"ROLE OF LIBRARY STAFF DURING COVID - 19 PANDEMIC TO ENGAGE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE OF USERS IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES"

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Abstract:

This paper highlights the role of library professionals in college libraries during the covid-19 pandemic situation. Library professionals are representing complete user community of on institution so that this is tough time for professionals because they had more responsibilities to engage academic excellence of their users. Library staff must show their expertise, experience by adopting new skills, ideas to support entire user community for their academic needs. Of course this study will help our professionals to upgrade their skills and to meet both users and employers expectations.

Key Words: College Libraries, Role of Libraries, Remote Services, Virtual Services, COVID-19

Introduction

We Indians remember the year 2020 as "VISION 2020" that was the dream quote given by our former people president Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam Sir, but unfortunately now the year 2020 was negatively remembered by whole world as the year of novel corona virus that is COVID-19. It's widespread across the world and the outbreak of this was made helpless to people and governments too. COVID 19 badly impacted global economy, healthcare system, education, cultural, business and so on. Millions of people infected job losses, closures of business, many times universities have changed the academic calendars' and still they are revising the same. To stop spread of hidden enemy called Corona virus worldwide governments declared lockdown followed by a shift to work from home and online learning.

Due to the pandemic the physical library systems was closed because online learning was started from school to college going students and researchers also. In this situation the role of college libraries and library professionals are most important to serve their respective user community, using through proper digital platform to meet users' academic fineness.

Objectives

- To recap the various challenges of Library Professionals.
- Find out the ways to overcome with challenges in this pandemic situation like COVID 19.
- To explore available types of facilities and services provided during the pandemic
- To explore mode of dissemination of services during this period.

- To provide the detailed list of E-learning platforms available around the world.
- Ad hoc services introduced
- To recommend the ways to manage this type of situation.

Literature Review

Bhatia and Kumar (2020) emphasizes on their study role of library professionals during pandemic time. Regarding the services they can offer to users to meet their academic needs. Authors explored the available online portal for information and learning process. Researcher helped the professionals to improve their skills and provide better service to respective users. Deol and Brar (2021) highlighted the role of libraries and professionals who can provide the relevant information to their users through various online and web sources. They expressed our professionals performing social role along with formal library role. Dadhe and Dubey (2020) explored the different services offered by Indian Institute of Technology and the study based on the contents published on their respective webpages. Researchers tried to find out how technology plays an important role in premier institution like IITs. Ma (2020) gave a brief note on Covid -19 situations in Hon Kong and author also highlighted the major services provided by CUHK Library during this pandemic.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Study mainly focused on college libraries offering services both UG and PG staff/students.

Traditional Role of Libraries and Library Professionals

- Acquiring, managing, preserving content
- Access and discoverability, contract negotiation
- Information and knowledge management
- Convergence with archivists and record managers
- Information services, sources and products
- Information literacy education

In addition to the above traditional roles of libraries and library professional are "converted from conservator of data to facilitator of knowledge in an effective manner. The predominant vital capabilities of library professionals are to the identity of problem, to select, to procure, to organize, to preserve, and disseminate information. Immediate response must take place in all of the above noted areas. It is a great challenge for library professionals to remain at the frontline of the profession to serve the user community.

Challenges for libraries and library professionals during pandemic

The entire world is facing different challenges during the pandemic, libraries and library professionals are not out of these situations. Libraries are the service offering organizations and millions of users were depended directly or indirectly on library services for these reason maybe

libraries and library professionals were facing more challenges than others the following are the few challenges faced by college libraries and library professionals during this medical emergency.

- ✓ Which are the services to offer and how?
- ✓ Due to the lockdown entire human community is mentally disturbed for different reasons. This is the biggest challenges for library professionals to takeout user community from this condition and engages them into healthy academic environment.
- ✓ Traditional libraries are closed but at the same time online classes were started, staff and students are asking information for their academic requirement.
- ✓ Even if libraries are open for users following government guidelines like social distancing, ensuring supply of sanitiser, keeping surface clean including computers is a difficult task.

How college library professionals overcome this situation to serve user community.

Whoever facing the bad situation one day they must overcome with that condition and fight back using his/her strength. Libraries and library professionals also did the same they strongly decided to provide services to respective users as per their requirements. Our dedicated professionals are strongly committed to serve the society to engage users for academic excellence. Many of the professionals are achieved the goals.

- ✓ The primary objective of the library professionals are to provide the curriculum based information so that, our professionals need to create digital libraries or if not at least digital platforms to provide academic resources related services to the users. (Blogs, www.Box.com and so on…)
- ✓ List out websites which where we can download eBooks without paying any thing or without registration. (NDLI, Book Boon, PDFdrive, Z-library)
- ✓ Whenever possible download the eBooks as per particular university syllabus, make it available same books using digital libraries of digital platform.
- ✓ Create the social networking groups like whatsapp, telegram preferably class wise and provide the same information to users. Ask teachers to provide study materials related to their respective subjects and upload the same to respective digital platforms/libraries.
- ✓ By approaching management handle the class at least an hour per week. in the library hour class guide the users in the following areas
  - o First give orientation about available resources to access from home for user's academic needs.
  - o If any subscribed e-resources are IP based ask the publishers to make password basis and share the same to respective users.
  - o Provide online hands on training on how to access the available e-resources.
  - o Conduct online quizzes, Mock test for SET/NET using Google forms, both staff and students are happy with this type of services.
  - o If the institute is offering PG courses then provide hands-on training on referencing tools like Mendeley, Zotero.

- o Provide research related information like how to design a structured questionnaire, how to write & publish scientific paper, which are steps involved in this process.
- o Provide placement related information to users like new job openings in state and national levels.
- o Ask users what they are expecting from library in this pandemic time to engage themselves for academic excellence.

Few Digital Platforms for Hassle free Information Access

During the pandemic situation to satisfy user academic needs few digital platforms which our professionals can provide same information to respective users.

National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is a initiatives of Ministry of Education, Government of India for its National Mission on Education. NDLI provides metadata contents for all academic levels including school students to researchers of all disciplines and in most of the widely used Indian languages, to empower people to learn and prepare from best practices from all over the world. (*National Digital Library of India*, n.d.) NDLI also had taken the national subscription of world eBook Library and South Asian Archives without paying but users need to fulfill simple registration process.

Karnataka Digital Public Library (https://www.karnatakadigitalpubliclibrary.org) is government of Karnataka initiatives. More than 1.63 crores of books are digitized, over 92 lakh people download the app using google play store. Good number of academic books, competitive examinations books, novels are available. Registration is mandatory to access the same resources.

e-PG Patashala (https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in) is an initiative of the MHRD under its National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT) being executed by the UGC. Quality content is the key component of all education system. e-PG Patashala website provides quality e-content in 70 different subjects covering all disciplines"(*E-PGPathshala*, n.d.) Users can access more than 22000modules both text and video format. Users can also participate in the quiz given in same website for 20 marks to know about knowledge on respective subject. Important thing is that registration is not required to access information from ePG Patashala website.

Shodhganga (https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/#) provides a digital platform for researchers to submit a copy of Ph.D. theses and the same is available for scholarly community free of cost. It hosts more than 3 lakhs of theses and more than 8000 of synopses. It has signed for MoU with more than 590 universities across the nation and 476 universities started contribute to the same. Our professionals should create awareness about the available free resources and provide hands on training for users to utilize the same.

Conclusion:

Library professionals job is service oriented job this pandemic was created on opportunity to serve our best to the academic community. Almost two years back this novel corona virus was widespread across the world but even today it's very difficult say when it will end. We learnt a lot how to provide best services in this type of emergency situation by exploring and using all

possibilities. Covid-19 created a chance for college/academic librarians to reframe their roles and core values for supporting and engaging academic excellence of users. Hope our professionals will do well to meet both users and employers expectations.

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