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Principal, KUMM's Vasantnao Naik College,
Murud Janjira, Dist- Raigad

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Role of Library & Information Science Professionals in Academic Libraries with Special Reference to ICT Utilization in Academic Libraries

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Abstract :

Library and librarian will become redundant in the tech-based education system. Some may think that library without wall and library without librarian are the same. Practically these two are quite different from each other. In the virtual library era it is somehow possible to have a library without wall. The role of the librarian and library professional just changes their identity, e.g. Cybrarian, Information Processor, Information Consultant, etc. To cope with the rapid changes of the technology and to control the ephemeral rate of information generation, librarians along with his professional colleagues should have to equip themselves as per the requirement of the electronic information society. In the light of the above, the present paper would like to highlight the reasons why library and librarian is essential in the modern technology based library service era. The paper also tries to point out the role of the librarian in the changing society, services offered by the e-library, e-learning and issues faced by the librarian.

Keywords: Traditional Library, Virtual Library, Digital Library, Technology and Education, Internet, Digitization, Librarian, Cybrarian.

Introduction :

The nature of the academic library and the role they play in campus is changing. Libraries are moving towards an information commons model of service, and becoming campus community centers. They invite student and faculty socialization, learning, research, scholarship and instruction. They are most effective when programming, services, and spaces are developed in partnership with others seeking similar educational outcomes. Academic libraries will increasingly provide information and services to their users at right time as per their requirement. Whatever the changes, the traditional roles of a library in an academic community, especially those communities that aren't changing substantially themselves, will remain valid and important to a successful college or university.

Virtual library Environment:

The concept of the virtual library is one that has developed with the growth in telecommunication networks, especially the Internet. The 'virtual library' emulates a 'real' library, but is understood to be a product of the virtual world of the Internet. A digital library possesses the same functions and goals of the traditional print-based library and that the difference lies in 'the digital part of the term which indicates merely that the material is stored and accessed digitally'. Comprehensive definition of the digital library is provided by the Digital Library Federation (1999) in the United States: Organizations that provide the resources, including the specialized staff, to select, structure, offer intellectual access to, interpret, distribute, preserve the integrity of, and ensure the persistence over time of collections of digital works so that they are readily and economically available for use by a defined community or set of communities.

E-teaching and E-learning :

Electronic learning is a term for all types of technology-enhanced learning (TEL), where technology is used to support the learning process. Often the medium of instruction is through computer technology, particularly involving digital technologies. E-learning has been defined as “pedagogy empowered by digital technology”. In some instances, no face-to-face interaction takes place. E-learning is used interchangeably in a wide variety of contexts.

Goals and Benefits of e-learning

- i.* **Access to quality education:** The fact that instructors of the highest calibre can share their knowledge across borders allows students to attend courses across physical, political, and social boundaries. Recognized experts have the opportunity of distributing information internationally at minimum costs.
- ii.* **Affordable education:** E-learning can drastically reduce the costs of higher education, making it much more affordable and accessible to the masses. An Internet connection, a computer, and a projector would allow an entire classroom in a Third World university to benefit from the knowledge of a distant instructor.
- iii.* **Convenience and flexibility to learners:** in many contexts, e-learning is self-paced and the learning sessions are available 24x7. Learners are not bound to a specific day/time to physically attend classes. They can also pause learning sessions at their convenience.
- iv.* **Reducing environmental impact:** e-learning allows people to avoid travel, thus reducing the overall carbon output. The fact that it takes place in a virtual environment also allows some reduction of paper usage. With virtual notes instead of paper notes and online assessments instead of paper assessments, eLearning is a more environmentally friendly solution

The Roles of the Librarian

Librarian is a professionally trained person responsible for the care of a library and its contents, including the selection, processing and organization of resources and the delivery of information, instruction and loan service to meet the needs of its users. In an online environment, the role of the librarian is to manage and mediate access to information that may exist only in electronic form. Crawford and Gorman (1995) have defined the role of the librarian today: To acquire, give access to, and safeguard carriers of knowledge and information in all forms and to provide instruction and assistance in the use of the collections to which their users have access. Libraries are about the preservation, dissemination, and use of recorded knowledge in whatever form it may come. The enhanced role of librarians is pivotal to the success of the academic enterprise of the knowledge society and could contribute to academic acceleration in the following ways:

1. **The collection development role** – that provides the materials for research and scholarship and involves selection, acquisition, processing for access, and control.
2. **The information consultation role** – that guides the student or faculty member toward the best materials to meet their information needs.
3. **The instruction role** – that helps develop students (and faculty) into information fluent citizens capable of long-term continued self-education and effective and ethical use of information.
4. **The archival role** – of collecting, preserving and carefully sharing the historical records

of an institution and the people who have worked there.

5. **The incredibly important and under-appreciated role** – of Special Collections in creating a unique intellectual focus and identity for an institution.
6. **The role of the library in providing** – not only spaces for group study or digital media creation and viewing, but for individual reflective work

Some other roles are as;

1. To provide intellectual access to information in any format
2. To evaluate available sources of information
3. To organize and structure information
4. To ensure the preservation of information
5. To provide specialized staff to offer instruction and assistance in interpreting resources and access to resources

Services offered by the E-library :

1. Online/offline access to digital information resources;
2. Database searching;
3. Public access services;
4. Electronic reference;
5. Public relations services;
6. Library promotion and marketing;
7. E-publishing;
8. Information literacy programmes;
9. Online circulation activities, such as electronic reserves;
10. User Services and queries; and
11. Online access to library catalogues, databases and the Internet.

The top issues facing by the academic libraries :

1. Online/offline access to digital information resources;
2. Database searching;
3. Public access services;
4. Electronic reference;
5. Public relations services;
6. Library promotion and marketing;
7. E-publishing;
8. Information literacy programmes;
9. Online circulation activities, such as electronic reserves;
10. User Services, and queries;
11. Online access to library catalogues, databases and the Internet

Conclusion :

Society is not ready to abandon the library, and it probably won't ever be. Libraries can adapt to social and technological changes, but they can't be replaced. While libraries are distinct from the Internet, librarians are the most suited professionals to guide scholars and citizens toward a better understanding of how to find valuable information online. Indeed, a lot of information is online. But a lot is still on paper. Instead of regarding libraries as obsolete, state and federal governments should increase funding for improved staffing and technology. The

virtual library environment provides both an opportunity and a requirement for librarians to develop greater familiarity with IT-type skills. Today, more than ever, libraries and librarians are extremely important for the preservation and improvement of our culture. Para-professional staff required practical 'hands on' experience and training. Librarians are moving into database development, courseware, open learning and academic staff development and need a combination of knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and personal qualities in order to fill their multi-faceted roles. Finally, it may be state that human component is basically an indispensable part of the Library as 'Librarian' and Cybrary (in the electronic environment) as 'Cybrarian'.

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