Disaster preparedness awareness among library professionals in Rajasthan state university libraries

Mr. Vinay Kumar Chauhan[*1]
[*1]*Research Scholar, Library & Information Science Vikrant University, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India*
ORCID ID: 0009-0002-8095-8421

Mr. Bhoopendra Singh[2]
[2]*Research Scholar, Department of Library & Information Science, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India*
ORCID ID: 0009-0002-2105-0077

Dr. Mahendra Singh Rao[3]
[3]*Assistant Professor Department of Library and Information Science University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India*

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Abstract:
The libraries are the store house of knowledge resources and cultural wealth. Hence it is the duty of libraries to provide protection to their collection and services. The disaster management in libraries has become a critical issue in the recent years due to many hazards like fire, flood, earth-quake, system crash and many other types of unpredictable disasters that may harm the library resources and infrastructure. Hence it is the need of the hour for librarians to prepare and plan for disasters to protect the library materials and to continue the library services. So the main objective of the present study is to know the librarians? awareness towards disaster preparedness in State University Libraries of Rajasthan. The study was carried out by the means of descriptive survey method. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data for the study and it was dis-tributed among the librarians in the selected state universities of Rajasthan. The findings of the study reveals that the librarians have primary idea about the disaster management but they are not prepared to manage any disaster. The libraries do not have a formal disaster management plan. Hence the study concludes that the librarians have to know more about disaster management, they have to prepare a disaster management plan, they have to undergo training so that they will man-age the disaster situation more effectively. Hence the recommendations are that the libraries must have formal disaster management policy and preparedness plan in order to protect the library resources and infrastructure and to manage any disaster situation efficiently.

Keywords:
Disaster Management, Disaster Preparedness, Academic Libraries, Library Professionals, State University Libraries, Rajasthan, Risk Management, Library Resource Protection.

1. Introduction:
1.1. Importance of university libraries as knowledge repositories:
In general, the role of a university library is very significant in the context of higher education. These libraries directly contribute to teaching and learning, as well as research activities(Ashiq et al., 2024). Library collec-tions comprise huge number of texts and information resources such as published works, periodicals, manu-scripts, MPhil/PhD dissertations, research reports, digital libraries etc. The information resources available in the libraries meet the growing demand of students, researchers and academics seeking knowledge on various

aspects of their discipline. In addition to providing access to information resources to learners, libraries preserve the wealth of knowledge and cultural heritage for future generations of scholars. Thus, it is vital that these collections and facilities are maintained and managed properly(Umar et al., 2024).

1.2. Potential disasters affecting libraries:

Libraries are vulnerable to various types of disasters that can cause serious damage to their collections, infrastructure, and services. These disasters may be natural or human-made, and their impact can lead to the loss of valuable information resources.

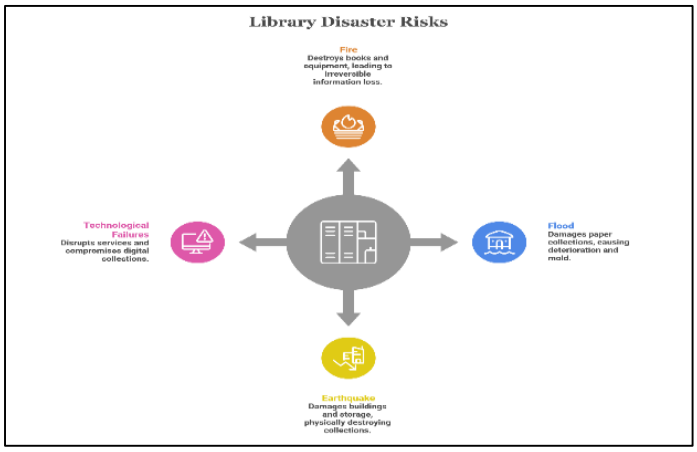


Figure. 1: Library Disaster Risks

Fire is perhaps the most common and potentially the most destructive type of hazard which can threaten the resources of libraries. It may result from an electrical fault, short circuit or from human carelessness in the form of accidental ignition. Whatever the cause the results can be equally devastating and with a similar rapidity of occurrence, there can be total loss of stocks of books, papers, equipment and furniture with consequent irreversible loss of information(Chigwada & Ngulube, 2025).

Flood Water damage to library stock and premises caused by flooding from storms, rain, drainage or leaks can cause a huge amount of damage to our stock. Paper based collections can decay, develop mound and become unrecoverable, and will be lost to readers forever(Dada et al., 2025).

Severe damage can occur to library buildings, collections and storage facilities as a result of an earthquake. All new library facilities must be designed and constructed with special consideration of earthquake-resistant design and construction in seismic areas(Onyejesi et al., 2025).Technological Failures Most libraries in today's technology age utilize automation systems for cataloging, circulation and online access to resources. These technologies and systems are vulnerable to problems such as server failure and loss of data, as well as to attacks from "hackers." A power failure can also cripple a library's automated systems(Deshpande, 2022).

1.3. Importance of disaster preparedness for protecting library collections:

Disaster preparedness is an important aspect of library management. It involves steps taken to mitigate the impact of disasters or their aftermath. It involves preventive measures and preparedness to minimize the losses and to ensure the earliest possible resumption of library activities(Feather, 2017). A disaster preparedness plan will ensure preparedness for possible disasters, training of staff for emergency situations, preparedness of contingency plans, provision of measures to ensure continuity of library functions, and adequate electronic protection of library materials. The implementation of the measures of disaster management will ensure the safety of library materials, continuity of library services to users and reduce the impact of disasters on the activities of libraries(Mahendra Singh Rao, 2025).

1.4. Overview of state university libraries in Rajasthan:

Rajasthan has a number of state universities engaged in imparting higher education and carrying our research in various disciplines. The central library of the university caters the information needs of students and faculty members. The libraries have huge collection of books, journals, theses and e-resources to meet their academic and research requirements(Garnett, 2019). With the help of modern tools and technology such as OPAC, e-databases and institutional repository the state university libraries in Rajasthan are trying their best to provide

information at the doorstep of users. But as we all know that these academic libraries too have their own set of problems relating to infrastructure, resource maintenance, etc. Hence it becomes the most essential thing to assess the awareness and perception of library professionals regarding disaster preparedness in state universities of Rajasthan in order to protect the library resources(Nandi et al., 2024).

2. Literature review:

2.1. Disaster management in academic libraries:

Disaster management is an important aspect of library administration nowadays because libraries are reservoirs of knowledge and contain invaluable intellectual and cultural assets. Academic libraries are particularly vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters such as fire, flood, earthquakes and damage from water leakage and other technological failures that could lead to the loss of irreplaceable library collections and disruption of library services(Kaur et al., 2016). In fact, most studies recommend that libraries should emulate preventive measures and embark on disaster management planning so as to avert tremendous losses to libraries' infrastructure and services. Therefore, disaster management in academic libraries is all about preventive measures, identification of potential hazards and the formulation of contingency disaster recovery plans. Indeed, a study on disaster management in health science college libraries established that natural and man-made disasters could pose great threats to library resources, infrastructure and technology and hence appropriate disaster planning and risk management measures are therefore needed to mitigate such disaster impacts(Biswas & Choudhuri, 2012).

There are very few studies which have focused on academic libraries in Assam to assess the preparedness of the library staff and the disaster management plans. The studies reveal that though the academic librarians have the basic knowledge of the possible disasters that can occur in the libraries, they have not yet implemented formal disaster management strategies in the academic libraries(Onyejesi et al., 2025). The academic libraries are concerned with various aspects of disaster management like risk assessment, preparation of contingency plan, provision of emergency measures and planning for the recovery of library functions. A general survey reveals that academic libraries do not have a comprehensive disaster management policy(Umar et al., 2024).

2.2. Awareness of disaster preparedness among librarians:

The concern of librarians towards disaster preparedness has been a widely discussed topic by many researchers. It is argued that awareness is a vital element of disaster management. As the occurrence of disasters and controlling the disaster impacts to the minimum possible extent and managing the emergency situation under disaster condition also depends on the librarians, librarians must be fully aware of the measures to be taken to minimize the effects of the disasters occurring in libraries(Nwokedi et al., 2017). The present study is an attempt to evaluate the perception of librarians in the University libraries of Kerala and Calicut Universities towards disaster preparedness with the help of a well-structured questionnaire. The study found that librarians have an awareness of the preparedness of the disasters but there exists a great difference between the awareness of disaster preparedness and the implementation of measures and plans for disaster preparedness(Selin & Devi, 2024).

Some recent studies conducted in India are on public libraries. Indian public libraries are highly prone to man made as well as natural disasters. There is a need for raising disaster awareness at the community level and to prepare public libraries in India to meet any disaster contingencies so as to save the library stock and infrastructure from catastrophic losses(Ranjan et al., 2016). It has been found that despite knowledge of disasters, librarians do not get adequate training to manage disaster due to policy constraints, non-availability of training Programme at grass root level and administrative obstacles etc. (Oehlerts, 2009).

2.3. Disaster planning in libraries in India and international context:

Library disaster planning has been a widely debated topic in India as well as abroad. A detailed survey of literature in relation to the disaster preparedness practices and problems encountered by the academic libraries revealed many foreign studies in this respect which express problems like lack of funds, insufficient training given to the library staff and absence of institutional disaster management policy(Rao & Verma, 2019).

Natural and man-made disasters are becoming an increasing threat to Academic Libraries in Indonesia, resulting in damage to collections, physical structures and disruptions to learning and research activities(Sharma, 2018). The ALSPP project undertook a case study on risks to academic libraries in Indonesia and identified natural and man-made risks to their collections and activities. Some of the man-made risks to libraries in Indonesia include theft, vandalism, power failure, hardware and software failures. The case study also found that while many libraries were aware of threats to their collections and activities, only a small number of libraries

in Indonesia have a disaster preparedness plan. Similar studies on disaster preparedness in academic and public libraries have been carried out in Nigeria and Philippines. In these studies, the researchers used surveys to investigate librarians' awareness of disasters and the extent of their preparedness and disaster recovery measures(Sukula et al., 2025). The results of the studies revealed that although librarians recognize the importance of disaster management, there is still a lack of formal disaster preparedness plans in academic libraries in Nigeria and Philippines(Ansari et al., 2024).

Library disaster management has emerged as a significant and popular area of research in India as well as abroad. The existing literature reveals that the focus has been on creating awareness about disasters and arranging evacuation drills for checking the preparedness of a library to meet with disasters and safeguarding the library resources(Tu-Keefner et al., 2025). It has also been suggested that the library should formulate a policy on disaster management, arrange staff training programmers and use the electronic means of preserving literature and data to safeguard the library resources(Dada et al., 2025).

3. Research gap:

This investigation sought to determine librarians' knowledge and awareness of disasters and disaster preparedness plans in academic libraries in India. A literature review on disaster management and disaster preparedness was carried out in academic libraries of various countries and regions. The findings of the studies that were reviewed indicated that the librarians' knowledge and awareness of disasters, disaster preparedness plans and their readiness to deal with disasters in their libraries varied. A good number of studies on disaster preparedness have been carried out in various libraries in India e.g. Kerala and Assam, and internationally e.g. Nigeria and Indonesia. However, the major drawback of the research works carried out in specific library or institutions and the general findings on disaster preparedness and management in academic libraries in India and internationally are wanting. Hence, the investigation sought to bridge this gap in the existing literature(Superio et al., 2024).

There is scarcity of literature which has dealt with the disaster preparedness in State University Libraries of Rajasthan. Rajasthan has number of state universities with good number of library resources and infrastructure. There is no systematic study which has investigated the awareness and perception of disaster preparedness among library professionals of Rajasthan State University Libraries. Hence, this study endeavors to make a positive contribution to the development of disaster management practices in the University Libraries of Rajasthan, which is one of the major literate States of India(Yang & Ju, 2021).

3.1. Objectives:

1. To examine the level of awareness about disaster management among library professionals in Rajasthan State University Libraries.
2. To analyze the perception of librarians toward disaster preparedness.
3. To identify existing disaster preparedness practices in these libraries.
4. To suggest measures for improving disaster preparedness

3.2. Scope of the study:

The primary aim of this study is to measure the awareness and perception of disaster preparedness among library professionals in the State University Libraries of Rajasthan. Methodology: This study was limited to the libraries of the state universities established and maintained by the Government of Rajasthan. The university libraries play an important role in supporting academic and research activities by providing access to wide range of information resources. The state university libraries are staffed by librarians, assistant librarians and other information personnel who have key role in managing library resources and providing information services. Findings: The librarians' awareness and perception concerning disaster preparedness is essential in evaluating the present level of preparedness of State University Libraries in Rajasthan and in identifying the areas of needed improvements.

While earlier it was mentioned that private University Libraries, College Libraries, Deemed Universities and academic & special libraries in Rajasthan are excluded, the present study has specifically targeted the perceptions of librarians towards disaster preparedness only, excluding the opinions and views of users at large, that is students, teaching faculty and management. The study has taken into consideration the State University Libraries (SULs) in Rajasthan with a purpose of assessing the disaster preparedness among the librarians and identifying the current scenario along with some recommendation that could enhance the practices of disaster management in SULs, Rajasthan.

3.3. Research methodology :

3.3.1. Research design:

Awareness and Perception of Disaster Preparedness among State University Libraries of Rajasthan: A Study using Descriptive Survey Research Design The study aims at evaluating the librarians' awareness and perception of disaster preparedness using descriptive survey research design. It sought to find out the descriptive information about the awareness and preparedness of disasters in State University Libraries of Rajasthan. The method used in this study is descriptive survey(Superio et al., 2019). This method of research helps in providing more in-depth information concerning the situation of the subject matter; that is, the attitudes and practices of librarians towards disaster management. The survey method of research is adopted to collect data from the respondents in an organized and systematic manner. It is an effective method used for gathering data from a large number of people(French, 2025).

3.3.2. Population of the study:

The study is concerned with the State University Libraries of Rajasthan. The study population consists of University Librarians, Deputy Librarians, Assistant Librarians and other qualified library staff members looking after library collection, library services and infrastructure(Shen, 2025). Library staff members are key actors in implementing the disaster management strategies in libraries. Therefore, assessing their opinion about disaster management and their level of awareness is of crucial importance in order to assess the present situation of disaster preparedness measures in libraries(Superio et al., 2019).

3.3.3. Sample of the study:

A Sample study refers to a subset taken from the totality of State University Libraries of Rajasthan which constitute the population for the study. The sampling frame for the study shall be librarians and the professional staff working for administration of libraries and their various activities. For this study Purposive sampling is most likely to be employed, as the required data is to be collected from experienced librarians and personnel in administration and in various libraries who are well acquainted with the general administrative practices of libraries as well as measures being adopted in connection with disasters(Matthews, 2005).

3.3.4. Data collection tool:

Primary data required for this study would be collected by means of a specially designed structured questionnaire, which aims at eliciting information about the knowledge and awareness of the library professionals towards the disaster preparedness. The questionnaire would have open ended, close ended and multiple-choice questions in order to know the opinions of the respondents regarding the measures for prevention of disasters, mitigation of disasters and the contingency plans to be adopted for the management of disasters in libraries(Lamberti-Castronuovo et al., 2023). It would also deal with the knowledge of the disasters and its impact, contingency plans available in the libraries, training and awareness programmers, preparedness measures, the rehabilitation measures taken by the libraries in respect of the disasters. The questionnaire would be sent to the respondents through email or through social media or in any other manner which is found feasible. The data collected would be compiled and analyzed by using percentage method, descriptive analysis etc. so as to know the awareness of the library professionals about disasters and preparedness in Rajasthan State University Libraries(Parker, 2025).

3.3.5. Data analysis and interpretation:

The collected responses will be analyzed and interpreted under several important aspects related to disaster preparedness in libraries.

3.3.6. Awareness of disaster management concepts:

Table. 1: Awareness of Disaster Management among Library Professionals

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Highly Aware	12	30%
Moderately Aware	18	45%
Slightly Aware	7	17.5%
Not Aware	3	7.5%

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Total	40	100%

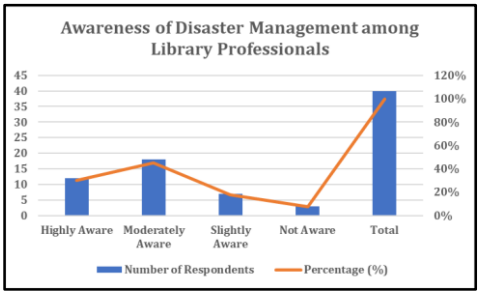


Figure. 2: Graphical Reorientation of Awareness of Disaster Management among Library Professionals

This section will investigate the library professionals' awareness of disaster management concepts and whether they know the disasters that may occur in libraries such as fire, flood, earthquake and technical failure disasters(Lagrada & Santiago, 2025). In addition, it is aimed to determine whether they are aware of the regulations of disaster management and the emergency response plans in the libraries. With the results obtained from this section, it will be possible to determine whether library professionals have the knowledge levels required for disaster preparedness. As can be seen from the table, 45% of the library professionals have a medium level of awareness of disaster management concepts. While 30% of the library professionals have a high level of awareness, the required awareness level is not seen in a small percentage.

3.3.7. Availability of disaster preparedness plans:

Table. 2: Availability of Disaster Management Plans in Libraries

Response	Number of Libraries	Percentage (%)
Yes	14	35%
No	20	50%
Not Sure	6	15%
Total	40	100%

The purpose of this section is to find out the extent to which State University Libraries in Rajasthan are disaster prepared. The information sought in this section relates to the library's written policies and emergency procedures for dealing with disasters and whether these plans are reviewed on a regular basis and communicated to librarians/staff. Fifty percent of the libraries do not have disaster management plan that deals with various disasters that can occur within the library premises as well as outside. Therefore, it is necessary to make disaster management planning and policies applicable(Kaplan & Abrishami, 2025).

3.3.8. Staff Training and Awareness Programs:

Table. 3: Training Programs on Disaster Management

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Attended Training	10	25%
Not Attended Training	22	55%
Occasionally Attended	8	20%
Total	40	100%

Staff Training & Awareness The purpose of this section was to explore staff training and awareness for disasters. It related staff training for disasters in libraries and by library staff for preparing training, seminars and drills in the event of emergencies. The aim of this section of the survey was to see how staff are prepared for an emergent disaster situation in the workplace. According to the results, 25% of staff have been trained in some way regarding disasters. The other 75% have not.

3.3.9. Perceived Risks to Library Collections:

Table. 4: Major Disaster Risks Identified by Respondents

Type of Risk	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)
Fire	16	40%
Flood/Water Leakage	10	25%
Earthquake	5	12.5%
Technological Failure	7	17.5%
Theft/Vandalism	2	5%
Total	40	100%

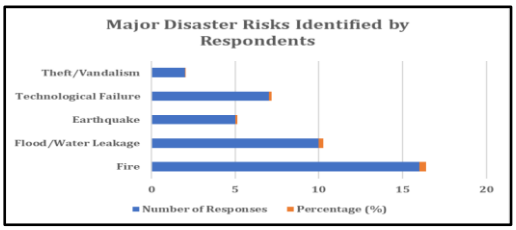


Figure. 3: Graphical Reorientation of Major Disaster Risks Identified by Respondents

The questionnaire asked librarians to name those risks which they believed were most likely to occur in libraries. The responses included fires, water damage, flooding, earthquakes and a variety of hardware/software failures including data loss and server failure. The analysis shows that the risks which librarians believe to be likely to occur are the same risks which they worry about. Thus, fire damage is considered by 40% of librarians to be the major risk to library collections with water damage of second and third order worry.

3.3.10. Preventive measures adopted by libraries:

Table. 4: Preventive Measures Implemented in Libraries

Preventive Measure	Yes	No
Fire Safety Equipment	28	12
CCTV Surveillance	22	18
Digital Backup System	18	22
Emergency Exit System	15	25
Disaster Preparedness Policy	14	26

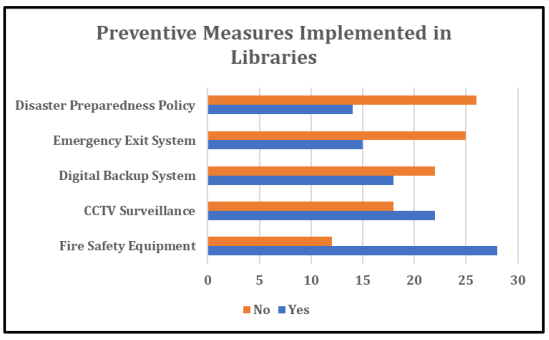


Figure. 4: Graphical Reorientation of Preventive Measures Implemented in Libraries

This section describes the preventive measures taken by libraries in order to reduce the impact of a disaster. Fire protection systems, adequate storage, electrical safety, adequate backup for electronic media and other types of security systems are indicated. This section will help us to establish the nature of preventive activities taken in libraries in relation to safeguarding collections and reducing potential damage. While fire protection systems are widely available, electronic media backup systems are rarely available and formal disaster preparedness plans are the exception.

Data analysis and interpretation will help the researcher to evaluate and realism the extent of the knowledge of disasters awareness, preparedness and preventive measures undertaken by the State University Libraries of Rajasthan for minimizing the damage. It will further help in identifying the areas that require enhancement.

4. Findings and suggestions:

4.1. Findings:

Data for the study was collected from the State University Libraries of Rajasthan from the library professionals. The study tried to find out the extent of awareness among the library professionals regarding the disasters in libraries(Antonelli et al., 2025). The findings revealed that the library professionals possess a medium level of knowledge pertaining to disasters and its management in the libraries. The professionals have knowledge at primary level about the general hazards such as fire, flood and technical failure which could affect the library resources and services. However, there is a dearth of information among the library professionals regarding the disaster management plans and mitigation measures to recover from the effects of any disaster that may affect the library(Lunde & Smith, 2009).

State University Libraries in Rajasthan do not have formal disaster preparedness and disaster management plans. Basic safety measures are available in some libraries in place of a disaster management policy and emergency procedures. There is a lack of awareness and training on disaster management issues. The majority of librarians have not undergone any formal training or participated in workshops/seminars or conferences on disaster preparedness. Hence, they may not be in a position to handle effectively any disaster that may arise. The institutional support for disaster preparedness is not adequate in the libraries studied. The institutions do not have adequate guidelines, infrastructure and administrative support for disaster management(Biswas & Choudhuri, 2012).

Overall, the study points out the need for better preparedness for disasters and a more institutional approach in order to protect precious library materials.

4.2. Suggestions:

1. University libraries must prepare Disaster Management Policy & Plan for the library to cover preventive, preparedness, response and recovery measures in times of any potential disaster(Rathee & Singh, 2022).
2. Library staff must undergo training on Disaster Management & Libraries preparedness. The training programmers and workshops may cover aspects of disaster preparedness, calamity risk assessment, and conservation of library documents(Umar et al., 2024).
3. The libraries must establish an Emergency Response Team (ERT) staff who are orientated to handle the emergency situation and are given enough practice so as not to cause considerable damage to Library resources and infrastructure(Sunday et al., 2025).

Times have changed and libraries in Rajasthan should adopt technology for creating digital back-up systems and for data protection of manuscripts, rare books, publications, documents and online databases and digital resources. Upgrading the modern security and surveillance systems will also avert any unforeseen disasters. In this way, State University Libraries in Rajasthan will be able to provide security to knowledge resources and enhance their disaster preparedness for ensuring the availability of knowledge resources for users for generations to come.

5. Conclusion:

Disaster preparedness is an essential aspect of library management. This is more so in the case of the University Libraries as they have to preserve very valuable academic and research material. The State University Libraries in Rajasthan are engaged in dissemination of knowledge for the advancement of learning and education. The University Libraries are highly vulnerable to man-made and natural disasters such as fire, floods, earthquake, technological disasters and accidents which can cause heavy damage to library collections, infrastructure and services. Although the library professionals have a very elementary knowledge of disaster management the study revealed that the state of disaster preparedness in libraries is not adequate. The absence of disaster management plan, lack of training and absence of institutional policy regarding disaster management are a few of the many reasons which call for serious attention towards disaster preparedness in University Libraries. Hence it is the responsibility of the University Authorities and the Library Administrators to do more and more towards the disaster preparedness by formulating a disaster management policy, training the library staff periodically and also taking measures to check disaster and accidents like installing safety gadgets, preparing the electronic copies of library materials, and providing adequate compensation in case of any calamity. The preparedness of the library staff will lead to the safeguard of the valuable library materials. Hence it can be concluded that there is an urgent need to enhance disaster preparedness measures in Rajasthan State University Libraries so as to protect the knowledge resources and ensure continuity of Library services in the event of any calamity.

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