Winter 10-5-2020

# Theft and Mutilation of Library Resources in University Libraries of India: A Study

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# Theft and Mutilation of Library Resources in University Libraries of India: A Study

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** This paper makes a broad investigation on the libraries of universities in Gujarat, India. The paper features the job of library experts in checking book robbery, mutilation, vandalism, and planning strategy to control and beat the issue in scholastic libraries. This examination additionally explores the security challenges in the libraries of universities. The investigation expects to distinguish the causes and defenselessness of book burglary, mutilation and vandalism and the weakness of library arrangements and safety efforts.

**Methodology:** The examination depends on information got through the dispersion of survey in the colleges of Gujarat to know the present circumstance of library and the familiarity with library experts in regards to human/man-made security. It was an organized survey planned for gathering information from the library experts in Gujarat, India. The information investigation was done through MS Excel with visual diagrams for illustrations apprehensible.

**Findings:**

The percentage of weakness is less than 50% for unsecured windows, multiple entries/exits, and untrained library staff and unfamiliarity with proper security techniques. Most of the

libraries have CCTV cameras, but very few libraries have RFID systems. More than 74% libraries take inventory regularly, fifty percentage data received that librarians' workplace under lock and key system and 87% libraries operate by single door entry-exit.

**Originality:**

The result of this research contribute to all the academic university libraries regarding the security against theft, mutilation, vandalism. This study also aware the libraries regarding the upgraded and viable security through sufficient enrollment, preparing, library strategy and selection of innovation like CCTV and RFID.

**Research Limitation:**

This study has been carried out on only academic libraries of Gujarat state in India from the perspectives of human/manmade security.

**Practical implications:** The important result in this study is that the enough text books is required to reduce the theft. Library have to change the rules of circulation and increase the loan period for books. Unawareness also observed from student side and at the time of examination they are suffer for the library books. Many libraries are not implemented grills on widow for security purpose. Library policy have to update as per the requirement and implementation is also necessary to control human security. The significant implication is RFID system not available in many libraries due to budget issue for that university management could develop the additional budget on security measures for libraries.

**Keywords:** Human/Man-made security**;** Book Theft; Mutilation; Vandalism; Library Policy; Security Measures; Academic Libraries; India.

**Introduction:**

Academic libraries are very significant to their users and they help in enhancing knowledge in a range of areas like teaching, research, etc. In this regard, the role of a librarian is to observe the lack of security in library, challenges, and awareness about different threats weakening human security measures. In this paper, the researcher has made a study on Human/Man-made security that covers different issues faced by libraries resulting in book

theft and mutilation, weakening of libraries, formulation of policy against crime and theft, and the availability of effective security measures to protect library. There have been some striking examples of theft and other collection security incidences in libraries due to the increase in staff and students in universities. The different unsuspected and unpredictable threats affecting libraries and their collections result in heavy damage or loss of library data. Therefore, security management is a very significant factor in all universities and academic institutions in carrying out and achieving their aims and objectives smoothly. Different security measures aim at preventing loss due to different factors.

**Literature Review:**

Lorenzen (1996) has identified more than two but not a lot of such events such as (i) theft of physical materials; (ii) theft or change of data and (iii) theft of money as major security crimes in libraries. Another important observation he made was of the theft of library materials by staff which is an issue that libraries should address and not overlook in light of the danger of awful reputation. He has recommended some strategies to control staff theft, including the establishment of high-security bolt frameworks, fixing of accumulation transportation and development methods, checking accumulations to show proprietorship, great record-keeping, and undertaking intermittent inventories. He also identifies several causes for mutilation, dissatisfaction of students with library services, a lack of information on replacement costs and time, a lack of concern for the needs of others and few students considering book theft and mutilation as a crime. The types of security failures in university libraries include theft and book mutilation and he has attributed the causes to security lapses, not enough or a limited number of essential materials, and user's financial constraints. These studies indicate that people aspect and security culture are important factors when assessing collection security in libraries, Ajegbomogun (2004). Additional studies have recognized wonderful books, original copies, and unique accumulations to be at the centre of robbery and mutilation in light of the exceptional interest for the top to bottom investigations of such materials.

The above studies demonstrate that the procedures that handle access to a gathering, for example, obtaining, specialized procedures, course, racking, and capacity of things in libraries, should be considered from security points of view and be surveyed by an accumulation security estimation instrument. The majority of the distributed writing on

library security issues centres on particular kinds of security rupture. Robbery, mutilation, and vandalism are well secured by investigating articles.

Holt (2007) has featured robbery and pyro-crime as dangers to accumulations and recommended that libraries define an arranged safety effort to ensure the safety of their collections. The other distinguished physical shortcomings in libraries are unsecured windows, defective crisis exits, unstaffed PC rooms, inferior approaches and methodology, absence of security designs, weak security focuses (exits, stacking territories, windows, uncommon accumulations) insufficient advances and reestablishment periods, non-existence of security handbooks and deprived signage as a portion of the reasons for security breaks. As featured by Ayoung, A D (2014) mutilation is a demonstration of featuring content in library books, tearing as well as evacuating pages of important books and deciphering in books edges, harming with the subject substance of library combination along these lines making it unfeasible to different clients.

There are numerous variables that may achieve low support of library assortments. In any case, a portion of the central point that have contributed extraordinarily to low support of library assets and administrations throughout the years are robbery and mutilation of the materials accessible in the library. Bell, S (2012) includes sexual harassment as a security matter by psychologically ill person. Massachusetts, Department of Higher Education has found that 61.3 38.7% of women constitute the sexual harassment complaint. Different kinds of violent events result in varying levels of need for victim services. As examined by Ugah, A (2007) theft of library collection is a criminal activity and a formidable obstacle to information access and use. Adekunle, F.A. (2018) describes theft and another collection incidence like mutilation of information resources, attack on staff as serious security issues that requirement of urgent attention. Theft is a common phenomenon in all types of libraries. As guardians of intellectual freedom, librarians should be aware of items taken thereby protect the collection.

As highlighted by Ozowa, V. (2016) in his research where the research instrument used was questionnaire for data collection says that in book theft and mutilation there is still a gap after using the electronic security systems as prevention of library collection. In fact, the government also funds for information resources but the aim is not achieved and book theft

happens every day. Recommendation has suggested more funding to library and to update the security systems implementation.

Chinwendu, A (2019) carried out a study on the Academic Library at the University of Lagos in Nigeria. The findings of the research show that book theft and mutilation are the outcomes of the very costly books, lack of photocopying machine, security system and unavailability of E-Resources in library. The proposal made was that male and female security staff ought to be utilized to guarantee that a careful quest happens for both male and female understudies at the exit of the library. The libraries hold printed materials including books, periodicals, papers, reports, unique assortment of government archives and a wide scope of electronic assets among others with which their clients' data needs are met. Each higher organization of adapting needs the help of entrenched library in other to fulfil their quick network (Vijeyaluxmy, 2015).

Olajide (2017) says that theft is when an individual dishonestly appropriates the property belonging to another. He has further stated that security is a major concern and he says that libraries are systems and security is an energetic part of maintaining stability in the system. It aids acceptable strategies of librarians and other library professionals to avoid or ameliorate the negative penalties of a realized risk in libraries. Therefore, security management of library is a professional effort to deal with difficult problems of library safety and security. Distinctive of library security outfit is to reduce damages and defend library patrons and their belongings as well as library resources, computers and other systems.

**Research Objectives:**

The research aims to study Human/Man-made security in the university libraries of Gujarat and identify the current status of the libraries in terms of security. This study is carried out with the following objectives.

1. To identify the different causes of theft, vandalism and mutilation and the vulnerability of libraries.
2. To study the awareness of library professionals and their ability to deal with problems.
3. To ascertain if libraries follow rules and regulations to protect against the problems that plague them and to scrutinize the security measures to control the problems.

**Research Methodology:**

Based on the literature review, the researcher has identified the different causes and vulnerability of libraries which fulfil the first research objective. The present study is carried out on a survey-based questionnaire method; after the pilot study of the questionnaire, it was distributed to all library professionals in Gujarat. In this questionnaire, both open and close-ended types of questions were included according to the nature of problems. The target population of the study comprised the entire library staff of all university libraries in Gujarat. A total of 140 questionnaires were distributed, and the researcher received a total of 120 responses from the libraries of universities of Gujarat. The responses to the questions were analysed and presented in bar graphs and comments have been made wherever and whenever necessary for the purpose of interpretation.

**Sample:**

As per UGC website (2016), there are 58 universities in Gujarat that include State, Private, Central, and Deemed universities, and the study was conducted, especially on university libraries. Targeted respondents were only library professionals of 58 university libraries of Gujarat. All universities like State University, Private University, Deemed University, and Central University were covered for data collection. As per the research area researcher covers all Universities of Gujarat and they are listed below with the respective place in Gujarat. The tables are separated accordingly to their category.

A: State University

**Table I:  State Universities of Gujarat**

B: Private University

**Table II: Private Universities of Gujarat**

C: Deemed University

**Table III:  Deemed Universities of Gujarat**

D: Central University

**Table IV: Central University of Gujarat**

As per the above table total 58 universities are categorized like 28 State universities as per the table no 1, 27 private Universities as per the table no 2, 2 Deemed universities as per the table

no 3, and 1 central university as per the table no 4. This data was covered as from the UGC website on 2016.

As per the below pie chart a total of 58 universities are categorized as 28 State universities, 27 private Universities, 2 Deemed Universities, and 1 central university in Gujarat.

**Figure I: list of total University in Gujarat**

**Table V: One-Sample Statistics**

**Table VI: One-Sample Test**

According to above data coming through, SPSS Version 21.0, statistical analysis has been performed to find out the One-Sample Test across 'Types of University' and 'Total'; it has been found that measured t value is 3.873 and 1.930 Types of University and Total respectively, whereas degree of freedom is 3, which is same in both cases. However, mean was calculated is 2.5 and 14.5 in such cases having standard deviation 1.291 and 15.022.

## Significance of the Present Study:

As per the data reflected in Figure 1, in the 21st century there are many causes that affect the security of any university's library resources. So, it is imperative for library professionals to be well trained to deal with these different issues and resolve them. The users have a set of rules and regulations laid down by the library to maintain discipline in library and penalty for misconduct of library patrons when and where required. This study will help library professionals make their library safer and more secure.

**Result and Discussion:**

To understand the problems and prospects of university libraries in Gujarat, more specifically safety features like library security, the data were collected from 58 university libraries for data analysis. In this section, the researcher obtained information on human security like library issues, causes for book theft and mutilation. There were questions about the Weakness in Library and the kind of library policy and security measures to be implemented.

**Research Question 1**:
**Does your library face issues as given below?**

**Table VII: Issues of Library**

As per the above data in Table 5, positive responses highlighted many problems like library materials are stolen, resources are mutilated, pages are torn from books, marking and writing on or in the books, misplacement of books, hiding books before exam and by new students because of unawareness about the library stack system. Some time students retain books with them as a result of which another student cannot get the particular book. One comment received form university library says that some students have the habit of tear off pages from books and hiding them specific stacking area.

The other response highlighted that 65% of students do not return the books and keep with them for a long period of time. Additionally, the negative responses have also been received but they are actually good because they are proof that in very few libraries theft of personal belongings of staff and library users, vandalism, and misbehavior with library staff by library users do not happen.

**Research Question 2:**
**What are the causes for book theft and mutilation in your Library?**

**Table VIII: Causes for Book Theft/Mutilation**

The most important data received form library professionals as reflected in Table 6 says that 93% libraries have not experienced any incident in their library. The data also proof that library people are very honest in their work and they are dedicated to their library users. 81% of students are very satisfied and they are familiar with library services. In regard to causes the 46% for short period of loan or renewals of library materials, 41% insufficient textbooks and 49% urgency realized by student at the last moment which proved that it led to book theft and mutilation. As per the data all these causes have happened in many libraries. Some librarians have specified that students' attitude is one of the reasons where they take books outside the library without having them issued. Librarians have mentioned that theft takes place very rarely because of high and effective security measures like CCTV surveillance.

**Research Question 3:**
**What are the Weakness in your library for book theft and mutilation?**

**Table IX: Weakness in Library**

In terms of weakness and vulnerability in library regarding book theft and mutilation, the analysis of the data received as per Table 7, it is seen that in 99% libraries there is no case of

misbehavior by library staff with library users. 82% libraries have secured windows with grills which prevent the theft of library materials, and these libraries have not operated their library by multiple exits. 84% libraries staff is well trained and very familiar with proper security techniques. Only 16% libraries staff have agreed that they do not have trained library staff because of which the library cannot provide proper services to their students. In 79% libraries the positioning of library security offices (LSO) does not change frequently. 55% libraries said that lack of manpower or enough library staff in library makes it vulnerable for book theft and mutilation but 45% libraries do not agree with that.

So it is clear that many libraries are facing the problem of book theft because of insufficient library staff or non-recruitment of qualified professional in library. Some librarians have mentioned that theft takes place during recess because of heavy student traffic. In other cases, books that are small can be carried out easily without being detected. In some universities the library space is under developing phase of Computer Lab., Reading Area, Stacking area, etc...

**Research Question 4:**
**Does your library have policies for library users against theft and mutilation?**

### Table X: Library Policies against Theft and Mutilation

As per Table 8, the responses received for library policies for library users against theft and mutilation is that 76% libraries give warning and leave the students without penalized if they are caught stealing or mutilating books for the first or second time. After that if they found for theft, as per the rules they are discharged from the library. Even some time libraries restrict the students for a semester or a year as punishment and not allow them to use any kind of library services and it is followed by 58% of libraries. 52% of libraries do not refund the caution money in the case of library materials theft by students. 82% of libraries inform the higher authority when the case becomes sensitive and if it is required to take any action against the student, then higher authority should be kept in the loop. 88% of libraries take penalty for damaged or loss of books. 69% of libraries take undertaking from students or guardian for theft of library materials. This practice is necessary for librarians to reduce the ratio of book theft and mutilation by students.

University libraries should develop their own policies, rules and regulation to maintain their libraries and issues related to security. There are some organizations that have already developed guidelines like ALA handbook on security (ALA), Guidelines regarding thefts in libraries (ACRL), Organization of International standard (ISO28000), Quality indicators of

Higher education (NAAC), Government of India, (GFR 2005) for security. These organization also help to developed library policies.

**Research Question 5:**
**What types of security measures are used in your library?**

**Table XI**: **Availability of Security Measures in Library**

In terms of security measures the above graph in Table 9 shows that 88% of libraries maintain entry register for all library users. This practice helps the librarians in finding out the user statistics which is also a very important document for National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) committee. This user statistics can be maintained by a manual register or biometric technology. 93% of libraries have already installed Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) for security purpose which is a very positive response but 7% of libraries have still not implemented CCTV. 26% of libraries are working with Radio frequency identification (RFID) technology and 74% does not use this technology because of financial constraint. The RFID technology is very expensive and a continually growing expenditure in library and so many libraries cannot afford this technology. 29% of libraries have alarm gate system and 71% of libraries do not have this gate which actually helps in detecting books which are going outside the library without checkout. 74% of libraries staff regularly check their libraries because it is their role to ensure the proper functioning of technology, automation software or any other system or the need to be replaced for the smooth conduct of library work. 49% of libraries appoint library security guards for security purpose and 51% of libraries have not appointed library security personnel. It may be because of lack of manpower in their university or they do not require. For the question of installed grills on windows, 58% of libraries' responses are positive and 42% of responses are negative. 54% of library staff workplace has lock and key system and 46% of libraries are working without lock and key system. All the official files, new books and digital materials are kept in library which should be in lock and key system for security purpose. 87% of libraries maintain single door entry exit for library staff and library users. It helps to maintain the user entry register or identify the unauthorized access of library.

83% of these libraries take regular stock verification for books collection. On the basis of this stock, librarians can identify the total loss of the books at the end of the year. As per the financial Rules 2005 government of India "Complete stock verification of books should be done every year in case of libraries having not more than twenty thousand volumes. Stock

verification should be taken once in a three year if libraries having more than twenty thousand to fifty thousand volumes". Few libraries recommended that student's belongings kept outside library for security purpose.

## Findings:

1. The internal staff of libraries does not steal library resources. A good number of users are very satisfied with library services. Short period of loan, insufficient textbooks, high academic pressure and urgency realized at the last moment are causes of book theft and mutilation in library.

2. The percentage of weakness is less than 50% for unsecured windows, multiple entries/exits, and untrained library staff and unfamiliarity with proper security techniques. It means most of the libraries believe that these are weaknesses but they do not affect the functioning of the library.

3. In many cases, libraries also inform the higher authority to sort out the issue. To curb such incidents, universities follow measures like discharge library users from the library or restrict their entry for a semester, caution money not refunded and penalty for damaged or loss of books.

4. Most of the libraries have CCTV cameras, but very few libraries have RFID systems. More than 74% libraries take inventory regularly, fifty percentage data received that librarians' workplace under lock and key system and 87% libraries operate by single door entry-exit. As per the data, there are very few data received for RFID and alarm gate system which prove that most of the libraries have not implemented RFID technology because of the high cost or lack of budget for the systems.

## Suggestions:

- There should be a central library in the middle of the university campus instead of a departmental or school wise library.

- To avoid theft, increase the loan period for books, library materials and Textbooks should be sufficient according to the numbers of students

- Appoint a security officer/guard inside/outside the library to control theft.

- Library extended time during the exam of the student library should not be open in the absence of library staff or security guard.

-  The library should have only one door for entry or exit of library users. Grills should cover all the windows of the library.

- The library has many tasks to manage all the things that enough workforce requires as library staff.

- The library has to develop policies, rules and regulations against theft and vandal activities and whenever it is required, it should be implemented against the users.

- Library staff workplace and other assets should be under the lock and key system.

- The entry register should be maintained at the library gate to monitoring user statistics.

## Conclusion:

The study focuses on Human/man-made security measures, plans, policies, and current status of library security as per the research plan made by the researcher. The study shows that library resources are facing security threats and hence, there is the need for awareness or alleviate security threats. There are various causes that can affect university libraries, such as theft, vandalism, mutilation, etc. Based on the analysis, the research objectives have proven as expected. Libraries face issues of theft, mutilation, vandalism, sexual harassment, and there are libraries that have already developed policies to control this kind of activity. Many libraries have implemented security measures, but still, the problems persist in many libraries because of budget and manpower constraints. A response received believes that instead of RFID systems library professionals prefer to appoint a security guard outside the library to control theft. Overall positive responses indicate that university libraries have some causes and vulnerability, but the skill of library professionals to manage the library is proof that users are satisfied with library services.

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