CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARIANS IN ICT ERA: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT: - *The advancement of Information, Communication and Technology has brought a lot of changes not only on the library and information services but also on the roles and expectations of the librarians and information professionals. With the global shift from storing the information to knowledge era, the tents of library profession have also changed. The Increasing and multidimensional user demands are forcing today's librarians towards change. Librarians have to adapt various skills to perform new age librarian's job. This paper represents ICT and changing role of librarians and also focuses on the trends, opportunities and challenges.*

KEYWORDS: Changing role, Environment, ICT, Librarianship Skills, etc.

1. Introduction:

The aim of traditional libraries' was to select, collect and disseminate knowledge. At earliest books were kept in storehouse and were tied with iron ropes. At that time these books were only for kings and related peoples only. These books were not for common people. After long time and great efforts of various people books and libraries were opened for common people. After invention of printing technology and industrial revolution made significant change in this scenario. Now a days information has became a commodity. This is due to information and communication technology.

Present age is called as information technology age. Information is growing at an exponential rate. Information is available in various formats, especially in form of digital media. Information is available from every where and at less time. Computer and internet has made revolution in every field. We can search for anything, any information at the tip of figure. This stage is called as information explosion. This era of information and communication technology has also effect on library profession. Information technology is important factor in the rapidly changing relationship between user and information. Traditional libraries are changing

due to which role of librarians is also changing. ICT has great impact on changing role of librarian.

2. Librarianship:

"Librarianship is a noble profession. A librarian derives his joy by seeing the dawn of joy in the face of readers, helped by him to find the right book at right time" (Dr.S.R. Ranganathan). Traditional librarianship is all about sitting down in the midst of books and expecting people to come and read. If they do not come, then, the librarian closes at the end of the day. This is the daily ritual. But a modern-day librarian in the Digital Age must be sound in the storage, retrieval and dissemination of information with the aid of information communication technology (ICT). This may be through computer, internet, E-mail, CD-ROM, slides, teaching aids, telephones, including the global system of mobile telecommunications (GSM), fax machines, etc.

3. Information and Communication Technology (ICT):

Every field including libraries are facing challenge by the rapid growing new information and communication technologies (ICT) like computer, internet, telecommunication, multimedia, world wide web, digitization, virtual technologies etc. The 21st century is marked by the advent of ICT including internet, multimedia. Communication is basic in education field .Multimedia is one such visual aid which plays important role in teaching and learning. Multimedia means use of computers as communication aid for teaching and learning through interactive mix of graphics, video, text and audio. Internet is a world wide network of computer networks that contains a vast collection of information and resources. It forms greatest source of information accessible anywhere.

4. Need to Change the Role of Librarians:

A survey published by Special Libraries Association (SLA) in 1998 found that, although our roles are indeed changing, "librarians foresee their role evolving to that of consultant and planner, where they facilitate the delivery of end user information through corporate network."

As we saw earlier those traditional libraries were store house of knowledge and librarians were acting as care taker of that knowledge. But due technological changes and growing information and increasing user demands role of librarians need to be changed.

Following are some reasons to change the role of librarians

1. Fast changing and multi dimensional user demands.
2. Increased awareness among users of library.
3. Computer and telecommunication technology invention.
4. Internet and mobile technology advancement.
5. Thrust for the 'BEST'

6. Changing virtual environment.

7. Expectations of apex bodies like NAAC. AICTE, NBA etc.

8. Information explosion.

9. Technology available at fingertips.

10. Competition in local and global market.

5. Changing Role of Librarians:

In this age of information technology, there are so many opportunities for us for involvement in ICT based society including electronic and multimedia publishing, computerization, internet based services, global networking and digital resources etc. Acquiring and providing dependable access to electronic resources require librarians to learn and apply new skills.

6. The Changing Environment:

The traditional information access and management roles played by the information professions are expanding, particularly in design and development of new information products and services, tools to support information seeking and selection. Computer, World Wide Web, internet, telecommunication has great impact on librarians work. ICT has driven the development of new ways in information collection, storage and retrieval. In this era librarian should acquire new skills. Role of librarian is totally changed in ICT era. Traditional librarians are now working as

information officers, information specialists, documentation officer, e-resource expert, end user trainer etc.

7. Skills Required For Librarians In ICT Era:

New age requires some special skills which are listed below

7.1. General skills:

a. Communication skills

b. Flexibility

c. Adaptability

d. Self confidence

e. Creativity

d. Innovation

e. Problem solving

f. Decision making

g. Customer relationship

h. Presentation skills

j. Time management

7.2. Managerial skills:

a. Local and global thinking

b. Planning and organization

c. Financial Management

d. Change management

e. Leadership

f. Consumer management

g. Project management

h. Resource management

7.3. Professional Skills:

a. Information technology skills:

    i. Hardware, software and networking skills

    ii. Presentation skills

    iii. Library automation

    iv. Database creation

    v. Internet use

    vi. Scanning technique

    vii. Content management

    viii. Digitization

    ix. Web based services

b. Information literacy

c. Information resource management

d. E resource management

e. Knowledge management.

8. Advantages of ICT era:

1. Helps in preserving valuable, rare and special collections.
2. Faster access to resources of libraries.
3. Worldwide communication.
4. Search optimization.
5. Online learning environment
6. Time saving

9. Disadvantages of ICT era:

1. Costly
2. Technology dependent
3. Trained manpower
4. User education and training

10. Conclusion:

In this technology driven ICT era librarians and his team has to play important role as they have to satisfy the multidimensional information needs of users. They have to use those technological tools in which users are comfortable. There is need to equip them with emerging skills. They should have knowledge about ICT as well as its actual application. Modern librarianship has become highly specialized job which requires positive attitude towards change and technological up gradation.

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