

## CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARY IN 21ST CENTURY

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**ABSTRACT:** - *Traditional concept of a library is becoming obsolete with the emergence of new “digital” means of storing and disseminating information on Internet. Social media has gradually adopted into libraries’ environment. Library also engraves role of librarians as relevant as other information providers, who start delivering experiences that meet the expectation of the modern user in the information-rich world. Libraries have started to use Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools to interact with their patrons on real time. The advent of technology has made the libraries to add new things to its collection. With the rapid development of electronic publishing, libraries are not only acquiring reading materials such as printed books and journals but also arranging for providing access to various learning resources in electronic form. In the present scenario libraries are making themselves to introduce several e-resource sand e-services like E-books, E-journals, E-Databases, CDs/DVDs, E-Conference Proceedings, E-Reports, E-Maps, E-Pictures/Photographs, E-Manuscripts, E-Theses, E-Newspaper, Internet/Websites-Listserves, Newsgroups, Subject Gateways, E-Document Delivery Service, USENET, FAQs etc. Due to that, traditional form of the roles as well as the services provided by librarians is being transformed into modern and advanced roles and services in 21st century.*

**KEY WORDS – Information Communication Technology, Cyber Library, Social Networking, Five Laws of Library Science**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries have undergone major structural change in term their collection, organization and services. Libraries have merged into information system that does not even require a building. Fast

development in computer, telecommunication and other technologies have made it possible to store and retrieve information in different forms and from any place developments in the technology have also revolutionized library into a knowledge centre. Library is a trinity of book, staff and

reader. In 21st century role of libraries in terms of these three factors has changed.

In 21st century, anybody can access their library any time any place in the form of e-content/digital collection. Library is a means of access to information and ideas and works of information. Perception of the users towards library has changed but the importance of library remains still in another mode. The term digital library and virtual library started to refer to access vast collection of information on Internet, cable television and various remote electronic connections. Muteshewa (2004) reveals that traditional libraries stored different types of information resources in different formats in buildings. Various tools and guides to locate these resources were available only when a patron physically visited the library. The situation has now changed and access to these guides has become paramount. He asserted that with the advent of computers and telecommunication technologies, libraries and information services can provide access to these resources through work-stations like PCs and Terminals that are in patron's offices, as well as in the Library.1, 2

In the present environment a student with his/her own computer can go directly to on-line services to locate, order and receive a copy of an article without ever leaving his/her home. Changing environment and changing demands of

information seekers is being adopted by libraries in their collection, functions and services.3, 4

## 2. CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARIES

- Now users are able to access information, bibliographic database and even primary sources (Journals, Conference Proceedings, Reports, Patents etc.) wherever they are located without country barrier and without visiting a library.
- Research scholars desire a small enclosed room with electrical outlets and internet connections for their laptop and other device. This environment encourages learning and research activities which result innovative and creative expression in their research work. Ellis and **Oldman (2005)** note that through the use of electronic resources, researchers and students now have access to global information resources for their scholarly intercourse.5
- In the age of ICT, electronic devices provide information which helps to reduce the bulk of printed material, thus changing environment of library plays a significant role in making library and society paperless in future.
- User can access any information with less human interaction easily and rapidly.
- Public library plays an important role worldwide in helping to bridge the information gap by providing free access to information and communication technology.

- Information seekers have greater freedom to conduct much of their information seeking online.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. FACTORS FOR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT OF LIBRARY**

#### **3.1 INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

In the age of science and technology, and with the innovation of Information Communication Technology (ICT), the world has changed into global village. ICT revolution has made transfer of information from one place to another place easy and accessible from any corner of the globe with the help of computer networks. ICT has impacted on every sphere of academic library activity especially in the form of library collection development strategies, library building and consortia. ICT presents an opportunity to provide value-added information services and access to a wide variety of digital based information resources to their clients. Furthermore, academic libraries are also using ICTs to automate their core functions, implement efficient and effective library cooperation and resource sharing networks, implement Management Information Systems, develop institutional repositories of digital local contents, and digital libraries and initiate ICT based Capacity Building Programmes for library users.<sup>7</sup>

#### **3.2 DIGITAL AND VIRTUAL LIBRARY**

More preference is given towards the development of digital and virtual library, which are responsible for changing traditional nature of library. Users are taking the piece of information relating to any field of study.

#### **3.3 MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS OF CYBER LIBRARY**

Another major factor for the responsible of vast changes in library is the growth of various cyber libraries. Several cyber libraries are established for retrieving information of related subject areas in India. Some examples of Cyber Library are given below:

3.4.1 BHU Cyber Library, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh: It was started in November 2013. It provides facility for accessing e-resources.

3.4.2 Social Science Cyber Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (India): It was established in December 2013. Social science cyber library brings all open access resources in form of e-books, e-journals, video lectures, subject gateways, databases and useful websites etc. in the field of social sciences at one place, so that students, research scholars and faculty members belonging to various disciplines of social sciences may make optimum use of them.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.5 SOCIAL NETWORKING /MEDIA

- Social networking is an evolutionary development of online participation where people of common interest communicate, share and contribute content on social cyber space. It is viable tool for cooperation and sharing knowledge in an open access platform. Social networking is a new way of providing library services through new Internet technologies with emphasis on user centered two-way interaction and communication of information. It is new model of online services that encourages an increased flow of information from library to users and from users back to library.

- Social networking sites are constantly promoting open access to knowledge, information resources are available to users without any cost and it does not require authentication or payments. It is a model that presents free access to publications. In an open access platform, users are not charged for access to articles or other resources and are free to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to full text of these resources provided they do not violate copyright rules, Budapest Open Access Initiative 2002. There are some social networking sites like BLOG, WIKIS, LINKEDIN, TWITTER, YOUTUBE, FACEBOOK etc.9

- Now major percentage of total population of India is involving themselves in using various Mobile applications for disseminating information

among their groups. Such as WHATSAPP, SKYPE, VIBER, VSee, HIKE etc.

### 3.6 CHANGING BEHAVIOR OF USER COMMUNITY

Perception of user community is also an important factor for changing role of library. There are various studies were done with particular attention given to the perception and preferences of user and faculty. Strouse (2004) shows that users (especially younger users) have developed a clear preference for receiving information in electronic formats. Liew, Foo, and Chennupati (2000) conducted a survey of 83 graduate students to study their use and perceptions of electronic journals. They found that a vast majority of graduate students (73%) prefer electronic journals over print journals. Commonly cited reasons include links to additional resources, searching capability, currency, availability, and ease of access. Sathe, Grady, and Giuse (2002) reported that fellows, students, and residents favor electronic journals and faculty prefers print journals. Ease of access, ease of printing, and ease of searching are the most commonly cited reasons for preferring electronic journals.10

### 4. CHALLENGES FOR CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARY

- Traditional mode of library has changed. Card catalogue an important source for seeking entry of library collection, now has less

importance as library puts its collections online and users do not want to waste their time to locate a piece of information by using these card catalogues. Now users prefer Internet as a way of seeking information.

- Periodical section is declined steadily and library provides access of more e-journal; libraries have converted periodicals rooms into group study rooms and cafes.
- Maintenance culture is seriously lacking in most institution in developing countries. Few available technologies are in better condition that may not support remote access to information.
- Low supply of electricity discourages people from participating in online form.
- Most librarians lack 21st century skills that could be required to adopt the technology for effective library services.
- Free access to information where people copy, paste and edit without acknowledging the authority is a serious challenge to copyright management.
- The new Mobile devices are changing the way information is delivered and accessed. Academic libraries are challenged to cope with this phase of information dissemination and access.

## 5. CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARIANS

Modern concept of library is also strongly affecting the roles of librarians. Now librarians

have to require better skills to meet the growing needs of their users and for better service delivery.

Some of skills are as follows:

5.1 Awareness of E-Services – Librarians should have skill to impart information about e-services and make their users aware form the use of different e-services.

5.2 Expert Search –21st century librarians should be an expert in web navigation; able to find the demands of the potential library users with common interest. Librarians should follow public conversations, posts, updates, and events of these key individuals, and pro-actively offer advice, resources, and help. They should act as an active participant of social space and be able to identify the needs of the members of library communities and prefer solutions by offering information, links to the websites that are relevant to their information needs and even direct offers of help.

5.3 Contact Management – Librarians should cross-link people and ideas among large groups of different areas.

5.4 Context Awareness – Librarians should be able to diversify knowledge and able to link information to people's profiles.<sup>10</sup>

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS TO FACE THE CHALLENGES

6.1 Embracing current change in order to remain relevant and adapt to new ICT driven environment.

6.2 Continuing education programme for librarians to acquire 21st century skill to adapt to changing ICT environment.

6.3 Educating user on issue of copy right law and violation.

6.4 There is a few methods in practice to preserve digital information, one method is full back-ups and particulate training maintains off line and mirroring.

## 7. FULFILLMENT OF FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

Importance of five laws of library science given by father of library science Dr. S.R. Ranganathan still valid in twenty first century.

Laws of Library Science	Web Application
Books are for use.	This law emphasises that the books are not for keeping in lock and key but for use. Now there is less need of any library location/hour/furniture because now documents are available in e-content or digital object. e.g. <b>National Repository of Open Educational Resources, Directory of Open Access Journals</b> etc.
Every reader his/her book.	Now this is the time of the concept of library without wall. Each user has freedom and opportunity to have access any document by using digital, virtual library via Internet. e.g. <b>Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), National E-Library</b> etc.

Every book its reader.	This law is fully applicable using hyperlink of webpage/document on Internet.
Save the time of user.	This law recommends best Internet connectivity, high data transfer speed and high quality devices like <b>INFLIBNET, DELNET, MALIBNET</b> etc.
Library is a growing organism.	Library as an institution has all the attributes of growing organism. Important advantage of the new technologies is to make available unlimited collections at a small place and a large number of users can use it easily.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Libraries are using talent, technology and trends to make their services popular and user-friendly. The concept of a library as physical form where one can visit to get information is rapidly changing to a social cyberspace where user access and communicate to existing knowledge. Twenty four-hour online bookshops can provide reference services as well as information to the global information user. In this era digital library facilities are able to satisfy the ever-changing needs and demands of the patrons. At the same we are losing the importance of manual library. It can also be found that there are various major initiatives being taking for modernizing the services and sources of library to fulfill the satisfaction of patron in the information technology-oriented world.

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