

# USE OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SPACES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

**Subal Chandra Biswas<sup>1</sup> and Meghna Biswas<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Central Library, Dr B. C. Roy Engineering College, Jemua Road, Fuljhore,  
Durgapur – 713206, West Bengal

<sup>2</sup>Central Library, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Kalyani,  
NH-34 Connector, Basantapur, Saguna, Kalyani – 741245, West Bengal  
*Email: 1. subal.biswas@bcrec.ac.in; 2. Email: meghnabsws@gmail.com.*

## INTRODUCTION

The academic library is a crucial component of any educational institution. However, in the past two decades, academic libraries have faced many challenges. They are no longer considered just an archive of recorded knowledge. The library's function as an information retrieval space where users search for data, check out book collections, and read printed materials has weakened considerably<sup>[1]</sup>. The availability of the internet and the digitization of resources, along with the impact of information and communication technology (ICT), are some of the most significant factors affecting the role of libraries today. Additionally, the current generation of students relies heavily on information technology daily. Every student can have a global library on their device in their pocket once connected to the internet. According to Bennett<sup>[2]</sup>, the current challenge for academic libraries is the shift from book-centered libraries to learning-centered libraries. As a result, the academic library in higher education is undergoing many changes. Due to advancements in technology many of the traditional functions and roles of the academic library have become obsolete. While searching for new purposes in the digital era, many academic libraries have incorporated the concept of commons that is library spaces where students can meet to learn together outside classrooms. After a long history of storing and managing information serving as their major functions academic libraries concluded that the fundamental function of libraries is not about information itself, but a place to enhance learning and enrich learning communities<sup>[3]</sup>. As collaboration has become a core competency of 21<sup>st</sup> century academic curriculum, and business workplace, libraries are changing to accommodate the need for collaboration and socialization. Rapid changes in the global economy have created a need for organizational agility and collaboration between and within organizations. Organizational collaboration has been emphasized in the business and industry fields as a means for improved organizational functioning. To address the needs of society and industry, the pedagogical paradigm in higher education has shifted to provide individuals with collaborative skills. As a result, academic libraries are becoming campus collaborative learning hubs outside classrooms.

In addition, the shift in learning patterns of the current generation is also motivating the changes in the functions of academic libraries. Today's college students: are interconnected to each other at all times through technology; use personal electronic devices simultaneously for learning and personal interest; virtually communicate with each other in real time; and multi-task to manage constant influxes of information. Libraries are expected to accommodate the work styles and demands of this generation's learners<sup>[4]</sup>. Under these circumstances, academic libraries are changing to become technology-enhanced collaborative research facilities