



## **Issues and challenges of globalization and digital era of library management in India: An overview**

**<sup>1</sup> Davender Kumar, <sup>2</sup> Dr. Shailendra Bhushan Sharma**

<sup>1</sup> Librarian, Noida College of Physical Education, Dadri, District – Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor and Head, Department of Management, Noida College of Physical Education, Dadri, District – Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India

### **Abstract**

With the advent of the internet the impact of globalization has been felt in all spheres and more so in library systems. However, this has been offset by emerging challenges and issues unique to the global inequalities and socio-economic structure of the country. This article deals with the pro's and con's of globalization and digital era and the challenges they has thrown up in library management systems in University environments particularly India. Certain challenges faced in library management strategies have been highlighted and have been dealt with under the broad areas of upgrading the capabilities of libraries in tune with changing economic climate, developing strategies to achieve maximum output and outreach, reform library management education, involve library management personnel in University education systems and introduction of safety checks using an honor code system within the ambit of library management. An account of the state of the University libraries in India and problems associated with global inequalities has also been dealt with in the above context.

**Keywords:** library management system, globalization, digital era, ICT, etc.

### **Introduction**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, several professions are adapting with changes and pacing with new useful technologies of ICT for their survival and advancement. In this century creation of new knowledge, capturing of new ideals promptly and their timely application is crucial for success in any endeavor. Integration of ideas to find solutions to complex problems, technological convergence to develop better and cheaper products and progression towards greater interface between policy, strategy, research and service to clientele is taking place. A new kind of competitive work environment, is emerging where cutting edge knowledge, ingenuity and new ideas make a big difference in advancement and hence there remains a constant hunt for talent and hiring people having agility, requisite skills and competencies, inclination for updating, penchant for learning and doing work in a better way through constant innovative approach. The mantra for development in this century is thus to pick up the people most suitable for jobs at hand, effective management of knowledge resources and ideas for finding most appropriate knowledge applications in work processes and operations.

The ongoing processes of globalization and liberalization have led to intense competition in every sphere of life and set forth the need for immense search for ideas and application of knowledge for outperforming others, cutting costs and finding knowledge based solutions to problems. Institutions and organizations having adequate and efficient knowledge support systems performing knowledge intensive work and leveraging success from knowledge and expertise are thriving in this era. Creation of new knowledge through R&D, accumulation of existing knowledge through constant search

and strategic use of this knowledge determine the creation of wealth. According to the World Bank reports, today almost two third of the world's wealth comes from knowledge. Knowledge is now a key input for an organization's success and the currency of the new millennium and wherever greater intensity of knowledge activities exists, it has the potential to transform those societies into knowledge-based societies.

In the industrial society pen was mightier than the sword. In the knowledge society mouse is more powerful than the pen. Connectivity including connectivity during mobility is very important in knowledge-based societies for just in time information search. From fixed phones people are shifting to mobile phones, from personal computers to personal digital assistants, from place centered Internet connectivity to WIFI and WIMAX networks. Technology enabled constant connectivity has helped in generation and use of more information and production and distribution of knowledge. The information networks provide most democratic access to information resources at any time and any place, thus accessing relevant information and its strategic use at a faster speed has become important. Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Nine-tenths of wisdom consists in being wise in time." Knowledge based societies therefore demand work performance at a speed and agility in decisions and actions. Looking at the global information resources, an individual may have propensity to do many things but finds little time to do the same. As an individual, one has limited time and capacity to acquire and process information and do work. Therefore, individuals and organizations are making investments and finding ways to save time. Strategic alliances, collaboration on mutually beneficial areas and agreeable terms

are taking place to achieve quick success and big targets. Learning organizations encourage their employees to continuously upgrade their skills and competencies and have knowledge of state of the art technologies that are applicable to their work. "Any large organization today has to survive, grow and prosper in a highly competitive, dynamic rapidly changing complex environment, where human obsolescence is as common as that of machines and where survival is only of the fittest." (Bhatia & Singh, 2000) The present networked information environment has facilitated increased awareness of learning opportunities through greater flow of information and helped the people to realize their true potentialities. It has ensured more information to greater number of people, offered more choices for decision-making and problem solving, led to diffusion of cultures and converted the world into a global village. It has also created an information chaos, problem of digital divide, division of information haves and has challenges of imparting information literacy to millions of people in a country like India.

#### **Use of information technology in academic libraries**

Information technology (IT) is for better management and exchange of information, for more efficient communication and ultimately for the benefit of the people using IT (Bryson, 1990). Information is a dynamic and unending resource that affects all disciplines and all walks of life as it supports education, research and development. As libraries and information centers deal mainly with information, majority of their technical applications will be in the collection, handling, storage, and dissemination of information or information technology. Technologies, especially computer and telecommunication technology have highly revolutionized the field of library and information services. They facilitate collection, storage, organization, processing, analysis, presentation, communication and dissemination of information. With the introduction of new technology and globalization, libraries are expected to use various types of technology to provide information, more quickly and in greater volume than before. The advantage of IT applied to information retrieval is the immediate and local access to a much wider range of library resources. Information technology has also made an impact on the alerting services, mainly by providing speedy access to information that appears initially and the news and business services of one kind or another in electronic form. Electronic delivery of materials has also made a major impact on information service operations providing increased flexibility, customization of services and opportunities for entirely new types of services in the widespread information transfer (Varalaksmi, 1992). The advancement in technology will continue to improve the effectiveness of the libraries and become indispensable for handling information between libraries and library patrons to librarian and vice versa (Kumbar, 1996). This is already happening the success of information technology will depend on library automation and skilled manpower, but the most important factor is considered, as the motivation and attitudes of librarians to get into information technology for their various work activities (Munshi, 1998).

#### **Necessity for electronic libraries**

Computers, digital communication technology, networks, multimedia, CD ROMs and networks have cemented the way to progression of electronic publishing and transformed the traditional libraries into electronic libraries which make all the holdings of the library in machine readable form by global networked and provide instant information to all who required. In this way researchers and students get effective utilization of the resources available in their libraries out of the library hours and the out of the library through resource sharing and network projects such as INFLIBNET.

Libraries are the lighthouse for information in the field research and development. The exponential growth of literature and growing need of information requirements makes the digital libraries very much indispensable. Technology is the main factor that has determined the development of digital libraries. An electronic library is a global virtual library of thousands of networked electronic libraries and dynamic storehouse of digitized information. It manages larger amount of digital contents and maintain standards that are necessary for the interchange of information.

#### **Issues and challenges in digital libraries**

Digital Libraries encounter various issues and challenges. In order to construct comprehensive resources such as books, journals, sound records, photographs, manuscripts etc., they must be transformed into digital shape. For that established standards and tools must be required for quality reproduction. Digital libraries appear to have an interaction between information technologists and libraries. Digital libraries are organized collection of digital information. Information resources and the information archives are preserved in the electronic form and transferred through leased line, whether it is through an earth station or gateway access to the internet. Conversion of paper into digital form is costlier and time consuming. Special hardware and software that are essential to view digital objects compounds the problem. Information widely communicated to be stored outside the human memory. Digital libraries organize collection of digital information. Electronic library archives are preserved in a digital form and transferred through leased line through earth station or gateway access to the internet. A complete management system is needed for one to gain control over the selection, acquisition and usage of the existing electronic resources of an institution. The management of e-resources becomes complex when the holdings of the library increased. Libraries need to embrace electronic books to keep up with changing needs of the user community and to develop flexible collection management strategies to meet their users' needs. Searching and retrieval tools compensate the incomplete cataloguing or descriptive information. We have to establish protocols and standards to facilitate the assembly of distributed digital libraries. It is essential to take care of legal concerns associated with access, copying and dissemination of physical and digital library resources.

#### **Advantages of digital library**

Information being the power, wealth and potentiality adding source for socioeconomic, cultural and intellectual development of an individual, society and nation, it becomes

necessary to communicate it at local, regional, national and universal level. In order to meet the rapid growth of information in the fields of science and humanities, social science and pure science enormous subjects' everyday makes outdated the existing tradition of information accessing, manipulating, retrieving, storing and disseminating the right information to the right user at the right time at a remote distance. Here, communication technology plays a vital role in providing need based retrospective service to the society. Networking connectivity facilitates the users at global level. DLs reproduce imprinted information in documentary forms and secure their prolonged existence without wasting the time, in a small space enabling the users to introduce user friendly service at their required time.

### **Modernization of libraries**

Earlier library used to handle and disseminate the information which consisted of books, journals, monographs etc. by the help of catalogue, reference service, referral service etc. after the literature increased in multidiscipline and inter-discipline. It could not be easy for a library to provide the information up to date. As users always want to get information up to date and relevant information according to their requirement which were solved by bibliographic, indexing and abstracting was increased so it could not be easy for the user to locate their resources easily.

### **Upgrading capabilities of libraries**

In both India, with the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have created the knowledge society, which will impact upon developing economies like India. As such, Librarians India has an important role to play in overcoming the digital divide, and making reference and sharing global knowledge. Information and knowledge are expanding in quantity and accessibility. In many fields future decision-makers will be presented with unprecedented new tools for development. In such fields as agriculture, health, education, human resources and environmental management, or transport and business development, the consequences could be revolutionary. Communication and information technology has enormous potential, especially for developing countries such as India and in furthering sustainable development. In terms of collection development, libraries have begun to reduce the traditional materials and have instead increased the purchase of network services and digital resources (Bertrot *et al.*, 2004). Network-based services and resources offered by libraries today, including digital references, digital collections, online databases, e-journals, and e-books, enable libraries to operate anywhere, allowing patrons with internet access to access content, services and resources any time (Bertrot *et al.*, 2004). Librarians and information personnel (IPs) need to realign their service in line with the knowledge demand of the users in the workplace. Users require repack aged or analyzed information that is needed for productive use. Librarians and IPs are trained to be experts in information searching, selecting, acquiring, organizing, preserving, repackaging, disseminating, and serving. However, professionals in information technology and systems have also regarded information management as their domain because of the

recent advances in ICT and systems. The freely accessible information on the web, in conjunction with the escalating costs of library materials, threatens the traditional mission of libraries to create and sustain large, self-sufficient collections for their patrons (Troll, 2002). An increasing number of corporate and University libraries in India are managing their knowledge by archiving information in document form, maintaining databases and data warehouses of corporate knowledge and mapping human knowledge within the organization. Some of the privileged Universities / Institutions of Higher learning who function directly under the University Grants Commission or the Department of Science and Technology have benefited, whereas the rest have sadly languished. It is not that internet access has not reached these Universities; it is just that they have not upgraded their Library Management Systems to keep pace with the times.

### **Conclusion**

The future of the automated libraries in the developed/developing countries seems to be very promising. It can be hoped that more and more libraries will adopt automation techniques/systems in the very near future, sooner rather than later. The new generation of computers and its use in libraries is not only modernization but it has become a necessity. In coming times, computers hold good future. Rather than using it as a tool for searching and retrieving information, Internet has become the king of all media, by which we can access virtual information and can build a virtual library to provide timely, quality service to the users. Librarians of this digital era are in the position to change their role as arbitrary information scientists/gatekeepers and to meet the Challenges of the Internet, World Wide Web, and online access in the knowledge society. So they must enrich their knowledge with special skills of the latest IT developments, to browse, access and retrieve particular information across the global networks and to organize and manage the information by building digital libraries and by which they can provide quality information service to the knowledge society. Library staff must be capable of working effectively in partnership with faculty members to enhance the strength of teaching and research.

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