Academic/Research libraries have traditionally been looked upon as information providers for students and academicians only. Further more academic libraries to supply materials and services that support the educational and research objectives of their parent organizations. This widely accepted the role of information providers usually overshadows the library's important role as an information consumer. In this context this article tries to identify what marketing is, especially library service marketing, reasons for adopting a marketing strategy, issues or adopting marketing techniques, activities to adopt marketing techniques and lastly to justify Nepalese academic libraries towards adopting marketing techniques.

Marketing and Library Service Marketing

According to Kotler, marketing is 'the concept of sensitively serving and satisfying human needs". Marketing of library services is a new term in library science although we have been practicing it for a long time. In the context of library, libraries are also sensitively serving and satisfying the 'information' needs of various community of users.

Marketing is not only a matter of promoting a service, but also an essential management activity whether it is profit making or non profit making organizations. Commercial ventures market their product/service for profit but non-profit bodies do marketing for their existence, to increase membership, donation and recognition. Though these groups have differing goals, they are alike in that they all market their product, people, ideas, places or organizations in different ways. To be specific even religions, trade unions, and professional associations, etc. market themselves to potential members for attracting membership or donation.2 Seeking profits is not their primary goal but money in the form of dues, donation, grants may be part of the exchange. Therefore, they all develop marketing strategy in accordance with the objectives of the organization for effective results.

Why Marketing Strategy?

Organizations convert their resources

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into an offering, relevant to their market, in order to meet the objectives of a public sector. Maximum take-up is encouraged by planned promotional activities. As far as libraries are concerned, the main reasons for having a marketing strategy are:

- the user’s market is constantly changing. There are changes taking place in business locations and personnel, in student population and in the population as a whole.
- the potential market for specific information is very large and has only been partially tapped by public sector libraries.
- there is a need to inform existing and potential users of the totality of information available. Also many new sources of information are becoming available. Such as business information and research information are probably growing faster than information in any other sector.
- competition for attention in the market place is high. Public sector services may be overlooked by potential users.³

Hence, service institution such as library and information center need to do marketing with a proper technique to increase its value/importance, uses, and attract donations. Marketing is essential to information management. Selection of user groups to be served and determination of their information needs are among the most important steps in marketing information services. Information centers should position their programs to support corporate goals, objectives and priorities.⁴

Why Academic or Research Libraries should Market their Services?

Public libraries have long been practicing a marketing approach. Since the services offered by public libraries have already been paid for, the aim must be to maximize the take-up of those services to ensure the greatest-cost-effectiveness. Maximum effectiveness also means serving those with the greatest need.

Academic libraries, like public libraries should become aware of the need to market their services effectively in a period when funding is reducing, demand from the outside has been increasing and new services are being introduced, which cost a huge amount of money and the technology is providing easy and prompt services for specific fields. Some of the issues which justify, academic libraries in shifting towards the marketing approach are:

- The rapidly changing present academic procedure and environment makes it difficult for library administration to identify the needs and desires of potential and future library users and to provide library collections programs and services suit it both for the present and for the anticipated needs. At the same time these difficulties provide unusual opportunities and encouragement for innovation⁵.

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³ A. Gallimore, Marketing A Public Sector Business Library : Developing a Strategy (N.P.: N.p, N.d.)
Academic libraries like many public utilities have long had a local monopoly as being the only 'information store' on campus but this has been challenged recently by competitors who offer more 'customized' service, or service not otherwise available. The library must recognize such challenges and when necessary respond.

The literature on marketing and librarianship shows that public libraries have long utilized marketing techniques. They are more closely aware of their users, funding sources and more ready to adopt marketing methods.

Academic librarians should not discard all the materials which are not used. They should make active marketing. They have false implication that their patrons knew how to find and to use information effectively and efficiently.

During the present period of shrinking financial support and increased pressure to justify nearly every expense, academic libraries must be aware of marketing techniques, not just to publicize their needs, but also to make their community more aware of the importance of what the library has and does. By this way, it can not only serve effectively but increase good-feelings among students and faculty member.

**Marketing Services Activities**

Academic/Research libraries often suffer from a host of common problems, including: low user awareness and understanding of what services the libraries provides; and how these services benefit both users and the organization as a whole. Marketing can help overcome these problems. From the standpoint of library, marketing is a planned approach to identifying, attracting, serving, and gaining the support of specific user groups in a manner that furthers the goals of both library and the organization. These functions are successfully performed through a wide variety of activities, including:

- selecting specific user groups to whom the library marketing efforts primarily will be directed; as well as selecting of services to satisfy user's information needs;
- planning, developing, and organizing library services and resources in order to meet these information needs;
- communicating and publicizing these offerings to inform, educate, interact and attract library users;
- cultivating strong professional relations with users, as well as building larger support network throughout the organization; and
- conducting marketing research and informal intelligence-gathering in order to gain better insights into the specific information needs and other important characteristics of current and potential users (user analysis), and the effectiveness of the library's current marketing efforts (marketing effectiveness analysis).

Hence Academic or Research library service marketing is a process of perceiving understanding, stimulating and satisfying the
needs of specially selected target markets by channeling a library's resources to meet those needs. Marketing is thus a process of matching a library's resources to the needs of the users. Marketing is concerned with the dynamic interrelationships between a library's services, the users' wants and needs, and the activities of competitors.

**Nepalese Context**

Most of the libraries in Nepal are working traditionally i.e. they think that most users know what and how to get books and other information in the library complex. They forget that there is a vast amount of information out there and without a guide or proper approach they are not fully used. Academic/research libraries rarely do marketing for their library resources. Some of the foreign based libraries such as the British Council and American Center do some kind of marketing technique to attract users but others do not. By practicing a marketing approach the Academic Research libraries not only increase usage of the library resources and goodwill among the students and academicians but also attract funding as well, which most of the libraries are lacking. By following some of the activities mentioned above most academic libraries can reap the fruits of having 'information' the most important power today.