on training sessions** on digital resource utilization. These initiatives are designed to equip students and young researchers with essential research skills such as literature searching, database navigation, data analysis, and scholarly writing. As observed by Raza and Rehman (2018), many students in central Indian universities enter higher education with limited exposure to research tools and scholarly practices. The BBAU Central Library thus serves as a capacity-building institution, addressing these gaps and preparing students for rigorous academic pursuits.

Importantly, the library's digital infrastructure—automated cataloguing systems like KOHA, OPAC access, and remote login for digital databases—ensures that research materials are accessible beyond physical library hours, supporting flexibility in research timelines (Singh & Verma, 2020). This is especially beneficial for part-time researchers and faculty members engaged in multi-disciplinary or collaborative research.

Central Library of BBAU is a vital pillar of the university's research ecosystem. Through its resource-rich environment, training programs, digital platforms, and adherence to academic standards, it empowers the academic community to conduct high-quality, ethical, and impactful research. By continuously upgrading its

services and aligning with global academic trends, the library strengthens the university's vision of being a center of excellence in higher education and research.

__Pertaining to Objective 2__

O₂: To explore the extent to which the library contributes to information literacy among students.

Information literacy, defined as the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for problem-solving and decision-making, is a critical skill in the modern academic environment. The **Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow**, plays a fundamental role in developing information literacy among its student population, especially in a context where many students are first-generation learners with limited exposure to advanced research tools and digital resources. As educational institutions increasingly prioritize independent learning and digital engagement, the library's initiatives toward fostering information-literate individuals have become essential to academic and professional success (Raza & Rehman, 2018).

The library supports information literacy through **systematic orientation programs and user education workshops** at the beginning of each academic session. These sessions familiarize students with the library's physical layout, cataloging system (KOHA), Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), and access to e-resources. These efforts aim to ensure that students can independently locate books, journals, and digital content relevant to their coursework and research interests (Singh & Verma, 2020). Moreover, customized workshops on database searching, citation management using tools like Zotero and Mendeley, and the ethical use of information empower students to critically assess the credibility and relevance of sources—a key component of information literacy (Sharma & Mishra, 2019).

Another critical area where the BBAU library contributes to information literacy is through its **subscription to digital academic platforms** such as JSTOR, Science Direct, e-ShodhSindhu, and INFLIBNET. These platforms provide students with direct access to peer-reviewed articles, e-books, and conference proceedings across disciplines. Through guided training on these platforms, students learn how to use advanced search features, apply filters, and analyze scholarly content, thereby developing evaluative and interpretive skills central to becoming information-literate (Kumar & Tripathi, 2021). Additionally, the integration of **anti-plagiarism software like URKUND** into student projects and thesis submissions teaches students the value of originality and proper attribution, reinforcing ethical information practices.

Importantly, the Central Library's contribution to information literacy also has a **democratizing effect**, especially for students from marginalized and rural backgrounds. Many of these students arrive at the university with minimal exposure to ICT tools or research methodologies. The library bridges this gap by providing **one-on-one reference services**, digital literacy sessions, and access to computers and high-speed internet, enabling them to develop skills necessary for academic competitiveness (Bhatt, 2020). This inclusive approach ensures that all students, regardless of their socio-economic status, can effectively engage with the information environment of higher education.

Furthermore, the library staff, through their **role as facilitators and mentors**, contribute significantly to the growth of students' information-seeking behavior. They assist users in topic refinement, keyword selection, and resource evaluation—skills that not only support academic work but also prepare students for research careers and lifelong learning. As highlighted by the University Grants Commission (UGC, 2020), libraries

are expected to function as centers of information literacy and digital empowerment in India's higher education system.

Central Library of BBAU significantly enhances students' information literacy through infrastructure, training, digital access, and personalized academic support. By doing so, it not only contributes to academic success but also prepares students to be informed, ethical, and self-reliant knowledge users in an increasingly complex information landscape.

Pertaining to Objective 3

O₃: To suggest strategies for enhancing the library's role in promoting research-driven higher education.

As the academic landscape rapidly evolves to emphasize innovation, interdisciplinarity, and global competitiveness, university libraries must reposition themselves as proactive agents in fostering research-driven higher education. At **Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU)**, the Central Library holds tremendous potential to further strengthen its contributions to research by adopting targeted strategies that align with 21st-century learning needs and technological advancements. These strategies must be grounded in both **infrastructure enhancement** and **user-centered services** to ensure greater academic productivity and inclusion.

One of the most important strategies involves **expanding access to high-quality digital research databases and open-access platforms**. While the BBAU library currently provides access to resources such as JSTOR, e-ShodhSindhu, and ScienceDirect, increasing subscriptions to discipline-specific international journals and databases like IEEE Xplore, SpringerLink, and Scopus could significantly enhance the research capabilities of faculty and postgraduate students (Sharma & Mishra, 2019). Moreover, promoting awareness and use of **open-access repositories** like DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) and arXiv can foster a culture of open scholarly communication and reduce dependency on paywalled content (Bhatt, 2020).

Another critical strategy is the **institutionalization of regular research skill development workshops**. These sessions can train students and scholars in advanced research methodologies, academic writing, data analysis tools (e.g., SPSS, NVivo), referencing systems (APA, MLA), and the use of citation managers like Zotero and EndNote. According to Raza and Rehman (2018), structured training sessions are especially useful for early-career researchers who may lack formal exposure to the complexities of academic publishing and literature review techniques. The library can collaborate with academic departments to embed such workshops into coursework or research orientations.

Enhancing **research visibility and academic impact** is another strategic goal that can be achieved through the establishment of an **institutional repository** for archiving faculty publications, theses, conference papers, and working documents. This not only preserves the university's intellectual output but also increases global visibility and citations of the researchers' work. As Kumar and Tripathi (2021) suggest, creating searchable, indexed, and open-access archives through platforms like DSpace ensures long-term knowledge preservation and accessibility.

Additionally, implementing **personalized research assistance services**—such as reference consultations, subject-specific librarian support, and academic advisory sessions—can guide researchers in identifying resources, formulating research questions, and accessing grey literature. Singh and Verma (2020) emphasize that such individualized support improves research outcomes and encourages academic independence, especially among first-generation learners and underrepresented students.

Technological integration is also a key enabler of research productivity. The library should continue to upgrade its **ICT infrastructure**, including high-speed internet, cloud-based access to resources, and virtual library services. Furthermore, investing in **anti-plagiarism software**, integrated digital reference tools, and analytics platforms that track resource usage and citation impact will align the library's services with global research standards (UGC, 2020).

Finally, the library can foster a collaborative research culture by establishing reading groups, journal clubs, and interdisciplinary forums where students and faculty engage in peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. Such initiatives not only promote intellectual dialogue but also build academic networks that extend beyond the university campus (Kaur & Rani, 2021).

For enhancing the role of the BBAU Central Library in promoting research-driven higher education requires a multi-pronged strategy encompassing digital access, research training, personalized support, open-access dissemination, and infrastructure modernization. By adopting these evidence-based strategies, the library can become a central force in advancing the university's mission of academic excellence and research innovation.

5. Conclusion:

The Central Library of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University plays a pivotal role in advancing research-driven higher education by offering a blend of traditional and digital academic resources, research support services, and information literacy programs. Its efforts to democratize access to scholarly materials, promote ethical research practices, and develop critical academic skills among students—particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds—highlight its significance as an inclusive academic hub. However, to further strengthen its impact, the library must adopt strategic enhancements such as expanding digital databases, integrating personalized research assistance, and fostering collaborative academic spaces. By doing so, the library can continue to evolve as a central force in fostering innovation, academic excellence, and equitable knowledge dissemination in higher education.

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