

Role of Library in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: With special emphasis on SDG-4

Madhurekha Saikia

Librarian, Eastern Karbi Anglong College, Sarihajan, Karbi Anglong, Assam

Email address: saikiamadhurekha@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper tries to explore the initiatives taken by the libraries to achieve Quality Education, Sustainable Development Goal-4 (SDG-4). Initiatives in terms of resources, initiatives in terms of services and initiatives in terms of programmes organized are discussed in detail. Role of both public and academic libraries are studied. Literature regarding the topic are searched, gathered and studied to explore the various initiatives taken by the libraries. It emphasizes life-long learning, information literacy, digital literacy, equitable education, research, preservation of indigenous knowledge and libraries as gateway to culture and heritage. The paper also tries to establish the interconnection between SDG-4 with SDG-12, SDG-13, SDG-16 & SDG-17 in the context of both public and academic libraries.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Information literacy, Quality education, Sustainable development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a multifaceted concept as it is not only concerned with environment, but reflects economic and social dimension too. Even though we live in a digital era dominated by Artificial Intelligence, we are far behind from achieving sustainability. Conversely we face the challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, gender discrimination etc. along with the global environmental challenge, the most concerning one. Challenge to the environment does not remain within the sphere of environment, but it becomes the major challenge to the society, as well as challenge to the entire human being. Peoples have to fight with long lasting impacts of climate change like pollution, droughts, floods etc. All these are universal problems impacting the whole world irrespective of geographic locations. Only a concerted global effort can solve this problem. In view of this grave challenge, the United Nations has adopted 17 far-reaching, people centric sustainable development goals (SDGs) considering the better sustainability of entire population. All these 17 goals are interlinked, so that the result of one influences the impact in others too. Libraries as an indispensable social component has great role to play for attaining sustainable development goals. It becomes very clear, when SDG-4 is concerned. SDG-4 ensures inclusive and quality education for all and promotes life-long learning. As education is the basic need for sustainable development, libraries have the potential to contribute in achieving SDGs in general and SDG-4 in particular.

Objectives:

- i. To discuss the services and programmes established by the libraries towards achieving quality education as SDG-4.
- ii. To find out the initiatives can be taken by the libraries to achieve quality education i.e. SDG 4.
- iii. To establish the relationship between SDG-4 with some other SDGs.

II. METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on secondary literature. Literature regarding SDGs in general and SDG-4 in particular are gathered. The literature was searched by typing the keywords 'Quality education', 'Sustainable Development Goals', 'Sustainable Development Goal-4', 'SDG-4 and library' and 'Quality education and library'. Results came out from all these are gathered, studied and collected relevant information for study. Based on the collected information, it is tried to establish the critical role of libraries in achieving quality education (SDG-4) and also to establish the interconnection between SDG-4 with SDG-12, SDG-13 and SDG-17.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chuenchom et al. (2022) discussed libraries for Sustainable Development Goals, where he elaborated libraries as energy saving and environment friendly library and as centre for sustainable learning.

Al Hijji & Alhinaai (2023) studied the role of libraries in achieving SDGs and discussed the role of IFLA in this context.

Kulkarni & Zanke (2024) studied the role of academic libraries in achieving goals of sustainable development explores some measures for promoting universal knowledge for sustainable development.

Shesha & Singh (2024) discussed the role of academic libraries in the context of Quality education (SDG-4), Gender inequality (SDG-5) and Strengthening the means of Implementation, Partnership (SDG-17).

Swami, Rao & Jain (2025) elaborated public libraries as sustainable development hubs by exploring its role in attaining SDG-4 (Quality education), SDG-10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG-11 (Sustainable cities and communities), and SDG-16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

IV. SDG 4 –QUALITY EDUCATION: OVERVIEW

SDG-4 focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

It emphasizes significance of children education, equal and easy access to learning resources and the development of skills required for employment and entrepreneurship.

The primary key to open the door of all 17 SDGs is education. When young generation get quality education, they can break down the cycle of poverty, they will be able to get better jobs and can live better. Obtaining quality education is the foundation to attain sustainable development. SDG 4 aims to provide children and young people with quality and easily accessible education with other learning opportunities. One of its targets is to achieve universal literacy and numeracy. In the attainment of the SDG 4 libraries irrespective with its type have a critical role to play. Even though all kinds of libraries have the potential to contribute in achieving SDG-4, more emphasis can be given to public libraries as it disseminates information and provides education from children to adult irrespective of caste, creed, religion, gender etc.

V. ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN ACHIEVING SDG-4

5.1. Life-Long Learning:

5.1.1. Public Libraries: Public libraries are integral part of the society that promotes quality education within their communities. They provide the platform for life-long learning through free and fair access to various educational resources. Public libraries are the effective and efficient place for intellectual development. Public libraries have better scope to arrange after-school tutorial programmes, adult education classes which directly helps in life-long learning.

5.1.2 Academic libraries: Academic libraries have also crucial role in providing life-long learning. They are the educational hub of schools, colleges and universities. They support literacy programmes, provide adequate space for learning, and support researchers to access, apply and reuse research and data to create new knowledge. Support beyond school hour, remedial classes and motivational programmes for weak students are just a few examples of how libraries respond to local needs and take action to improve education. Through various out-reach programmes, academic libraries extend educational support to their communities.

5.2. Information literacy: Proper information is the basic need for quality education. Public libraries help in augmentation of information literacy by arranging information literacy programmes. Academic libraries enable its users to acquire information literacy and learning skills by providing quality service to accompany and support teaching and research activities. By implementing library policy, academic library serves the information and documentation needs of students, faculty, and researchers. In addition, it supports literacy programs, provides a safe space for learning, and assists researchers in the reuse of research results and data for further study.

5.3. Digital literacy: Digital literacy is another key component of quality education, as we live in digital era. From morning to night we work with digital component. Our life revolves around digital components. Libraries irrespective of its kinds help in attaining digital literacy by organizing awareness programmes, workshops, discussions and seminars.

5.4. Equitable education: This goal emphasises the need to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Academic libraries serve as supporting units for all academic activities in the universities through various programmes, services, and resources. A library can ensure equitable education by providing resources to its users and also by providing open access to other educational repositories. Revising and updating the resources to meet the modern needs is another measure adopted in this regard.

5.5. Research: Libraries support researchers by providing access to research and data. In this context, academic libraries play a vital role. It provides information and related resources that support academic research to produce a new body of knowledge. Depending on users need academic libraries subscribe resources that can fulfill the researcher’s need. Providing e-resources through institutional membership is another significant support to the researches. In this regard INFLIBNET provides remarkable support to academic institutions through developing various e-resource consortia and providing free access or access at minimum cost. Some such consortia are,

i. e-ShodhSindhu, an initiative of Consortium for Higher Education Electronics Resources by Ministry of Education, provides access to e-resources (10000+ full-text journals, 164300+ e-Books and 4 databases through e-ShodhSindhu and 600000 e-Books through NDL) to Universities, Colleges and Centrally Funded Technical Institutions in India.

ii. ONOS, One Nation One Subscription scheme provides 13,000+ fulltext journals access to all Higher Education Institutions managed by the central government and state governments and Research & Development Institutions.

iii. ShodhGanga, an open access repository of thesis submitted to the Indian Universities. It helps in greater extent to search the previous research works related to a particular study.

Thus, academic libraries provide a better platform for research, in quest of knowledge and to enhance quality education.

5.6. Preservation of indigenous knowledge: Libraries preserve various sources of knowledge from time to time, which carry flow of knowledge from generation to generation. For quality education knowing indigenous knowledge is must.

5.7. Gateway of culture and heritage: Libraries act as a gateway of culture and heritage by preserving and disseminating documentary as well as digital resources regarding culture and heritage of a particular community. Books provided by the library can be treated as window to peep into the culture and heritage of various communities both at the national and international level.

VI. INTERCONNECTION WITH OTHER SDGS

All these 17 sustainable development goals are more or less interrelated with each other. One has the impact on fulfilling the others. Here is a trying to establish a relationship between SDG-4 with some other SDGs.

6.1. SDG-4 and SDG-12: Digital Transformation: Digital transformation fosters sustainable consumption and production, the key factors of SDG-12 and plays a vital role in quality education. Transformation to e-books, e-journals, online

databases and cloud based repositories increases educational accessibility by making information freely accessible. As information is the raw material to acquire knowledge, it enhances quality education also. Moreover by minimizing dependability on physical books, printing and paper-based

activities, libraries help in responsible consumption and production, reducing waste and encouraging sustainable use of resources.

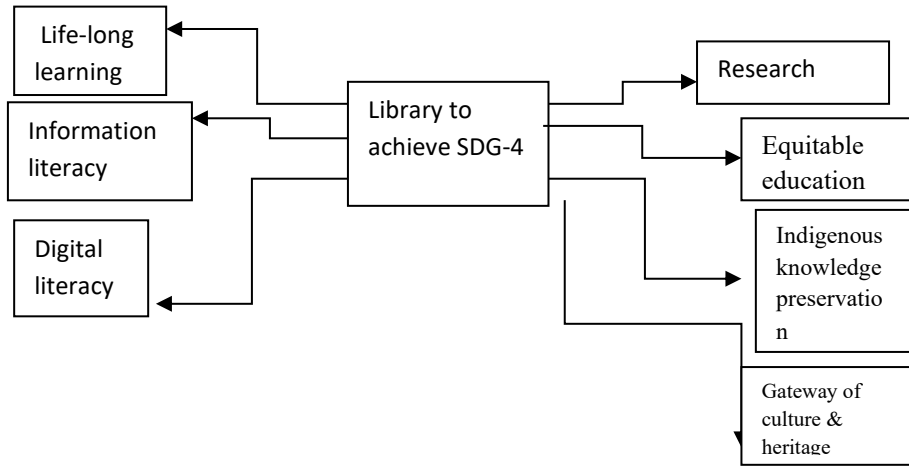


Fig. 1. Role of library in achieving SDG-4

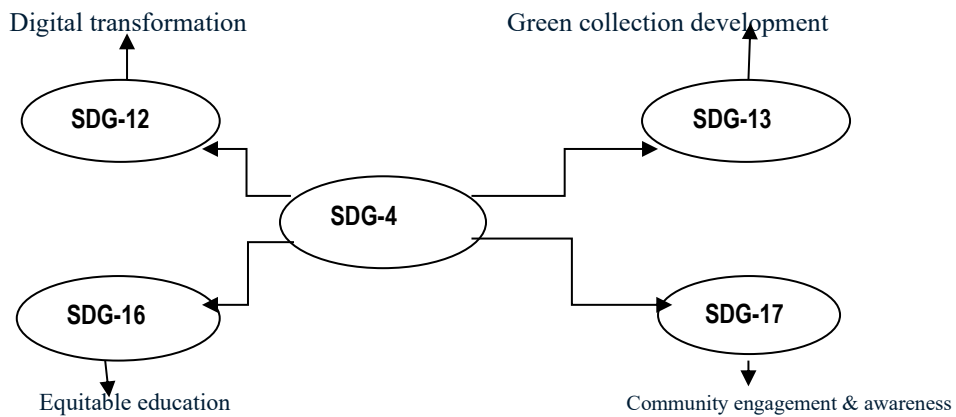


Fig.2. Interconnection between SDG-4 with SDG-12, SDG-13, SDG-16 & SDG-17

6.2. SDG-4 and SDG-13: Green Collection Development: By developing specialized collections concentrating on climate change, sustainability, environmental regulations and eco-friendly technology, libraries play a vital role in fostering environmental consciousness and literacy. Reinforcing students with the information required to grasp and address world environment concerns, directly promotes good education.

6.3. SDG-4 and SDG-16: Equitable Access: As SDG-16 says about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, it has the role to provide quality education through inclusive institutions. Inclusive institutions are developed from the concept of universality which emphasizes universal access to the resources and services and hence it ensures that all children including specially disabled or from marginalized groups, have the opportunity to receive quality education. It thus, fosters an environment where individuals have equal access to resources,

services and opportunities. By building inclusive institutions SDG-4 can be fulfilled to a desirable level.

6.4. SDG-4 and SDG-17: Community Engagement and Awareness Programme: By organizing workshops and eco-literacy campaigns, libraries help in attaining SDG-17, which in turn is a part of SDG-4. Workshops, awareness programmes and eco-literacy campaigns are the integral part of quality education. So libraries help in attaining SDG-17, help in achieving SDG-4.

VII. FINDINGS

7.1. Libraries help in achieving quality education through providing the platform for life-long learning. In this context, public libraries provide better platform in comparison to academic libraries.

7.2. Public libraries contribute to the enhancement of quality education by arranging awareness programme on information literacy, whereas academic libraries fulfill information needs of

students, faculties and researchers through implementing policies on information literacy.

7.3. As digital literacy is one of the key components of quality education in today's context, libraries revitalize it through various workshops, discussions, awareness programmes, seminars and other programmes relevant to it.

7.4. Libraries provide the platform for equitable education by providing equal access of resources to all its users.

7.5. Research is another key area of quality education. Libraries significantly support researchers by providing both offline and online resources to its users. INFLIBNET contributes remarkably by providing various e-resource consortia like, ONOS, N-LIST, E-ShodhSindhu and Shodhganga.

7.6. Libraries preserve and archives indigenous knowledge for dissemination.

7.7. Libraries act as a gateway of culture and heritage of a particular community as well as a particular region.

7.8. Through digital transformation of resources, libraries help in achieving both SDG-4 and SDG-12. Digital resources, the key component of quality education, foster sustainable consumption and production.

7.9. Developing green collection in libraries affects positively in combating climate change and its impacts. It proves the interconnection between SDG-4 and SDG-13.

8.0. Inclusive institutions offer equitable education, which is a core part of SDG-4. It establishes the interconnection between SDG-4 and SDG-16.

8.1. Libraries organize workshops, seminars, discussions, eco-literacy programmes, which establishes the interconnection between SDG-4 and SDG-17.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Libraries are gradually transforming into environment friendly library, which can also be termed as sustainable library or green library or eco-friendly library. It has the potential to contribute in achieving the goals if sustainable development.

Libraries directly contribute to achieve SDG-4 and indirectly contribute to some other SDGs, as almost all the goals are interconnected. Quality education (SDG-4) is the basic need to fulfill all those. Libraries should try to implement some measures to fulfill the SDGs.

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