

## Security Systems in University Libraries: A Survey Report

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**Abstract** - *This study examines traditional library security systems being adopted in the university libraries in Hyderabad. The library security system includes Traditional security system being practiced in university libraries to avoid collection theft, mutilation, building security, emergency and disaster preparedness in order to provide effective services to its community. A survey was conducted among thirteen university libraries in Hyderabad and found the different traditional security systems being adopted to defend the library security threats. This paper overviews about different types of traditional security systems used in libraries and the status of the security systems in the university libraries.*

**Keywords:** Collection security, university libraries, traditional security system.

### Introduction:

A Library is the place where the information collected, processed, and disseminated to a defined community for their needs. Depending on the user community, it collects resources and makes accessible to its users. The information collected in any of the media, should be made available to its users at any time in a good condition without any loss. But it is witnessed that, many libraries are facing many challenges related to security threats and loss of information due to unethical practices such as theft, and mutilation. Besides providing safety and security to the library collection, it is the responsibility of the librarians to preserve safely as long as possible to the future generations. The university libraries always have to render the service to many students and staff for their academic needs among all the libraries. It is very challenging task to the library staff to look after the safety and security of collection, such as documents theft and mutilation including the emergency management like Fire damages. It is necessary to know how the university libraries in Hyderabad have been facing with the above said challenges. The main aim for the present study is to identify the different traditional library security systems being practiced in the thirteen university libraries. Hendrick and Murfin (1974) speculated that the academic libraries are the most vulnerable places to the theft, mutilation, and other delinquent activities. Weiss (1981) found that the pressure to get success in academic environment to the users are the reasons for the theft, mutilation, and other delinquent activities in the library. Olorunsola (1987) opined that the expeditious growth in university library collection would result in precisely increase in the collection security issues in libraries.

Ezeabasili and Nwosu (2018) found that the available electronic security systems are not in use in Federal University Libraries in Nigeria because of lack of funding and poor maintenance. Amoah (2016) identified the security breaches by patrons and found the security measures to ensure patron security and safety and recommended the installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance system to monitor users. The study also proposed an adequate budget for strengthening security system by appointing skilled or qualified security personnel at the library entrance and proper training to the library staff. Gupta and Madhusudhan (2018) enumerated all library security challenges that affect the library services and possible solutions for minimizing challenges by adopting electronic security systems besides traditional system. Winter (1985) studied the plans of entrances and exits in Australian academic libraries and found libraries more successful in preventing theft with one exit. Further concludes that the future libraries should have only one exit, because these are easier to monitor.

**Collection Security:** Library is the knowledge repository to keep information available to its user community. This knowledge is available in various formats such as print format and electronic format. Print comprises of books, periodicals, research reports and electronic comprises of electronic books, e journals available on CD-ROM and online as well. Libraries are growing by increasing its print and electronic resources day to day by making all the resources available to all its users by preserving as long as possible. In an attempt to preserve long time, the library security system plays a major role. The collection security aims to protect all the library resources from the threats.

**Traditional Security System:** In good olden days, say 20<sup>th</sup> century library functioning have been started with closed access, in which library users are not allowed to enter into the stacks area and the library staff itself used to go to the stacks and issue library materials to the users on demand, hence there is no need of security person at gate as it is closed access for users. This practice has been replaced by a security person guarding at exit gate believing that any selfish user may hide any unauthorized document under cloths and go away. This security person is responsible and one who prevents library collection from theft.

Slowly libraries have extended its services from closed access to open access services to facilitate more access to the users to select their choice of documents for its users in selecting documents and become aware of what kind of information resources that library is having with reference to the user needs. But this open access system is inviting many more challenges like theft, mutilation, hiding, misplacing, physical damaging, and others. To defend these problems library should have adequate security system, but there are many cases which reports theft and mutilation of library collection even though there a security person guarding at exit gate. Thus, keeping in mind these issues, library management is changing its phase from traditional security to electronic security system, believing this electronic system controls rather than traditional security system. In this way electronic security systems are being adopted by many libraries day to day.

**Fire extinguishers:** It is an active fire protection device used to extinguish small fires frequently in emergency situations. It is not suitable for use on fires which reaches the ceiling and where there is no get away route for smoke, and explosion hazard. It is made up of a hand held cylindrical pressure vessel having with in an agent that could be ejected to douse the fires.

**Grills on windows:** The Grilles are fixed on windows to prevent any physical entry in to the library or deliberately throwing any library materials out of the library in order to steal the library resources. These grills are made in such a way not possible to fit any of the library resources through it. These grills not only prevent the threat but also give good aesthetic design and adequate ventilation when the windows are opened. Fire extinguishers are also classified into A, B, C, and D categories depending on the type of material they use in.

1. Class A fires relate to solids such as paper, wood, and plastic.
2. Class B covers flammable liquids such as paraffin, petrol, and oil.
3. Class C is used for flammable gases such as propane, butane, and methane.
4. Class D deals with metals such as aluminum, magnesium, and titanium etc. Fires in libraries would therefore be considered as ‘A’ category fires.

**Id cards & Access Control:** All the registered users are issued identity cards by library or university. The users of the Library must carry their identification to be shown to staff on request at the time of the library entry. These users’ identity cards which will serve as a form of identification and a means of access to services and facilities.

**Lock & Key System:** According to Dictionary.com, Lock is “a device for securing a door, gate, lid, drawer, or the like in position when closed, consisting of a bolt or system of bolts propelled and withdrawn by a mechanism operated by a key, dial, etc.” A lock is a mechanical fastening device which is operated by a physical object called a “key”. It is operated by a key by rotating either clockwise or anticlockwise or supplying secret information such as a number or letter permutation. A key is a device which is used to operate for the purpose of locking or unlocking a lock. A key is a small piece of metal consisting of two parts, i.e. the bit or blade, which slides into the keyway of the lock and distinguishes between different keys, and the bow, which is left protruding so that torque can be applied by the user. In its simplest implementation, a key operates one lock or set of locks that are keyed alike, a lock and key system, where each similarly keyed lock requires the same unique key. The key serves as a security token for access to the locked area. Locks are meant to only allow persons having the correct key to open it and gain access. In more complex mechanical lock and key systems, two different keys, one of them is known as the master key, which serves to open the lock. Common metals include brass, plated brass, nickel silver, and steel.

**Observation by security staff:** Any man or woman intending to use the University Library and its assets in person should present his/her private Identity Card and always furnish correct particulars at the gate register for entry into the library. The checkout procedure was based on the honor system, when there was no security system exists. The library user would pull the card, write his name on it and leave the card in a box for the librarian. This would no longer work as the tags would have to be deactivated with a deactivation card or the alarm would go off and this could only be done by someone on duty. If no one is present there to hear the alarm, library users can still “walk” away with book, journal, or any other library materials.

**Physical checking for men and women users:** The library security guards should comprise of male and female staff to monitor both genders. In most of the places male security would monitor both male and female users. In this practice, if male security guard only presents, he only check the male users and female users leave unchecked.

**Security guard patrolling:** The foremost purpose of a security patrol is to provide the safety and security of the library premises. They must keep intruders away and ensure the library property by prevent theft, they should identify if any emergency safety accidents and give warning to reduce the loss of library property and personnel. They must have knowledge of the premises of library to be patrolled. They are well aware about where the water shut-off valves, electrical, alarms, emergency lightings, backup generator, first aid kit, fire alarms, hydrants, extinguishers are located.

**Signature of users:** all the users, whoever comes to the library must furnish their details such as name, course, contact numbers and sign in the gate register before entering into the library. The security staff at the gate ensures all users to give correct details which identify the users.

**Single door entry/exit gate:** the libraries should maintain a single door entry and exit for library users, staff, and any other visitors to keep an eye on them. It makes security staff's job easier to maintain the log register and identify the unauthorized user's entry into the library. It becomes easy to monitor entry and exit by single security person.

**Statement of the problem:** Now-a-days university libraries are catering needs of thousands of students and faculties for their academics and research with various new approaches in order to satisfy their needs. But in another side the technology is improving rapidly and library recruitments are being decreased due to some reasons. Thus inadequate staff and increasing the use of resources in the library by the users create threats and challenges related to security. To defend these library threats, adopting new technology is inevitable for the library management. The present study aims to explore how many university libraries adopted the state-of-the-art security technologies in University Libraries in Hyderabad.

### **Objectives:**

1. To find out status of traditional security system in the university libraries under the study.
2. An overview of library traditional security systems

### **Research questions**

1. What are the different Traditional Security Systems (TSS) being practiced in the Libraries under the study.

### **Methodology:**

The present study designed a survey method to collect the primary data from 13 university libraries in Hyderabad to explore the present security systems being adopted. It also helps to take future course of action in library security related issues with reference to collection theft. A structured questionnaire was administered to the librarians for the purpose of collecting the primary data and presented research findings by using descriptive methods.

### **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The present study tries to bring to limelight the existing security systems being used in University Libraries in Hyderabad. There are 3 Central Universities, 10 State Universities in Hyderabad, which are listed in University Grants Commission (UGC). Deemed and Private

universities are excluded from the study. Present study identifies the different security systems being used in the university libraries in Hyderabad besides traditional security systems.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Status of Security Systems

Table 1. Traditional Security Systems

S. No.	Security Systems	EFLU	UOH	MANUU	OU	NIMS	PJTSAU	JNTU	DBRAOU	PSTU	NALSAR	JNAFAU	SKLTSHU	SPVRTVU
1.	Fire extinguishers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Grills on windows	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	Id cards & Access control	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
4.	Lock & Key System	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
5.	Observation by security staff	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
6.	Physical checking for men users with male staff	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓		✓
7.	Physical checking for women users with woman staff	✓	✓				✓							✓
8.	Security guards patrolling	✓	✓		✓		✓							✓
9.	Signature of users	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Single door entry/exit gate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	If any others, pls specify													

Table1. Shows that all the thirteen (100%) of the university libraries have been equipped with fire extinguishers, towards emergency preparedness. All the university libraries have windows with proper grills to avoid unauthorized entry into the library or throwing out any library document from the windows. Eleven university libraries out of thirteen are using Id cards & Access control. Nine out of thirteen university libraries are using Lock & Key System. Ten out thirteen university libraries are monitoring users by Observation by security staff. Six out of thirteen libraries are controlling by Physical checking for men users. Four out of thirteen libraries have physical checking for women users with women staff. Five out thirteen are monitoring with Security guards patrolling. Twelve libraries out of thirteen are taking Signature of users while entering into the library. All the university libraries have Single door entry/exit gate using for users. 12 out of 13 libraries checking library users ID cards while entering into the library to avoid unauthorized users entering the library. Few University Libraries are practicing Physical checking for men users, Physical checking for women users, and Security guards patrolling. All the University libraries have single door entry / exit gate. 12 out of 13 university libraries are taking signature of users while entering the library.

### Conclusion:

The traditional security systems in all the university libraries are almost unique. University Libraries should employ women security staff to check or handle women users in order to

control unethical practices in the libraries. Libraries should also improve library security guard patrolling in order to prevent any emergency and disasters. All the Fire extinguishers in the library must be inspected and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

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