INCREASING THE DISCOVERY AND USE OF E-RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess the information communication technology (ICT) literacy of the library professionals working in university libraries in Maharashtra. The study gives an overview of the present level of ICT literacy among library professionals and it helps to know the need for training and orientation in the areas such as ICT-based resources, services and tools to the library professionals working in university libraries in Maharashtra. A structured questionnaire based survey was conducted to analyze the ICT literacy among library professionals. The findings of the study reveal that, the ICT literacy level of the library professionals working in university libraries in Maharashtra is satisfactory. Majority of library professionals have acquired the basic ICT literacy skills which is required to handle day to day library operations, but still few library professionals need to enhance their literacy level in the area of open source library automation software, digital library software and institutional repository software etc. The study suggests that, university libraries should organize in-house training and orientation programs on ICT-based resources and services or depute their library professionals to attend the training and orientation programs on regular intervals, in order to enhance the ICT Literacy level of library professionals.

Introduction:

Information communication technology (ICT) has made great impact on the every field of the society such as agriculture, health, education, business, industries, and so on . Libraries are not exception to these fast pace changes happen in the society. ICT has changed the overall functioning of the libraries. To provide relevant information within short span of time it becomes essential for libraries to adopt an ICT-based information system and ICT infrastructure. In early days when manual library system was in existence, they faced many problems due to consistently growing size of information sources and lack of storage space, this has forced libraries to adopt the ICT-based library systems to overcome these difficulties. University is unique system in a sense that it caters to educational needs along with the social, cultural and economic needs at large. Maharashtra State Universities have oldest historic presence in India and they have commitment to competitive, professional quality & Academic excellence in higher Education and Research-Development in emerging areas. Each one of these Universities has a pool of talented dedicated faculties and researchers mentoring the younger generation students. They impart application oriented skills at par

with International standards, so as to meet the challenges of Global scenario in innovative, professional job oriented courses. In order to promote excellence in study and research and to ensure equitable development they encourage and equip the aspiring students to succeed in their studies. These Universities provides a platform for enhanced research interaction. They shall, with the involvement of all the stakeholders, namely students-parents, teaching faculty, Non-teaching staff, College Principals and Managements, Authorities of various bodies, Government-State & Central, UGC, New Delhi; Industries and Chamber of Commerce; and the People of the Society; try their best in this endeavor, providing best physical infrastructure facilities. As quoted by our former president of India; Dr. APJ Abdul kalam-―Dream is not what I see when asleep, it is the one which DOES-NOT allow me to sleep!‖ The focused path-forward set by these Universities are expansion, Diversity, quality and Inclusiveness for overall development of the society. University Library is one of the integral parts of their respective Universities and because of the advancement in technologies; they are playing a vital role in disseminating the information to the dynamic needs of the user community in Maharashtra State. Study revealed that all these University libraries in Maharashtra state have adopted advance technologies in their collection development and imparting their services to teaching, learning and research activities.

Need for the study:

Maharashtra state has a large number of universities of both technical as well as non-technical streams and millions of rupees are spent on the development of their infrastructure like library is one of the important units in them. It is evident from the facts that the majority of the library expenditure is on mainly for the development of digital library sources and services. Hence it is important to know at what extent the libraries attached to the universities in Maharashtra state have responded to these changes brought in by these new digital technologies.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives framed for the study are

- To assess the present levels of ICT literacy among library professionals.
- To identify the training methods used by library professionals for enhancing ICT literacy.
- Find out the hindrance faced by the library professionals to enhance the ICT literacy.

- To provide the suggestions for the enhancement of ICT literacy level of library professionals.

Scope of the study:

The scope of the study is focused on Maharashtra state Universities established under Maharashtra State Public University Act 2011:

- University of Mumbai, Mumbai; 1857

- Nagpur University, Nagpur; 1923

- University of Pune, Pune; 1948

- SNDT Women's University, Mumbai; 1951

- Dr. B R Ambedkar Marthwada University, Aurangabad; 1958 6. Shivaji University, Kolhapur; 1962

- Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati; 1983

- North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon; 1990

- Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded; 1994

- Solapur University, Solapur; 2004

Methodology:

The data was obtained from the University librarians of Maharashtra state universities libraries using Questionnaire method. Data obtained about ICT infrastructure availability and digital library development.

Data Interpretation and analysis:

A detailed questionnaire was sent to all the ten state universities and also visited to these University libraries to get their feedback.

All the Maharashtra State University libraries are automated, Table-1, Most of the (50%) libraries are using SOUL, followed by (30%) libraries are using LIBSYS and then (20%) libraries are using SLIM automation software to automate their library services.

Extent of automation of their library sections also revealed that Cataloguing and Circulation sections are highly (90%), followed by 50% of Acquisition Section and only 20% serial control sections are ‗Fully Automated'. Serial Control section is one of the lowest (90%) ‗Partially Automated'sections. Bar Code technology is highly (80%) used in Maharashtra state Universities.

Findings from the study:

Following findings were observed based on data analysis:

- All the Maharashtra State University libraries are automated and Cataloguing & Circulations sections have fully automated.

- Barcode technology is used in these libraries to render their services.

- All the Maharashtra State University libraries have the digital collection and e-journals subscriptions; this is may be because of the UGC-Infonet digital library consortium.

- Most of these respondent University libraries have setup the Digitization lab and they have started the digitization activities, and also participating in INFLIBNET, Shodhganga initiative.

- Most of the respondent University libraries have an opinion that, they have Very Good e-journals & email facilities available.

- All the University Libraries have given their preference of collection development to both print as well as electronic resources.

- Majority of library professionals were well versed with the computing technology, storage devices, printing and scanning technology, audio visual technology and communication media technology, hence the literacy about these emerging ICT technologies was found high among majority of library professionals.

- Amongst all electronic resources E-journals was found most preferred e-resources among majority of library professionals, it may be because E-journals are becoming increasingly a valuable source of electronic information in university libraries, therefore majority of libraries procured E-journals through various consortia such as UGC INFONET, DELNET, INDEST etc as well as through individual subscription.

- Majority of library professionals were found well literate of Web OPAC, Reprographic Service, CD-ROM service and CAS. Since these services are provided by them on a regular basis to the users, whereas literacy of bulletin board service, e-query service and translation service was found low among library professionals due to lack of knowledge and expertise to use these ICT based services.

- Majority of library professionals were actively participative in online discussion groups and social media and with this participation the professionals keep themselves update with the current developments in libraries and information centers, but still few library professionals are lacking with the literacy of blogging, Listserv, RSS feeds and Social book marking.

- Majority of library professionals are found well literate of SOUL and LIBSYS software as it has been installed in their respective library for automating library activities and services and all library professionals are using the same to carry out various library activities. Few library professionals felt that they do have sound knowledge of SLIM, KOHA, SOUL and CDS/ISIS as many organizations are conducting training programs for these software's and possibly the library staff must have undergone the same.

- Literacy of institutional repository and digital library software's was found low among library professionals. One of the major reason for lack of literacy might be that the few library professionals usually look after the digital library section even though majority of them might have flexibility to access the digital library software.

- Majority of library professionals acquire the ICT skills and Knowledge themselves through self-study and trial and error method.

- Majority of library professionals could not acquire the sufficient ICT skills due to their day to day busy working schedule and do not get opportunities to enhance their ICT skills and knowledge. Library professionals lack the proper ICT training at work place.

Conclusion:

We can conclude from the above mentioned data analysis as follows:

- Serial Control &Acquisition sections are required to be automated fully, this will help these University libraries to manage and control the collection.

- All these University Libraries are using commercial library automation softwares, since open source automation software are readily available like Koha, etc, can be used in the future.

- It is required to digitize the Thesis available in the library to make the available to their users.

- Need to increase the AV-Material collection in all these University Libraries.

- No libraries in the study have utilized the Cloud Computing technology, since digital library development and maintenance is one of the costly affairs for the University libraries with their shrinking budget, with proper security & mitigation plan, it is advisable to utilize the Cloud Computing technology.

- Majority of library professionals working in university libraries in Maharashtra are ICT literate, which is required to perform day to day library work, but still few library professionals have lack the literacy of ICT-based tools, resources and services. In spite of having good literacy level, the library professionals need to enhance their literacy in various open source library automation software, digital library software and institutional repository software, etc.

- The existing ICT training and orientation provided by the university libraries in Maharashtra is not fully sufficient to create ICT literacy among the library professionals. Library professionals need to attend various workshops, seminars, conferences and training programs on ICT more frequently in order to enhance their level of ICT literacy. Library professionals need to undergo various short-term computer courses in order to increase their literacy and confident in performing ICT related works more effectively and efficiently.

- The university library authorities needs to acknowledge the benefits of ICT in libraries and always strive to raise the level of ICT literacy among the library professionals by organizing in-house ICT training and orientation programs, workshops, Seminars and conferences on regular intervals in order to enhance the ICT literacy of library professionals and facilitate the effective utilization of ICT-based tools, resources and services by library professionals.

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