

Impact of Digital India program on Public Library professionals

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Abstract

Digital India program is the largest Information communication project of the Indian government which is in progress. It support to transform the whole India and make the global connectivity with a global economy. The enormous advantages it has that it will easily deliver the information across the India. This paper discusses the impact of Digital India and role of library professionals to change the knowledge and information societies. The digital India program is the largest step of digital empowerment for people of India. It is universal truth that public library is a center of local knowledge. When people are digitally aware they ask and use information in electronic format. The traditional public library should undergo a change as per the needs of users. The public library professional should update themselves more trained in handling digital objects and ICT tools.

Keywords- *Digital India, Public library, Library professionals.*

Introduction

Information is so essential for every human being. All human beings have the information need, either in individual or in collective form. It is information transfer and information revolution by which cultural change; socio-economic development of a nation make possible. The recent developments in Information communication technologies (ICT) have revolutionized the information handling capabilities of public libraries and information centers all over the world. Librarians, especially Public librarians have been facing challenges in the profession due to the rapid technological changes with the development of information technologies. Now Public Library professional has to play the role of mediator between the vast network of resources and its users. To meet the ever-changing demands of the users, library professional requires continuously updated knowledge and skills for effective performance. Continuing training is necessary for every professional, not only in library profession but also in all service sectors and it is fundamentally a responsibility of the individual professional. A Public library professional in the digital India project play a lead role as the local information provider. The demand of the digitally literate local people may specific about information of daily needs. The public library professional need to train in the digital connectivity, information storage and dissemination in the e-format for local people. It will possible that digital India may change scenario of the public library to transform in conventional book format to digital format.

What is Digital India Program?

Digital India is an initiative of the government of India under the leadership of our prime minister for transforming India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Three important ideas for this project are: digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen, delivering service digitally in governance and service on demand and digital empowerment of citizen with digital literacy, deserve full support from the people of society. In the first phase by 2017, there are 250000 villages have been connected with national Optical Fiber Network¹. The united telecom limited responsible to done this mammoth job. There are nine pillars of digital India project have identified for the effective activation and inclusion. Such as broadband highway for all, universal access to phone, public internet access program, e-governance as a tool for the reforming government through technology, e-Kranti ; electronic delivery of services information for all, electronics manufacturing information technology for creating job and early harvest program such as Wi-Fi for all university secured e-mail within the government. It is rightly said for prime minister of India that information technology plays the important role to make India a digitized country. In his words India Today (IT) + Information Technology (IT) = India Tomorrow (IT)².

Objective of the Study

The major objectives of this study are: To be familiar with the concept of Digital India and its Impact on Public Library Professionals. To discuss present activities of Public library Professionals and proposed plan for changes in their digital information preserving and delivering ability. To suggest, Digital Information based professional public library will find an innovative way to help people in communities and provide recommendations for overcoming the limitations.

Methodology

This study uses both the qualitative and quantitative approaches along with the consultant of related literature. The conceptual and textual information related to the present study were collected from primary and secondary sources of information such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, conference proceedings, official documents, and unpublished sources. Web sites were also used for collecting information.

How does it help common Peoples?

The digital India program will deliver long-term impact on the People of India. There is three vision of digital India project, Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen, Governance & Services on Demand and Digital Empowerment of Citizens. It is an Umbrella Program that covering many governments of India departments. It weaves together a large number of ideas and thoughts into a single, comprehensive vision so that each of them is seen as part of a larger goal. Each individual element stands on its own feet. It is coordinated by DeitY³, implemented by the entire government, both at the Centre and State. The weaving together makes the Mission transformative in totality. The Program has to pull together many existing schemes of government. These schemes will be restructured and refocused according to needs. They will be

implemented in a synchronized manner. Many elements are only process improvements with minimal cost. A full connectivity of Villages, Panchayats, Blocks, District, and Official Government portals will ensure the project. The high-speed broadband connectivity will reduce the time of information sharing. The common people should alert about their day to day information needs. There needs should be different according to their community but common needs of information will same every time. In the villages and urban areas agriculture, health, education, government plan and policy, related information is the basic needs. It will promote the reading and write in the digital mode with the fast access.

Public library as local information access center

‘The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.’ (*IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994*)⁴. The public library has an important role as a public space and meeting place. This is particularly important in communities where there are few places for people to meet. It is sometimes called ‘the drawing room of the community’. Use of the library for research and for finding information relating to the user’s education and leisure interests brings people into informal contact with other members of the community. Using the public library can be a positive social experience. The public library is the local center of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. All public libraries will be community Centre responsive to local needs and able to meet information needs through quality services informed by input from the local communities, input which is actively and systematically sought. The librarians will be inspired by the vision of the new model of responsive service and motivated by the opportunities to fulfill their dynamic role as change agents. There will be a national strategic plan directing growth, expansion, and consolidation of public library services, taking into account the diversity of needs of different communities, and targeting previously disadvantaged areas and groups. They will plan their services based on the foundational principles of freedom of information and access for all. The public libraries will fulfill their important contemporary function of making available public spaces, where activities of various types are offered and taken up, in pursuit of their unique educational, societal and cultural roles.

Need for skilled Public library professionals

Skill is an ability or proficiency in execution or performance, which is required for a person to plan and execute an action designed to achieve some goals or accomplish a particular task. A skilled person has the ability to perform any task successfully. He can face the challenges occurs in a particular profession because of the social, economic, education and technological changes. The digital India program will change the requirement for public library users. They transform from conventional book to digital document user. There Needs should increase because many government services are available online. The social and economic, connectivity program is starting by the government. Information about Banking, employment, subsidy, travels, health, news, innovation, event, and etc. is needed digital connectivity. Public library professional job is going digital from conventional book medium. They need to transform their

skill for digitally empower the user. Here I discuss some important skill that should have in public library professional:

Computer and Information Technological Tools using Skill

In the digital India environment information and communication technology play lead role for the public library services. The library professional in the public library must have the skill of using the computer and other information technological tools properly because the quality of public library services has depended on the quality of the library professional performance. The skill of computer operation, application of barcode technology, creation and managing of the database and its updating, designing and daily updating library website pages etc. are required for the web based librarians.

Skill of using Internet and Computer Communication Networks

Public library professional need to Skills of handling different computer communication networking architectures and systems like LAN, MAN, and WAN as well as using of the internet and other library related networks of government portals, like Human resource development ministry, health ministry, and others. Public libraries required for a modern library professional working in IT environment to tackle the problems and challenges raised in building and maintaining a digital web-based library. Speedy resource sharing and dissemination of information with local people are possible only with the proper computer networking skills. Moreover, the library and information professionals should have the knowledge of inter-network protocols like TCP/IP, UDP, SMTP, HTTP, FTP4 etc.⁵

Information Retrieval Skill

As the public library web-based libraries are the database of databases, the library professional should have the professional technological skills of comprehensive retrieval of right information from a public library database in a logical and analytical manner and to provide it to its users at the right time. The public library professional should be in a position to help its diversified user community by providing retrospective searches, ready reference services, bibliographic services, selective dissemination of information services, News Paper Clipping service, and compilation of information for the local people needs etc. ⁶

Basic Skill

Traditional skill includes those basic skills, which are necessary for running and operating a general traditional library. Skill for classification and cataloging of documents, the method of indexing and abstracting etc. are also required for the librarian working in the web environment. With these skills, the library professional can manage the information in the proper way and provide them to the users in a right way. The professional should implement the local variation of library facility to full fill the user need.

Managerial Ability

As the librarians are the manager of a library and information center, they should have some basic managerial skills for managing the Public library. They should have to apply some of these managerial skills in planning, decision-making, and motivating the library user. Time management skill is one of the important managerial skills required for a successful public

library professional. Total Quality Management (TQM) of the public library is mostly reliant on the managerial skill of the library professional⁶.

Communication Skill

The library and information professionals act as the mediator between the information users/seekers and the information resources or information providers. In the digital public library environment, librarianship is now rightly hailed as the public relationship. Therefore proper communication skill is also important for the library and information professionals. They should be acquainted with the skill of technical communication writing, as they should have to deal with various groups of people through Fax, E-Mail, Bulletin Board, Web Sites, Blogs, Whatsapp twitter, and facebook etc. the social website will play a key role for the library professional that he connect with his users. He should make the library connectivity facility for the user. The SMS alert service about new arrival books, he will try for them. The social blog connectivity will reduce the time of user and library also and make them touch with library collection.

Preservation Skill

As like traditional library in the digital library environment, also the librarian should have the preservation skill for the E-Resources. In the public library, more E-documents will come in the digital form, but they are not fully secured. A different computer virus can attack the public library databases and affect them very badly. The hacker can also hack the public library with their dangerous intelligent skills. Therefore, the library professional should have the knowledge of cryptography, firewall, and different anti-virus software for prevention and preservation of E-Resources⁷.

Conclusion

However, a public library is becoming available to the user's community at their doorstep but this beneficial technological application in a library institution will be fully successful only when there is a close co- ordination between the IT and the human resource. Because it is mandatory for any public library that before implementation of any information technology it should be ensured that, the professional possess the required skills and competence. In the digital India environment, the LIS professionals have to face different kinds of challenges; so there is the maximum need of the skill enhancement program for the library professional. Besides academic institutions, other organizations may also help in enhancing the skills of the library professionals. Along with the potential working skills, the library professionals should also have the positive attitude to work for the benefit of the public library and make it truly public institution for achieving its long-term goals of social and economic empowerment. As the National Knowledge Commission (NKC)⁸, under the chairmanship of Sam Pitroda has stated that for establishing a knowledge dependable society, importance should be given to greater participation and more access to knowledge across all sector of the society. The public library with a group of skilled professionals will become a global information hub and can help in fulfilling the objectives of the information empowerment society in reality.

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