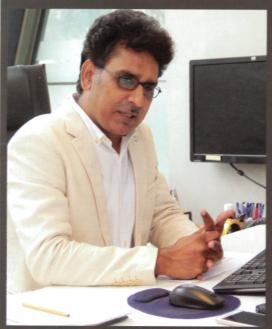# Mian Abdullah Library

The history of the IBA library dates back to 1955, when it was founded and since then, it has been playing a vital role in attaining a unique position among business institutions. By 1957, the IBA library had 8000 volumes & 130 journal subscriptions and was considered to house the most up-to-date materials on business and public administration in Pakistan. Over the years, the library underwent a series of developments through IBA's in house funding but it was after the donation of an endowment of PKR 100 million by the Mian Abdullah Foundation, that IBA welcomed the launch of the Mian Abdullah Library in its full glory at the Main Campus; named after its magnanimous founding chairman of one of the largest business groups of the country.

The state-of-the-art library has inspirations and design inputs from best modern practices and can accommodate 450 students at a time. It comprises of 4 unique study spaces: Individual, Collaborative, Leisure and the Multimedia. Each space encourages students to collaborate with each other and study individually and collectively. The aesthetics of the library have drawn students to enjoy studying, reading books and browsing magazines. This library was a measure taken by the IBA to offer its students the best facilities and education rather than having to opt for 2nd Tier Western universities.

Head Librarian's Interview

The Head Librarian of the library, Mr. Anwar was interviewed by The Current. Mr. Anwar holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from the International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur and is a member of the Advisory Board for Africa, Asia and Oceania, EBSCO Information Services and the International Journal of Librarianship and Information Science. With 20 years of progressive experience, he has helped IBA achieve the distinction of converting its conventional library services and spaces into ultra-modern learning centres. The information received is as follows:

- **If students are dissatisfied with any of the library services, how do you tackle that situation?**

We try to first understand the issue, and then we try to solve it. Sometimes students want personal benefit. Other times if there's something to do with our services, we immediately try to address those issues. This way, we have gained the confidence of all the students with respect to their issues, because of which they no longer feel the need to approach the higher authority.

Island of Excellence

In 2011, the IBA initiated the concept that a library can be aesthetically appealing, colourful and with an in-house coffee shop. Other renowned universities are also following this model. The State Bank of Pakistan has also subscribed to the library for some resources.

In 2011-12, IBA's library was behind in terms of structure and content, but now, it is at par with the libraries of other leading universities. When compared to other libraries, Mian Abdullah Library has an upper hand because it serves as a standalone function rather than being embedded into the overall structure. It is an independent and uniquely designed building with its own air-conditioning and an independent network.

"Success is not what you achieve in life, it is about what you inspire others to do."

We at the IBA are always ready for change as change is the only constant.

Technology

The Mian Abdullah Library has crossed many milestones in the field of technology to provide the best facilities to its users. The system has been automated, hence information retrieval has been made easy with the help of a kiosk in the library.

For eContent, this year's budget for the library has 20 Kindles for in-house borrowing. Students will also be able to bring in their own Kindles and be provided with books (which will expire in 14 days), like the 140,000 eBooks in the eBrary. This year orders for the Kindles have been placed in advance in addition to 10 Tablets, which will be hung on shelves. Self-service scanning will also be introduced in the library near the walk-up terminals. The library also contains an impressive collection of over 100,000 eJournals.

Netflix (a provider of internet television network) subscription was a part of the initial agenda for the library. For this facility, there's an individual screen, network support and a DVD player with the subscribed content available. There's a multimedia space available too, which is normally booked for larger sophisticated discussions with corporate executives.

In the future, there will be a proper facility inside the Mian Abdullah Library called the 'Information Commons' to help with assignments and research work; where trained staff will be available in addition to database guides and brochures. The facility will have 36 terminals: 2 slots for laptops and 34 slots for PCs. Research support software like SPSS will also be available for the users.

• What role does the library play in encouraging avid readers?

To increase activities like book reading etc., you need a team in addition to a vision. Libraries in foreign universities have already undergone the revolution we are experiencing presently. We have much more on our agenda right now, hopefully after the completion of which we will be able to embark upon those set of activities. We are focusing on building relationships with our students, and most of our student body does not read extracurricular books during the semester. Even if we start those activities, students will not partake in them until and unless it is somehow linked to their academic section.

• What are the long-term objectives associated with the position you are in?

To sustain the setup. We need to maintain and preserve the standard of our services to ensure that we only move forward. Making available mature research support and public services, we plan to complete our team this year by hiring 4 more people.

• How does IBA encourage and inspire people to work in a library?

IBA hires people as Library Trainee Officers since the last 3 years, who are toppers from their universities. When they go out into the market, they are immediately taken up by good institutions. This can serve as an inspiration to others and can be potential applicants for us as they are trained as per our standards. We have team members from the last 35 years and we enhance old employees' skills too by giving them informal training sessions. The only inspiration can be structures like the IBA library with the excellent work environment. Some people come into this profession by following their family lines. They can be improved and turned into agents of positive change.

• How should Library Studies be changed to keep up with the times?

The Library Studies degree in Pakistan and worldwide needs to be broadened and should be versatile in order to attract new talent so that it does not reach stagnation. This can be done by incorporating courses regarding business and technology into the degree like some universities in Asia have.

• What role does the library play in facilitating the feedback process?

As a professional I feel that feedback is important. I conduct 3 hour sessions for PhD students. Some discussion is based on what we want to do and some on what they ask us to do. We cater to as many requests as we can. Sometime students during exams want to discuss more. We expand the group study space and change the location of silent study spaces to another makeshift room. We try to be flexible by extending exam timings too. So far there haven't really been requests from our users for further innovation.

Research

Due to the renovation project, the content in the Mian Abdullah Library does not reflect that it is 60 years old. After fixing the face of the library, the administration is now tending to the back end. The archives are being revamped, which will take another 1-2 years. If IBA used to subscribe to a magazine in 1955, there's still a historical relevance in IBA having the hard copies at present even though that data is available digitally. This is because there are still some gaps in that digital data.

The library has customized its services to meet the needs of its members at their varying academic levels. The 'Ask Us' facility can be used, for which trained staff is present and helps with information retrieval. Then there is also a research support librarian available for consultation to help with citations and reference styles when needed. This service is also available to the alumni.

Alumni can request IBA for documents through the 'Document Delivery' service and use the library services by visiting in person. IBA has links with various document supply services like the British Library and as per demand, licensed documents (books chapters, research articles) are supplied to the faculty and researchers.

In 2011 - 2012, only textbooks made up a major portion of the library's collection. However, the IBA now focuses more on the acquisition of digital content that supports teaching and research. The library is partnering with Harvard for the provision of teaching cases to the faculty and recently two more databases – the Casecentre & Emerging Market Case Studies – have been added. More investments are being made on the provision of research eContent. At the same time, the subscription to print journals has gone up from 40 in 2012 to 100+ in 2017. The number of electronic journals has crossed 10,000, many of which are being subscribed by IBA's own funds and the print book collection has crossed 66,000.

The library subscribes to a number of specialized resources to support business students. It also works closely with the HEC Digital Library Programme and suggests resources that are of good use to other business schools as well.

To date, there has been no instance where a request has been sent to the library from a faculty member and has not been addressed, be it for a book chapter or a thesis or a research article. There is 200% support in terms of mindset, awareness, and energy which has gained the trust of the faculty members in IBA and the senior/research students. The library showcases and streamlines the work done by the graduate students and is the custodian of the format compliance of the approved templates.

There are 27 electronic databases available to strengthen graduate and postgraduate research e.g. Bank Scope, Orbis for Banks, Datastream, Eikon by Thomson Reuters, Passport by Euromonitor, WARC – World Advertising Resource Centre, IFN – Islamic News Network, UN Comtrade, Newsbank, and Dissertation & theses.

Infrastructure

Libraries now are designed to be more transparent and to be integrated into the campus culture so that students don't feel isolated in them. The non-linear component spaces are supposed stand out, as opposed to viewing the library as one whole uniform structure.

Previously, there used to be 10% space in the library for interaction and the remaining 90% was for self-study. Currently, the students want interaction as opposed to isolation. This is why, even the Silent Study Spaces in the Mian Abdullah Library are linked with the Group Study Spaces. Thus, the IBA Library incorporates all the latest infrastructural trends, always cashing in room for improvement.