Utilization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Public Library Services in India

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated the ICT and its impact on library and information services. The present study demonstrates and elaborates the primary way to learn about ICTs, the purpose of using ICT enabled library services, to assess to what extent users are utilized ICT based library services and facilities, various aspects of Internet usage, favourite search engines, and problems faced by the users in using the ICT in libraries. The papers also determine the satisfaction level of users regarding library services, online database services and infrastructure facilities. Suggestions have been given to make the service more beneficial in the library users of ICT Libraries in public library services all over India.*

Keywords: ICT, Public Libraries Services, User Studies, India

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1. Introduction

Information has emerged as the prime in the 21st century. ICT has exerted a profound influence on traditional academic libraries. They have no option but adapt themselves to new developments, especially due to cuts in budget allocation. Hence, networking of information centres is inevitable. The prime objectives of the library is pooling information resources and information related infrastructure and sharing them. In this process, many library have re-examined their traditional methods and services to overcome inadequacies trough automation and computerization. The use of computers for library operation avoids respectively jobs and saves considerable amount of time, resources and labour. It also speeds up technical processing and information services. ICT has been a means to bring quality services. Systematic planning of its introduction and application will assure that the technology based information services are sustainable, and enhances the ability of library. In the present scenario, the library and information centres at global level are able to provide access to;

- Online databases across the country and worldwide
- Comprehensive statistical databases and content page services
- Full text information sources with key word searching

The academic libraries in Indian setup have been preparing themselves on a corporate basis; a platform for ICT based informa-

tion services. Internet has transformed the ways and means of information service. Breaking the distance barrier, internet has emerged as a boon to the information seekers as well as libraries. It has become popular, easy to use and inexpensive teaching and research tool. Internet, in fact is changing the way the librarian view information sources. Professional associations, research organizations publisher is treated as the speedy, accurate and effective way of communication among academic, research, executives and business communities. Hence, internet for information service/ current awareness service in the library is gaining momentum and becoming popular too. It is also true that internet has become a part of library environment today.

2. Review of Literature

The process of collection management has become very challenging and complex. As observed by Friend (2000:55), basic collection management activities include analysis of user needs, inter-and – intra-library communication, policy development, budgeting and allocation of resources, contract negotiations, macro-evaluations of collection, micro-evaluation for selection, relegation, preservation or withdrawal of stock and system evaluation. The world is undergoing a transition from a paper to a digital economy. It is essential for libraries in countries in developing world to take part in this changing scene. In this regards, developing countries, which include Nigeria are being encourage to invest in ICT. Thoine (2003) cited by Ogbomo, Ogbomo (2008) indicates that many initiatives have been taken at the international level to support Africa's efforts to develop communication infrastructure and these efforts are designed to enable African countries to find faster ways to achieve durable and sustainable development. Nwalo (2000:34) asserts that many libraries in the third world including Nigeria are gradually but steadily converting from manual to computerised routines. The benefit of the automated or uses of ICT in a library system are both self evident and overwhelming. He further stressed that ICT will help to improve the library services and help the libraries in reporting all the various operations in the library.

2.1. LIS Education in India –An Overview

This year is the centennial anniversary of the establishment of a university level LIS programme in India. Library education was first formally began in 1911 at Baroda in the form of a training programme and establishing a public library system. At the university level, the Punjab University started a course in LIS in 1915. The scholars like K. M. Assadullah, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, and Prof P. N. Kuala contributed greatly to developing the sources of LIS subjects in pre–independent India. In post-independent India, library science is being offered by more than 100 universities and other organizations at various levels such as certificate, diploma, bachelor, masters, PG diploma, and research. To update the LIS syllabus, UGC (University Grants Commission) designated the CDC (Curriculum Development Committee) in 2001 to redesign the courses in LIS, which quickened the LIS schools to include different facets of ICT in their syllabi. So far, most of the departments in LIS in India have widely adopted the models given by the CDC. Currently in India, library and information science (LIS) education is disseminated through traditional classes and through the distance mode by important institutes like NISCAIR (National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources), DRTC (Documentation Research and Training Center), ISI (Indian Statistical Institute) and all universities. PG Diploma Courses with ICT specialization are offered by Alagappa University, Annamalai University, IGNOU, Punjab University, Sambalpur University and University of Hyderabad, etc.

2.2. Courses Available in LIS in India Certificate Course

1. ICT Application in Libraries
2. IT enabled Services ‹
3. Librarianship ‹
4. Library & Information Science

Diploma Course

1. PGDLAN (Post Graduate Diploma in Library Automation & Networking) ‹
2. Diploma in Library Automation ‹
3. Diploma in Lib. Sc. /Inf. Sc.
4. B. Lib. Sc. or B. LIS.
5. M. Lib. Sc. or M. LIS or MSc (Inf. Sc) or MS (Inf. Management)

6. M. Phil.

7. PhD (Doctorate in Philosophy)

LIS Education Distinction

In the past, many bodies like the UGC, ILA (Indian Library Association), and IATLIS(Indian Association of Teachers in Library Information Science) took different initiatives for developing the quality of LIS education in India. Development has now passed through stages and LIS education has become a fast improving discipline with a multi-subject approach. Today LIS education not only includes the information specific discipline but has extended to subjects like digital technology, information science and management studies. With the changing situation, modern information professionals have become a profession with a multiplicity of opportunities and challenges for LIS students and librarians.

3. Policy Objectives

Specific purpose and objectives of the ICT Policy should be enunciated so as to be clear about the policy and its intentions. The policy should be mindful of the need to address economic development, poverty reduction and governance among other areas.

Purpose of ICTs Policy

The purpose is to provide strategic direction and guidance for sustainable national development through the systematic application of ICTs in a country.

This is achieved through the following objectives:

Policy Objectives

• Ensure provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities necessary for ICTs development,such as reliable supply of electricity, telecommunications and transport.

• Promote and support the systematic, relevant and sustainable development of ICTs.
Embark on extensive educational and training programmes to provide adequate supply of qualified ICTs personnel and knowledge workers in all sectors.

• Establish structures for effective implementation of ICTs strategies.

• Establish institutional mechanisms and procedures for determining sect oral application priorities; and

• Encourage the development and use of and ensure equitable access to benefits offered by ICTs across gender, youths, the disabled and the elderly.

ICTs Challenges in Indian Countries

Indian countries are now aware of the benefits derived through adoption and use of ICTs but there are many serious challenges which must be addressed and chief among them are: *f* inadequate communications and power infrastructure *f*

• Shortage of ICTs facilities and ICTs skills

• Inadequate institutional arrangements *f*

• Limited financial resources

• Inadequate public private partnership

• Limited data management capacity *f*

• Inadequate horizontal and vertical communication

• Inadequate bandwidth nationally and on the Gateway

Some of the above challenges can be addressed through public-private smart partnerships.

Emerging ICT Technologies for Library Services

Global-level information retrieval is fast and in recent years, increasingly more user friendly for library end users. The fol-

lowing ICT technologies have been used by many of the research and development libraries in India:

• Approach by touch – Disseminate library services.
• Cellular Technology ‹
• IOS Technology
• Smart card Technology
• Talking Computer Library – Robot
• Social Networking
• RFID and Smart card
• CDROM Searching ‹
• Online Networking ‹
• Photostat
• Online Information services
• News Clipping Scanning Services
• Online –Reservation Services
• Database Searching Services
• Audio Visual Services ‹
• Internet Access
• E-Query Services
• E-Journals ‹
• E-Books
• E-Lists
• Barcode technology
• Printing Technology
• Web Rings
• FAQs ‹
• Digital Archives
• Bulletin Boards
• Web Exhibitions
• Virtual Help Desks

Use of ICT tools to provide and disseminate knowledge has been slowly adopted in a great number of libraries. This may be due to different issues such as inadequate ICT facility or funds and management reasons. Libraries should aggressively invest in ICT.

ICT Skills to be Procured

While there are common ICT skills for all users, nevertheless there are certain ICT skills and development needed to be the focus points focus of the LIS teaching s as they pursue ways to develop their teaching. Such ICT skills are:

• To reasons for selecting particular ICT tools for syllabus
• Facility to access application of ICT in libraries

• Facility to assist students and users to discover, contrast and analyse information from different sources of ICT ‹

• Assist students and users to combine and to incorporate current information using ICT techniques.

• Evaluate ICT tools to use for teaching and library functions for smooth participation.

Job opportunities and Career Options

There are many opportunities for a career in librarianship and those interested in careers in this field may find employment possibilities in the following areas:

• Public/government libraries

• Universities and other academic institutions

• IT/ ITES sectors

• News agencies and organisations

• Research and Development libraries / NGOs ‹

• Private organisations and special libraries

• Large industries ‹

• Foreign embassies or consulates ‹

• Photo/film libraries

• Information centres/documentation centers

• Companies and organisations with large information handling needs

• Museums and galleries.

Subsistence Produced by ICT based LIS Courses

With the emergence of corporate houses and multinational organizations in India, the demand for LIS professionals in the country has drastically increased. The increasing number of engineering colleges, private colleges, and business colleges had increased the demand for ICT trained librarians. The salary ranges Rs.10000 in to Rs.45000 per month for such librarians, considered to be well paying for a rewarding occupation and well paying one. Those who hold ICT skills and have a good knowledge of E-databases and technologies and modern search methods, digitalization of documents and the training to enhance in a networked environment, will have good opportunities to work in scientific and other specialized research organizations.

4. Conclusion

Pertinent, recent technologies and accomplishments on ICT have been infused in most of the syllabus of LIS schools in India. Where needed, restructuring revisions to syllabi in LIS schools in India should permit to include ICT. The ICT infrastructure in Indian libraries is good, and most of the libraries (large government libraries and special libraries) have already implemented many recent ICT technologies in their libraries. Some of the private libraries have yet to incorporate modern techniques and some of the libraries still have much room for development. For instance, real differences can be made in the empowerment of the LIS practitioners and students.It is ofcrucial importance to improve librarians' physical approaches, application and deployment of ICTs in the library's functions. In addition to this, LIS schools in India should fulfil their syllabus by utilizing the broad scope provided by ICT and positions made possible by the digital space and by expansion in the 21st century technologies. We conclude that ICT offers a major role in the LIS job opportunities in India.While basic ICT skills and training have become generally necessary in the LIS profession, there is drastically increased demand for advanced ICT skills in the LIS job sector. We recommend that LIS Schools in India should contemplate introducing advanced ICT courses to their syllabus in order to meet the employers' expectations and needs. Furthermore, Indian LIS schools and the libraries should sharpen formal and informal ICT education, skills and training in order to meet the stipulated demands of the current LIS job opportunities.

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