

“DIGITAL LIBRARY IN INDIAN EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC CHALLENGES”

K. S. Katenahalli

Assistant Librarian, VijayanagaraSrikreshnadevara University Ballari, P G Centre Yelburga,
Koppal (district) (583236), Mail: kishorkatenahalli@gmail.com

Abstract:

The Corona virus pandemic has dramatically remodelled and transformed the education sector into a digital learning hub due to the closure of educational institutions globally. Possessing adequate digital literacy skills and embracing web-based techniques are the only means to ensure continuity in the process of teaching and learning. The purpose of this paper is to show the positive influence of Covid-19 pandemic in molding librarians into tech savvy library professionals in enhancing their digital knowledge and in upliftment of their IT skills. The libraries of those institutions also play a vital role in acquiring and disseminating information for academic and research activities. Digital libraries are a way of making educational and research data and information available to faculty, researchers, students, and others at the institutions and worldwide.

Key words: covid-19, pandemic, digital, library and information science, education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential resource or commodity that any human being possesses, though in different degrees and types. Education is acquired through learning at home, school and the environment. It can be said to be a moment by moment or every day experiences that are acquired, stored in the brain and used/applied as the need arises. Education should be a worthwhile endeavour that prepares life for now and for the future.

Education is as old as man on planet earth. It is either formal or informal type of education. Assessment in education means the same with evaluation. God educated Adam and Eve on what shall be their food and what plants shall constitute food items for other lower creatures under Adam's care. The Israelites (Hebrews) built schools to educate their children in places like Samaria, and other 6 locations. The Sumerians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Greek, Chinese, Romans contributed much in the development of education in the distant past. Today, formal education is known in almost all the countries of the world and it is one of the rights of all persons to have it.

The present day information systems (digital libraries) play a catalytic role in realizing a knowledge society and consequently these have been debated ranging from their development to the recent trends. However, growth and use of the digital libraries lies in the orientation for digital library education in the institutions offering the Library and Information Science courses.

Library is considered as the power house of knowledge and library professionals play a great role in attending to the information needs of the users. The intrusion of Covid-19 pandemic

has completely turned the world upside-down disrupting the normal way of life. With the closing down of the educational institutions across the globe, the library patrons have been facing great hardships as they are unable to access the library for their information requirements.

The pandemic has dramatically remodelled and transformed the education sector into a digital learning hub. Going digital and adapting the latest ICT applications was the only solution to contend with the pandemic situation. The pandemic has given a wide range of opportunities for the librarians to upgrade their digital literacy skills in order to provide the finest services to the library patrons during the Covid-19 pandemic era.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- ❖ To identify the importance of digital literacy in education
- ❖ To understand the various challenges of using digital library skills in the present covid-19 era

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The study carried out under the subject is based on secondary data. The methodology adopted to carry out the study is described below.

Secondary data has been collected from published reports and other data source from various authentic websites such, the search of the websites was conducted during 18 September 2020 to 27 September 2020. This survey studied all the 23 IIT libraries listed in the webpage of Department of Higher Education, Government of India. ("Dept of HE Govt of India,"). Broadly this study uses the method of investigation of the websites to find out the responses of the libraries of the premier technological institutes of India to COVID -19.

Theoretical observation of digital library and traditional library

Information and communication technology (ICT) could change individuals' lifestyle in the short time form advent. One of areas that accepted large amount of changes is education. ICT's role in learning cycle is so important. In old form of education, people should study and write consistently and approximately the total flow of education is unilateral. By applying ICT in education, in addition to basic skills, individuals need ICT usage skills too. Learning based on new information technologies, with fundamental changes in the traditional education

The services rendered by traditional library are those of collection, selection, acquisition, organizing, storage, dissemination, conservation, preservation, etc of library collections or materials. Much physical space is required for the traditional library services to offer meaningful services to its customers. Much man-power is needed to run the different units of the traditional library. Its operations are manually based and a few aspects are electronic based.

Digital library services are similar to those of traditional libraries. The difference is that, digital collections are in digital forms. The services are technologically driven. Less space is required for the users to occupy and access it services. Digital library materials can be access from anywhere on the globe provided electricity and network are available. Computers are the

means to deliver digital services to its users unlike in the traditional library services where human labour is vital in its operations.

Libraries and Education Generally libraries, both traditional and digital one have three roles in education: place for sharing reach information, maintaining ideas, and give awareness to bring together individual with learning aims. Primary purpose of each library is supporting, facilitating, and expanding formal education in mother organization. Next step is to supporting informal education. Resources in libraries are collected to support learning. Digital libraries provide immediate access to a wide range of sources not exist physically, in a comparison with traditional libraries that are limited to place and time. Digital libraries without physical obstacles can provide resources via an internet connection each moment from each place. Because of these advantages, in digital libraries learning is independent process. Digital libraries provide appropriate opportunities for learners, because of including upto-date information. Collecting multimedia resources made it possible to remote learning. Digital libraries by storing and feasible retrieve of educational resources from computer networks provided worth aid to electronic and networked learning. Without existence of organized and retained electronic resources by digital libraries, accessibility to up-to-date e-Learning resources is impossible

Digital Libraries and Higher Education

Over the centuries, libraries have been the keepers and distributors of books, journals, maps and other materials that are used by students in the learning process. They have also been the legal deposit of part of the products of scholarly publications – theses & dissertations, articles, technical reports, etc. In general, students have been patrons of the libraries of their institutions. In order to make more contents available and thus benefit students and faculty, pools of institutions have engaged in commuting items and/or their copies. There is no reason for digital libraries not to have the same functions of traditional libraries, except that they can add functions and value due to their digital and networked nature.

From providing traditional library services to going digital to provide e-services to the library clientele in the covid-19 pandemic and lockdown period, the librarians had to go through a lot of training in order to upgrade their digital literacy skills.

- ✓ E-learning platforms such as MOOCs, Swayam, Swayam Prabha, NPTEL, Vidwan, Shodhganga, E-Shodhsindhu, National Digital Library, N-LIST Consortium have benefited the library professionals to learn and enhance their knowledge.
- ✓ Increasing use of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp,, LinkedIn, YouTube, Telegram, Clubhouse to connect and communicate with the patrons.
- ✓ Apart from social networking sites, conducting webinars on various topics, blogging, , updating library website, uploading YouTube videos were some of the approaches adopted in order to keep the users updated about the latest services, trends and practices.
- ✓ Educating users about NDLI, Utilizing the library E-resources including N-LIST Eresources in satisfying the information needs of the users, there by leading to excessive use of library E-resources during the pandemic.

Digital literacy is a great tool for advancement especially in the Covid -19 pandemic eras. Working, teaching and learning from home was forced upon the society to be safe and avoid the spread of the dangerous life-taking Corona virus. At this crucial period social networking sites created a pathway for communication. It helps the library professionals to develop a collaborative network with the library clientele. Social networking sites have made possible creating, connecting, conversing, contributing and sharing information a much simpler and quicker process.

Numerous e-learning platforms , e-databases and e-resources aided in enhancing the knowledge of the librarians who in turn were more efficient in satisfying information seeking behaviour of the library patrons. Upgrading digital literacy skills was mandatory for all the library professionals to work efficiently and provide the library services effectively at the time of Covid-19 pandemic where anything and everything was only possible on a digital platform.

Solving Challenges in Digital Library Education in covid-19 pandemic era.

Revamp facilities, revisit curricula to educate and train professionals competent enough to meet and surpass the market demands. Training should focus on skills, talents, knowledge resourcefulness and dissemination of information.

The education: (i). Should be professional type.(ii). That meets the present challenges and developments and trends in ICT. (iii). that is very useful to the society. (iv). that transforms the professional. (v). to make one to continue to stay in service. (vi). programme that is competitive and relevant to the needs of the work place and market place. (vii). that plays practical role in preparing human resources for managing knowledge resources for the society. (viii). that educates and train students for managing information and knowledge resources in other sectors of economy other than the library.

The study recommended from the following challenges to resolve/ provide appropriate skill to development of digital library in education system

- i. Providing students with complete knowledge on digitalization
- ii. Making students develop skills in digitalization
- iii. Enabling students evaluate software and using internet
- iv. Enabling students acquire skills to provide library services in digital form as in the traditional libraries.
- v. Based curriculum on digitalization
- vi. Provision of competent faculty
- vii. Instructional technology support
- viii. Learning resources (in the form of print, electronic and web-based materials)
- ix. Continuing education programmes, system of continuous evaluation, adequate financial support from the sponsoring bodies.
- x. Knowledge and skills to manage the shift in the goals of the library and the view of the changes in information storage and delivery mechanisms.

The Key Suggestions the study:

The author suggested basic development of digital libraries through providing significance basic need of library is faculty hence fulfil the entire digital library in education process. The faculty quality describe from the following

Faculty

Specialized faculty for Digital Library Education programme should come from Management, ICT, Psychology /Education, Media studies, LIS and etc. Train, Competent and Committed faculty will deliver the goals. Excellence is measured in terms of faculty, curriculum, learning resources and the students. Each area should be developed, cared for and bring to a level "where their synergy results in high quality education". Give more attention to teachers because they are the critical resources responsible for developing the curriculum, learning resources and the students. There should be no room for weak, lazy teachers and sympathy employment.

Conclusion:

The outbreak of Corona virus has completely transformed the education sector into a digital learning hub. Possessing adequate digital literacy skills and embracing web-based techniques were the only means to ensure continuity in the process of teaching and learning. Living in this digital era it is very important that the library professionals have adequate digital literacy skills to serve the user community efficiently. Social networking sites played a pivotal role in reaching out to the library patrons and satisfying their information needs.

Digital libraries and digitization are crucial for disseminating and preserving knowledge. Digital library activities are gathering momentum in developing countries, especially India. Since most higher education and research institutions in India are funded and controlled by the central and state governments, clear-cut national plans and policies are needed for infrastructure, standards, metadata, interoperability, multi-lingual databases, training, co-ordination, copyright, and archiving and preservation methods, so that our heritage of knowledge and culture can the ravages of time and present and future generations can benefit and be guided by them.

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