

ROLE OF NEW MEDIA IN DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN LIBRARIES

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Abstract:

New media or computers started creeping in the Indian Society around 1986. Thus, it is definitely proving to be a significant technological revolution dawning an era of e-generation. As an agent of immense change it is the opted tool for greater specialization in curriculum through experiential learning and has broken the barriers of traditional media which confined to just providing content without allowing the readers or viewers from participation. It has revamped the educational world through content sharing and constant updating and upgrading of the information creating sweeping changes in the learning process. Today we can witness a drastic shift in learning which had confined to classrooms and library to the world of technology. No doubt the electronic era of the 21st century has brought changes to the library services and also particularly in India. The libraries in India have been challenged like never before to render more pro-active and more value added services to meet the ever changing needs of the patrons. Due to revolutions libraries have witnessed the changes and from the traditional practices libraries are shifting to automated libraries. Thus, the present paper is therefore, an attempt to study the new media's role in development of Indian libraries.

Keywords: New media, e-generation, technologies, development, library, public library, academic library, library services.

Introduction

The technological advancement i.e. the emergence of new media in the latter part of 20th century is the fusion of traditional media with the computer technology and has bombarded the education sector with expansive information and data. Presently India is riding high on new media which has ushered with new range of opportunities and with its immense potentiality it is expected to bridge the gap created by the traditional media.

Libraries were established in ancient India mainly by the patronage extended by emperors, major capitalists, and scholars. (Joshi and Panda, 1989, pp. 60-72) evaluate the services of technical libraries and pointed out the need for trained manpower, more efficient management and introduction of computer based library systems and services.

In the recent years a number of changes have taken place in libraries such as expand of Web-based services, changes in libraries', appraisal of education, knowledge and skills, etc. The Websites for libraries are essential in today's environment as it supports library services in a better way. (Balas, 2000, pp. 56-59) discusses some of the issues involved in designing the Websites for libraries, including: moving from print design to web design, the use of tools available online, etc. Similar views are expressed by (Jeevans, 2000, pp. 169-177). Library online tools and Websites are one of the most and important services made today. More or

less social media has gradually crept into the library with social sites such as Facebook, MySpace, You Tube, Flickr, Library Thing, etc. Hence, through this media, strategies for the enhancement of library services have been proffered (Chauhan, 2013).

The Information Technology has made its impact on the academic library in recent years in India. Modern academic libraries are conglomeration of printed books and journals as well as electronic resources (e-resources) where both forms of the documents can be stored, retrieved and delivered as when required. The reference service is one of the library's primary services besides acquisitions, classification, cataloguing and physical planning. Kumar et al. (2010) present the shifting of academic libraries from the traditional form to networked information services. The library can offer special services through the blogs. They describe the types of blogs, blogs for library. They speak on, how blogs can be used for extending the library services and support dedicated users.

The library services are redefined with changing Information Technology environment. Communication, resources sharing among other libraries become easy. (Chopra and Mukherjee, 2000, pp. 49-51) trace the need of networking among academic libraries by pointing out its basic targets. This highlights the situation of networking among the academic libraries of Jabalpur, India, before and after 1995. (Sridhar, 2000, pp. 28-41) explains the purpose of modernization of library services through the introduction of information technology (IT) and indicates the unlimited potential of IT for modernizing the library services. To modernize the libraries, information professionals are adapting technologies as well as to satisfy user's expectations from libraries. Therefore, the libraries need to proactively embrace the new technologies and face the challenges for better services delivery.

Growth and Development of Indian Libraries:

In sixth century A.D there were many well-developed libraries and even the Mughal period gave a further stimulus to the growth of libraries. The names of Maharaja Sawai Man Singh of Jaipur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab are remembered with appreciation in the history of library services in India.

In 1808, the Government of Bombay proposed to register libraries, which were to be given copies of books published from the "funds for the encouragement of literature" (Dutta, 1970, p. 100). According to the "Sinha Committee", this was the beginning of the first phase of public library development in India. These public libraries have always been the door to learning as they serve a great majority of the populations. During the first half of the 19th century, the three presidency towns of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras had public libraries (Jagdish, 1979, p. 19). But, later the public library at Calcutta was developed into the National Library of India. Simultaneously, many subscription libraries were started in many Indian cities but these libraries were not public libraries in the true sense. In the early 19th century when the libraries were began to develop in India they were western product but later the first three decades of the 20th century can be looked on as the golden age of the Indian library system. On January 31, 1902, the Imperial Library Act was passed and in 1906, Lord Curzon transformed the Calcutta Public Library into an Imperial Library. During 1937,

with the existence of democratic governments another phase of the library movement began. Between 1937 and 1942, a number of village libraries and travelling libraries came into existence in Assam, Bihar and Punjab (Verma and Agarwal, 1994, p. 6).

After independence though the growth of libraries was remarkable in general but it was not remarkable as that of academic and special libraries. However, the public library is still lacking on several fronts but it was considerably seem to be improved during the post-independence period (Zahid Ashraf Wani). The Delhi public library founded in 1951, whose purpose was to adapt 'modern techniques to Indian conditions' and to serve as a model public library for Asia deserves special mention as it was the first UNESCO Public Library Pilot Project under the joint auspices of UNESCO and Government of India (Verma and Agarwal, 1994, p. 8).

It is to be mentioned that in between 1951-195 in the first five-year plan for educational development included a proposal for 'Improvement of Library Service.' This proposal envisioned a network of libraries throughout the country, which was coordinated by National Central Library at New Delhi (Planning Commission of India, 1952). However, on May 22, 1972, the Central Government established the Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) at Calcutta to develop libraries specially the rural libraries. Also, in between 1997-2002 many funds were provided from central grants to the Connemara Library, Chennai, Thanjavur Maharaja SerovjiSarasvatiMahal Library, Thanjavur and the State Central Library, Mumbai for modernizing and computerization of the library.

Library and Information Networks and Network Based Services:

Library networks are essential for resource sharing which can be developed by using Information Technology. It can be developed on various levels to achieve resource sharing like local library networks, national library networks, etc. There are many library networks developed in India which are provides enhanced library services based on network.

Juneja (1986) in 'Networking and Libraries' described the development of networking in India with special emphasis on project INDONET. In promoting information, Kaul (1992) presents a systematic study of library networks and analysis the efforts made in India especially the contribution of NISSAT and UGC. He also highlighted global view of library networks, automation of Indian libraries and Indian library networks like CALIBNET, DELNET and INFLIBNET. It also covers hardware and software issues, network architecture, communication links, bibliographic standards, etc.

(Murthy, 1996, pp. 3-9) in his paper describes the development of library networks in India. He also describes about the present scenario of library networking and the problems facing in operating the library networks which includes software, archiving data, operating large databases, online searching, price of the internet, lack of knowledge, standardization and training facilities, etc. Murthy has also suggested possible solutions to solve the problems and suggested opinions for developing good library networking.

Rao (2001) in his article has discussed the changes that are faced by libraries and information centers in India and has suggested the need to undergo the change. He has also highlighted the role of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in transforming traditional libraries and information centre into a digital mode and illustrated that promotion of resource sharing among library members and the development of a network of libraries is very essential.

Agarwal (2002) in his book explored the basic aspects of library networking and its need, where as Baruah (2002) described the advent of computer networking, which is an accepted part of the library and information.

(Gulati, 2004, pp. 335-350) in his paper has studied the status of information and communication technologies usage in Indian libraries with reference to special libraries and the efforts made by various institutions to propagate e- information products and services.

Jebaraj (2004) in his scholarly communication has described about the concepts of networks development in India. In his paper he has divided library networks into general network, specialized network and metropolitan network. His paper also detailed out the developments of library networks in India like NICNET, INDONET, VIKRAM, CALIBNET, BONET, DELNET, ADINET, MYLIBNET, DESINET, SIRNET, VIDYANET, BTISNET, INFLIBNET, MANLIBNET, BALNET.

(Rumeia, 2004, pp. 283-290) pointed out that libraries plays vital role in terms of promoting and sharing of access to information. The author illustrated that although the traditional methods of literature indexing and accessing continues to exist and develop, library networking might become the new model and the direction for the development of the library.

Sinha, (2004) studied the status of automation and networking of libraries of North East region of India. The researcher has evaluated automation and networking services in twelve libraries that had financial assistance under INFLIBNET program.

Meitei and ThPurnima (2006) in their paper discussed the term library network as an essential component in information society. Their paper highlights the scenario of rural libraries in the state of Manipur and elaborated the conceptual ideas for setting up a proposed model of 'Rural Library Information Network System' for powering the masses for the construction of knowledge based society and also the importance of ICT which is a key to bridging new digital connections in the rural areas of Manipur in this global digital information age.

(Karn and Das, 2009, pp. 698-700) in their paper 'Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET): A Boon for Higher Education in India', described the growth of library and information networks in India. They also described about the INFLIBNET and its mission – vision, aims – objectives, activities and services. They said that INFLIBNET has facilitated automation and networking of academic libraries for resource sharing using network and provided access to information.

Kumar and Kanamadi (2004) conducted a study on IT based services on the basis of user requirements and satisfaction in the university libraries in the Karnataka state. Their study revealed that these libraries have traditional and modern infrastructure. They also revealed that IT facilities and network facilities are available in most of the university libraries and most of them were participating in the one/other network system for sharing the resources.

Summary

During sixth century A.D there were many well-developed libraries. Even the Mughal period gave a further stimulus to the growth of libraries. In 1808, the Government of Bombay proposed to register libraries. According to the "Sinha Committee", this was the beginning of the first phase of public library development in India. Between 1937 and 1942, a number of village libraries and travelling libraries came into existence in Assam, Bihar and Punjab.

After independence though the growth of libraries was remarkable in general but it was not remarkable as that of academic and special libraries. The public library was considerably seemed to be improved during the post-independence period. The Delhi public library founded in 1951 was the first UNESCO Public Library Pilot Project under the joint auspices of UNESCO and Government of India whose purpose was to adapt 'modern techniques to Indian conditions'. Also, in the first five-year plan an educational development included a proposal for 'Improvement of Library Service.'

The first three decades of the 20th century has been looked on as the golden age of the Indian library system. Later, with the emergence of new media a number of changes have taken place in libraries such as expand of Web-based services, changes in libraries', appraisal of education, knowledge and skills, etc. More or less social media has also gradually crept into many libraries with social sites such as Facebook, MySpace, You Tube, Flickr, Library Thing, etc.

Many efforts have been made for the development of libraries. NISSAT, UGC, made efforts in developing library networks in different sectors in India viz., PUNENET, BONET, ADINET, CALIBNET, DELNET, etc. INFLIBNET at city and national level and Asian networks at regional level are also established in passage of time.

In the recent years the Information Technology has made its impact on the academic library in India. Hence, library offers special services through the blogs. Further, Information Communication Technology (ICT) is playing an important role in transforming traditional libraries and information centre into a digital mode especially in rural areas.

The library services are also redefined with changing Information Technology environment. Thus, to modernize the libraries, information professionals are adapting technologies as well as to satisfy user's expectations from libraries.

Conclusion

The new media technology in education is creating a genre of outreach learning and contributing for the future global leaders. In the changing academic environment the libraries have to develop their electronic resources with the existing print sources. The internet has enabled academic libraries to widen their services and also traditional print based collections. Though, it is not surprising that the academic library has witnessed more technological change over the past decade than perhaps any other campus area. But still there is an urgent need for all the libraries to adopt the new technology and social networking tools in their services as a strategy to embrace change while promoting a participatory role for library users in knowledge creation.

In the technological library, there should no longer be any justification for the criticism that librarians too often treat users as 'adversaries rather than as allies'. In today's networked information environment, any library action must be part of a wider campus infrastructure committed to furthering new educational approaches. Above all there must be strong communication and an effective partnership between the institution's library and its computing service. In developing digital library infrastructure, there must be a tendency to assume that each institution must develop a full complement of capabilities. Consequently, collaborative development of tools, services, and capabilities will be far more common in the future.

For at least the next decade or so, the library as a building with four walls will continue to exist. Thus, certain investments must be made if the library is to emerge as a player in the changing environment. To be successful, the libraries should pay more attention to the development trends of information society that would enable to adjust their development strategies to social information needs. With the advent of digital technology and internet connectivity, the library scenario of our country is changing very rapidly to meet their users need in fast growth digital world.

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