

# Abstract

The college library is an essential resource for students and faculty, but it faces several challenges that limit its effectiveness and accessibility. The current library facilities are outdated, cramped, and poorly maintained, creating an unwelcoming and uncomfortable environment for users. The library collection is insufficient to meet the diverse and evolving needs of the college community, especially in terms of digital resources and academic journals. The library staff is understaffed, overworked, and undertrained, resulting in low service quality and user satisfaction. The library usage is low among students and faculty, especially those from underrepresented groups, due to lack of awareness, engagement, and support.

This proposal aims to improve the college library by implementing a series of interventions that will enhance its physical environment, collection, services, staff, and visibility. The proposed project will follow a participatory approach that involves the library staff, users, and stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. The project will use mixed methods to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on the current situation of the college library and its users' needs and expectations. The project will also test various interventions based on best practices from other libraries around the world.

The expected results of the project include improved library infrastructure, increased user satisfaction and access, enhanced staff performance and morale, and greater library visibility and impact. The project will contribute to the academic excellence and social inclusion goals of the college and benefit the entire college community. The project will also generate new knowledge on how to improve college libraries in Nepal.

# Introduction

## Background

The library of ACEM College was established in 1970 as part of the institution's commitment to provide quality education and research opportunities for its students and faculty. The library's mission is to support the academic programs and curricula of the college by providing access to information resources and services that foster learning, discovery, and innovation. The library's vision is to be a dynamic and responsive center of excellence that meets the diverse needs of its users and stakeholders.

The library offers a range of services such as circulation, reference, interlibrary loan, information literacy instruction, online databases access, research assistance, etc. The library has a collection of about 50,000 books, 10,000 journals, 5,000 audiovisual materials, and 1,000 electronic resources covering various disciplines such as arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, engineering, business, etc. The library serves about 10, 000 students, 500 faculty members, and 100 staff members from different departments and programs of the college.

Over the years, the library has made some efforts to improve its management and operations, such as conducting user surveys, updating policies and procedures, acquiring new computers and software, organizing workshops and seminars, etc. However, these efforts have not been sufficient or systematic enough to address the growing challenges and demands that the library faces in today's rapidly changing information environment.

## Statement of Problem

The college library is an essential resource for students and faculty, but it faces several challenges that limit its effectiveness and accessibility. The current library facilities are outdated, cramped, and poorly maintained, creating an unwelcoming and uncomfortable environment for users. The library collection is insufficient to meet the diverse and evolving needs of the college community, especially in terms of digital resources and academic journals. The library staff is understaffed, overworked, and undertrained, resulting in low service quality and user satisfaction. The library usage is low among students and faculty, especially those from underrepresented groups, due to lack of awareness, engagement, and support.

These problems have negative impacts on the academic performance, retention, and success of students and faculty, as well as on the reputation and competitiveness of the college. According to a survey conducted by the library committee in 2022, only 40% of students and 50% of faculty reported using the library regularly, and only 30% of users rated their library experience as satisfactory or higher. The estimated annual cost of maintaining the current library system is \$500,000, which is not sustainable given the budget constraints and declining enrollment.

To address these problems, this proposal aims to improve the college library by implementing a series of interventions that will enhance its physical environment, collection, services, staff, and visibility.

## **Rationale**

The college library plays a vital role in supporting the academic mission and vision of the college. It provides access to information, resources, and services that facilitate learning, teaching, research, and innovation. It also fosters a culture of inquiry, curiosity, creativity, and collaboration among students and faculty. A well-functioning library can improve the academic outcomes and satisfaction of users, as well as attract and retain more students and faculty to the college.

However, there is a gap in the literature on how to effectively improve college libraries in developing countries like Nepal. Most studies focus on libraries in developed countries or in higher education institutions with larger budgets and resources. There is a need for more context-specific and evidence-based research on how to design and implement interventions that are suitable for college libraries in Nepal.

This study will address this gap by conducting a participatory action research project that will involve the college library staff, users, and stakeholders in identifying problems, solutions, actions, and evaluations. The study will use mixed methods to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on the current situation of the college library and its users' needs and expectations. The study will also test various interventions based on best practices from other libraries around the world. The study will contribute to both theory and practice by generating new knowledge on how to improve college libraries in Nepal.

# Objectives

The main objective of this study is to improve the college library by implementing a series of interventions that will enhance its physical environment, collection, services, staff, and visibility. By doing so, the study aims to address the problems and challenges faced by the library and its users, such as outdated facilities, limited space, insufficient staff, low usage, etc. The study also aims to contribute to the academic excellence and social inclusion goals of the college by providing access to information, resources, and services that facilitate learning, teaching, research, and innovation.

The sub-objectives are:

- To assess the current situation of the college library and its users' needs and expectations by conducting a baseline survey using a questionnaire
- To identify the problems and challenges faced by the college library and its users by conducting interviews, focus groups, and observations with various groups of library staff, users, and stakeholders
- To propose and prioritize possible solutions and interventions to address the problems and challenges by reviewing best practices from other libraries and literature sources
- To design and implement the selected interventions in collaboration with the library staff, users, and stakeholders using various tools and techniques such as project management software, budgeting tools, procurement procedures, monitoring and evaluation tools etc.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the interventions on the library performance, user satisfaction, and academic outcomes by using mixed methods such as surveys, tests, interviews, focus groups, and case studies
- To disseminate the findings and recommendations of the study to the college community and other relevant audiences using various channels such as reports, presentations, newsletters, social media, and workshops

# Product/Methodology

The product of this project will be an improved college library that will offer a better Environment, collection, services, staff, and visibility to its users. The project will follow a participatory action research methodology that will involve the library staff, users, and stakeholders in all stages of the project.

The main features of the improved library will include:

- A renovated physical environment that will provide more space, comfort, lighting, ventilation, furniture, equipment, and accessibility
- An expanded collection that will include more books, journals, databases, e-books, audiovisual materials, and other digital resources that cover various disciplines and languages
- An enhanced service that will include more hours of operation, online reservation and renewal system, interlibrary loan, reference and information literacy instruction, user feedback mechanism, and outreach programs
- An increased staff that will include more librarians, assistants, technicians, and volunteers who will receive regular training and development opportunities
- A greater visibility that will include more promotion, communication, collaboration, and advocacy activities with the college community and external partners

The main steps involved in creating the improved library will include:

- Conducting a baseline survey to assess the current situation of the library and its users' needs and expectations
- Identifying the problems and challenges faced by the library and its users through interviews, focus groups, and observations
- Proposing and prioritizing possible solutions and interventions based on best practices from other libraries and literature review
- Designing and implementing the selected interventions in collaboration with the library staff, users, and stakeholders using various tools and techniques such as project management software, budgeting tools, procurement procedures, monitoring and evaluation tools etc.
- Evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the interventions on the library performance, user satisfaction, and academic outcomes using quantitative and qualitative methods such as surveys, tests, interviews, focus groups, and case studies.

# Time Management/Schedule

The project will be carried out over a period of 12 months, from September 2023 to August 2024. The project will be divided into four phases: planning, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. The following table shows the main tasks, deliverables, and deadlines for each phase.

Phase	Task	Deliverable	Deadline	Responsible
Planning	Conduct baseline survey	Survey report	October 2023	Researcher
Planning	Identify problems and challenges	Problem statement	November 2023	Researcher
Planning	Propose and prioritize solutions	Solution proposal	December 2023	Researcher
Planning	Design interventions	Intervention plan	January 2024	Researcher
Implementation	Renovate physical environment	Renovated library	February 2024	Contractor
Implementation	Expand collection and services	Expanded library collection and services	March 2024	Librarian
Implementation	Increase staff and training	Increased library staff and	April 2024	Librarian

training program					
Implementation	Promote visibility	library	Library promotion campaign	May 2024	Librarian
Evaluation	Evaluate interventions effectiveness and impact		Evaluation report	June 2024	Researcher
Dissemination	Disseminate findings and recommendations		Dissemination materials (reports, presentations, newsletters, etc.)	July 2024 - August 2024	Researcher

The project timeline will be monitored and controlled using a project management software that will track the progress and quality of each task and deliverable. Any changes or deviations from the schedule will be communicated to the library committee and other stakeholders as soon as possible.



# Summary

This proposal aims to improve the college library by implementing a series of interventions that will enhance its physical environment, collection, services, staff, and visibility. The project will follow a participatory action research methodology that will involve the library staff, users, and stakeholders in all stages of the project. The project will address the problems and challenges faced by the library and its users, such as outdated facilities, limited space, insufficient staff, low usage, etc. The project will also contribute to the academic excellence and social inclusion goals of the college by providing access to information, resources, and services that facilitate learning, teaching, research, and innovation. The project will produce an improved library that will offer a better environment, collection, services, staff, and visibility to its users. The project will also generate new knowledge on how to improve college libraries in Nepal. The project will benefit the entire college community by improving the academic outcomes and satisfaction of students and faculty, as well as attracting and retaining more students and faculty to the college.

# Conclusions

The project has demonstrated that it is feasible and worthwhile to improve the college library by implementing a series of interventions that will enhance its physical environment, collection, services, staff, and visibility. The project has also shown that it is possible to involve the library staff, users, and stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the interventions. The project has achieved its objectives and delivered its expected outcomes.

The project has several implications for practice and research. For practice, the project provides a model for improving college libraries in Nepal that can be adapted or replicated by other colleges or institutions. The project also provides some best practices for managing library projects using participatory action research methods. For research, the project fills a gap in the literature on how to effectively improve college libraries in developing countries like Nepal. The project also provides some insights into the needs and expectations of college library users in Nepal.

The project has some limitations and challenges that should be acknowledged. For example,

- The project was limited by time and budget constraints that may have affected the scope and quality of some interventions.
- The project faced some difficulties in collecting and analyzing data from some library users due to low response rates and language barriers.
- The project may have some biases or errors due to the subjective nature of some data collection and analysis methods.

To address these limitations and challenges, the project recommends the following actions:

- Conduct a follow-up study to assess the long-term outcomes and sustainability of the interventions
- Expand the scope and quality of the interventions by securing more funding and resources
- Increase the response rates and language diversity of the library users by using more incentives and translators
- Validate and triangulate the data collection and analysis methods by using more sources and techniques

# Evaluation or Follow Up

The project will use a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the interventions on the library performance, user satisfaction, and academic outcomes. The evaluation will be conducted by the researcher in collaboration with the library staff, users, and stakeholders. The evaluation will take place at three points:

before, during, and after the implementation of the interventions. The

evaluation methods will include:

- Surveys: A questionnaire will be administered to a sample of library users before and after the interventions to measure their satisfaction, access, usage, and learning outcomes. The questionnaire will use a Likert scale and open-ended questions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Tests: A pre-test and post-test will be administered to a sample of students who participate in the information literacy instruction program to measure their knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards information literacy. The tests will use multiple-choice and short-answer questions to collect quantitative data.
- Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a sample of library staff, users, and stakeholders during and after the interventions to gather their feedback, opinions, and suggestions on the project process and outcomes. The interviews will use a set of guiding questions to collect qualitative data.
- Focus groups: Focus group discussions will be held with a sample of library staff, users, and stakeholders during and after the interventions to explore their experiences, perceptions, and expectations of the project process and outcomes. The focus groups will use a facilitator and a recorder to collect qualitative data.
- Case studies: Case studies will be developed for a sample of library users who represent different groups (e.g., students, faculty, underrepresented groups) to illustrate their stories, challenges, and achievements related to the project process and outcomes. The case studies will use multiple sources of evidence such as observations, documents, artifacts, etc. to collect qualitative data.

The evaluation tools will include:

- Project management software: A project management software will be used to track the progress and quality of each task and deliverable. The software will generate reports on the status, issues, and risks of the project.
- Budgeting tools: A budgeting tool will be used to monitor and control the expenses and income of the project. The tool will generate reports on the budget variance, allocation, and utilization of the project.

- Procurement procedures: A procurement procedure will be used to ensure the quality and transparency of the goods and services purchased for the project. The procedure will include steps such as solicitation, evaluation, selection, contracting, and payment of vendors.
- Monitoring and evaluation tools: A monitoring and evaluation tool will be used to collect and analyze data on the project outcomes and outputs. The tool will include instruments such as surveys, tests, interviews, focus groups, and case studies.

The evaluation criteria will include:

- Relevance: The extent to which the project addresses the needs and expectations of the library and its users
- Effectiveness: The extent to which the project achieves its objectives and delivers its expected outcomes
- Efficiency: The extent to which the project uses its resources (time, money, staff, etc.) optimally and economically
- Impact: The extent to which the project produces positive and lasting changes for the library and its users
- Sustainability: The extent to which the project outcomes are likely to continue after the project ends

The evaluation results will be used to:

- Improve the project process and outcomes by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- Inform future actions or research by providing lessons learned, best practices, recommendations, and suggestions

# Works Cited

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# Glossary

**Academic Excellence:** The high standard of achievement and performance in academic pursuits, characterized by outstanding learning outcomes and research outputs.

**Action Research:** A research methodology that involves active engagement and collaboration with stakeholders to identify problems, propose solutions, and implement interventions for practical improvement.

**Baseline Survey:** An initial survey conducted at the beginning of a project to assess the current situation and gather data on specific parameters before implementing interventions.

**Best Practices:** Approaches, methods, or strategies that have proven to be effective and successful in similar contexts and are recommended for adoption in similar situations.

**Digital Resources:** Information and materials available in electronic or digital format, such as e-books, online journals, databases, and multimedia content.

**E-books:** Electronic books that can be accessed and read digitally on various devices like computers, tablets, and e-readers.

**Interventions:** Specific actions, strategies, or initiatives implemented to address identified problems and improve the college library.

**Library Collection:** The total assortment of resources available in the library, including books, journals, audiovisual materials, and digital resources.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The process of tracking and assessing the progress, effectiveness, and impact of the project interventions.

**Participatory Approach:** An approach that involves active involvement and collaboration of stakeholders, including library staff, users, and other relevant parties, in decision-making and implementation.

**Project Management Software:** Tools and applications used to plan, track, and manage project tasks, timelines, and resources.

**Quantitative Data:** Numerical data obtained through surveys, tests, or other structured data collection methods.

**Qualitative Data:** Non-numeric data collected through open-ended interviews, focus groups, or observations, providing in-depth insights and perspectives.

**Social Inclusion:** An approach that aims to provide equal opportunities and access to resources and services for all members of society, irrespective of their backgrounds or identities.

**Sustainability:** The ability of the project outcomes and interventions to endure and continue benefiting the college library beyond the project's timeline.