

The Role of Libraries and Information Technology Services for Higher Education in Knowledge Societies

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Abstract - The paper discusses the impact of information technology and role of libraries in the age of knowledge and information societies. It also highlights the Libraries & Information Technology Service (LIS) sector in India and achievements over the years using modern information technologies. They are the identified projects, initiatives, strategies and methodologies. The major objective relates to the specific demonstration of how the skills of information can be exploited and profited for collaboration in the organization's mission through a study case.

Keywords: Library. Higher Education. Information Technology, Knowledge society

I. INTRODUCTION

In modern societies, every human activity is organised through institutions. Every major social task, whether or not economic performance or health care, education or research, business or industry is institutionalised. The protection of the environment or defence is today invariably entrusted to institutions and organisations. Since knowledge and information are so vital for all round human development, libraries and other institutions that handle and manage knowledge and information are indeed invaluable. Education is maybe the most important among them, for it helps to mould a well-informed, knowledgeable and responsible citizen who alone will be able to contribute to progress and advancement. Then there is the goal of the economic wellbeing of society. Activities towards this end have to be sustained by technological developments brought about by research and the enormous amount of information it makes available to users. It is recognized widely that economic development is increasingly linked to the ability of a country to acquire and apply knowledge. A person also wants recreation throughout his/her leisure time, and unless there are facilities for constructive and competitive activities, his/her attention is likely to be diverted to negative and destructive avenues.

The aim should be the development of a society that is able to lead a cultured, prosperous life and laying emphasis on certain basic values in life and adhering to them. It is the collective responsibility of members of society to form appropriate arrangements for this purpose.

The new society is coming into existence where knowledge is the primary factor of production compared to capital and labour. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India in his talks to students mentioned that

“Efficient usage of existing information will produce comprehensive wealth for the nation and also improve the standard of life including higher education, health care, infrastructure and different social group needs.

The ability to create and maintain a knowledge society infrastructure, develop the knowledge workers, and enhance their productivity through the creation, growth, and exploitation of new knowledge, will be the key factors when making a decision the prosperity of this information society. Whether or not a nation has developed into a information society is judged by the method it creates and deploys information in all the three sectors of the economy namely - Agriculture, Manufacturing and Services.”

In information society, knowledge forms a major component of any human activity as a major creative force and centre of economy. The developments in Information technologies have facilitated the access and utilisation of knowledge more effectively than before. The Information Technology is increasingly dependent on the creative management and distribution of information. Over the past decades the world has been experiencing vital changes in which the need to acquire, utilize and share knowledge has become increasingly essential. Now, in the new era, the age of knowledge and information is in its higher gear. This is an age when invisible knowledge and information take the role of prime movers leading the higher education in society. In a information and information-oriented society, creative brains become leaders of economy and knowledge workers are in great demand. The global changes particularly the Information Technologies have impact on the functioning of academic libraries. The developments in Information Technologies have changed the users' expectation from the academic libraries in different ways like –

- to create collection and services to the end users vary from the recent past practices.
- to satisfy the end-users demands effectively, the academic libraries need.
- to identify and adopt good practices and benchmarks.

Thus, preparing guidelines in a very standardized way based on the most effective practices used by libraries is important which is able to ultimately enhance the worth primarily based services of educational libraries. Libraries and information Technology Services for higher education institutions play a central role in enhancing the standard of educational and research atmosphere.

II. ROLE OF LIBRARIES

For the higher education in modern information society libraries have a new role and there are various kinds of library models, where the use of electronic services and Web-based information sources constantly increases, libraries are managed in a more democratic way, have more flexible communication system and work organization, and their services development is based on the quality and user-orientation of services. In the knowledge society for higher education libraries have a new role and there are various types of library models. These are as follows:

- traditional library as a memory institution
- library as a learning and research centre
- library as a cultural and communication centre
- electronic library
- digital library
- virtual library as library without walls

In the twenty first century, libraries have to perform pivotal roles in disseminating and sharing the culture of knowledge. In this age of knowledge libraries should be repositories of all of the knowledge and information accumulated by human kind to improve the higher education. They will have to store all types and forms of material and information and disseminate beyond the geographical boundaries.

III. OPPORTUNITIES IN LIBRARIES

Libraries and information Technology services are the goals of creating, disseminating, optimally utilizing and preserving knowledge. They are instrumental in transforming an unequal society into an egalitarian, progressive knowledge-based society. Libraries and Information Services (LIS) sector in India has got remarkable achievements. Efforts had been made to set up networks at local, regional and national level to deploy information and communication technologies and to create electronic information sources.

Besides INFLIBNET at the national level to support university and faculty libraries, a number of various national networks and various library networks have also been developed together with NICNET (National Informatics Centers Network), ERNET (Education and Research Network), CALIBNET (Calcutta Library Network), DELNET (Developing Library Network), etc. A number of educational institutions are members of such networks. These networks, particularly INFLIBNET and DELNET, are engaged in compiling union catalogs, creating numerous databases of experts, providing training

to library employees, ILL, on-line facilities, reference service, assistance in retrospective conversion.

IV. ROLE OF THE NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMISSION (NKC)

The NKC has included the Libraries as one of the concepts of knowledge paradigm -Access to Knowledge. Knowledge will impact the lives of standard individuals of India. NKC is conscious that knowledge is about students having access to quality education and jobs; scientists having access to laboratories; industry having access to skilled work force.

- to satisfy the goal of knowledge society, information poverty in India must be overcome. L & IS sector is committed to support the knowledge society by providing equitable high quality cost effective access to information and information resources to fulfill the institutional, educational, recreational and cultural needs of the community.

A key task during this initiative is to open doors to information, skills, imagination, and ideas available or accessible to the people. The libraries stand as a rich repository and resource. So it's the central objective of NKC to examine the present standards and services of the various kinds of libraries.

National information Commission is also formulating similar open access policies and tips for the higher education and R & D sectors to enhance access to research literature and disseminate.

V. ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT COUNCIL (NAAC)

The National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) try for quality and excellence in higher education and enhancing the role of Libraries and knowledge Technology Services in improving educational environment. It is institutional accreditation that the NAAC does, the assessment of a libraries, a vital sub-unit, is a key step that integrates itself with the overall evaluation. Libraries are the fulcrum of support for the entire range of academic activities on an educational campus. In today's high-tech learning environment, the libraries are taking up as a learning resource increasingly more academic space and time in the life of a learner. NAAC has decided to identify the set of best practices in Libraries & Information Technology Services, with the help of a few case presentations from few selected libraries of the accredited universities and colleges. In general, the utilization of technology and innovative ideas result in evolve best practices in library and information surroundings. The data on best practices have collected on a format developed by NAAC and presented them under the four broad areas.

A. Management and Administration of Library

Library and information Management System is the basic and core activity that helps the user community in

identifying and accessing knowledge resources in an educational institution. It also includes the activities performed in relation to the development of vision, mission, goals and policies of the library working hours, stock verification methods, copyright issues, membership, budgeting and reporting, resource mobilization, technical processing methods, manpower development, basic amenities and facilities as well as collection development management or information resources development, technical services, information services generation. It also concerns with strategic designing of LIS in present and future operations.

B. Collection and services

Collection Development / Management and Information Services Generation are two important interrelated functions that facilitate the provision of the right information to the right user at the right time and thereby conformance to the five laws of Library Science is ensured. However, collection or Information Sources Development should be based on sound policies and programs. Best practices in collection development would include a well-defined Collection Development/Management policy that ensures access to peer reviewed journals procured by individual and/or consortia approach as well as networked access to documents of all types available in other academic libraries.

C. Extent of use Services

The information sources and information explosion requires the libraries to play increasingly significant role in evaluating resources and educating the user. For a better and qualitative information service the academic libraries play significant role. They have built the users' trust in the academic library services and to get them to use the services to capture information once, and then share it across all relevant services to create information widely accessible, and to provide equal access to all.

D. Use of Information Technology

The impact of information Technology (IT) is gigantic and global in its magnitude. IT has become an integral part of all aspects of the library. IT has deeply affected library operations, information resources, services, and staff skills requirements and users expectations. IT has just about unlimited potential for kind of useful applications in libraries because it significantly contributes to improved quality, increased productivity, more efficient operations, better resource sharing and more effective services to the users. Library Services need to reach to the user desktops with the use of Technology. the implementation of Information Technology Tools are used in Libraries with the changes that are taking place in the Information Technology applications. Libraries are encouraged to help in adding value to the existing practices or add new practices that they are adopting for the end user benefit in providing new and improved services. A database of the

documented practices will be available in NAAC website and regular updating will be made with consultations on contributing institutions. The best practices all have mentioned might be in practice in many institutions. We have mentioned the name of one contact for further details as it was submitted to us by that particular institution.. We do hope that the outlined practices may serve as one of the ways to strengthen the Libraries and Information Technology Services of academic libraries.

VI. CONCLUSION

Academic Libraries play a unprecedented role in educating and empowering citizens. They help individuals and Knowledge society to become more knowledgeable, aware and imaginative. At the center of the drive towards global sharing, libraries transcend economic and social disparities. Institutional libraries are thus playing a vital role in crossing the borders, the key to opening all gateways to knowledge. A true hub, libraries seamlessly incorporate information technology. The acquisition of knowledge has therefore been the thrust area throughout the world. The economy of present times depends no longer on visible resources and capital goods but on invisible knowledge and information therefore, poor nations as well as poor people will produce wealth through active contacts and use of knowledge and information. Libraries of the twenty first century will facilitate fight economic condition and narrow the gap between rich and poor. For the first time in history poor have gotten chance to enhance their wealth through the creation and use of data.

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