

Libraries face challenge

By Our Reporter

LAHORE, May 12: Punjab University Associate Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood has said that rising flood of information was a challenge for the libraries.

He was speaking at a seminar on 'Improvement of Standard of Libraries in Pakistan' organised by the Quaid-i-Azam Library here on Friday.

Prof Mahmood said the libraries were set up for dissemination of information. Developments in information and communication technology had changed the shape of libraries as information was now available not only in the form of print but in electronic forms as well. The information could be provided anywhere at anytime due to advancement of communication technology.

He said setting up of libraries was not the responsibility of the state any longer. The private sector was also setting up libraries but the government had prescribed no standard for them. There was no service structure for librarians in the country, he added.

Lahore University of Management Sciences chief librarian Muhammad Ramzan said the character of libraries had changed with the passage of time. The readers wanted remote service in different ways. Every

library had different mission and was set up keeping it in view.

He said the libraries had a direct link to the development of a country. A review of the state of libraries showed the state of development of a country. Continuous education of the staff was also necessary for maintaining the standard of libraries.

He said librarians were the first community to learn the use of computer in 1968.

He said the government was not encouraging the use of computer in the libraries. The funds allocated for computers were often utilised for other purposes. The standard of libraries should be improved through the appointment of qualified staff.

Quaid-i-Azam Library chief librarian Muhammad Taj said standard was being developed for the libraries but the progress was slow because professional organisations like the Pakistan Libraries Association had stopped taking interest in it.

He said a committee had been constituted for formulation of standards for libraries in 1960 for the first time. The Directorate of Public Libraries made an effort to improve the standards in 1970. Two bills were adopted for college and special libraries in the 12th conference of Pakistan Libraries Association in 1992.

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