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## Libraries as Knowledge Centers

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### Introduction

International competitiveness has been growing among the countries during the last few decades more than ever before. Smaller countries with well defined knowledge and industrial bases have achieved better financial returns. We have been noticing that it is the lack of knowledge or access to appropriate knowledge and lack of capacities to use knowledge profitably that divide the rich and the poor nations today. Governments have to make knowledge accessible to public and public in return has to use it for production of goods, promotion of life style, or modernization of the society. We therefore find that the accessibility of knowledge to public is becoming very essential.

The wealth of knowledge which is available in the libraries the world over, and is being created for making is generally beyond the reach of every ordinary person. In India the caste system introduced in ancient India had limited the use of knowledge by caste. Everybody could not access all knowledge. But during the last century these limitation don't exist now, new type of barriers have emerged in accessing the relevant knowledge by an individual. In this environment where knowledge is still barricaded, the following remarks of T. S. Eliot appear to be still valid.

- Where is the life, we have lost in living?
- Where is the wisdom, we have lost in knowledge?
- Where is the knowledge, we have lost in information

These three questions ask us to go deep beneath the layer of information, knowledge, and the living styles of people in order to discover wisdom and find how life should be lived. We find how life should be lived. We find now that information overload is suppressing knowledge and barriers to knowledge are stifling the growth of wisdom. We need to delve deeper into the systems of knowledge to see how wisdom can emerge out of this new information disorder.

Knowledge is generally classified into instrumental knowledge intellectual knowledge and spiritual knowledge. While we are somewhat familiar with the tomes on spiritual knowledge and find a large number of them on intellectual knowledge, let us at this time take recourse to instrumental knowledge which classified into "Professional knowledge", "Other Practical Knowledge" and "Cumulative knowledge". Cumulative knowledge present in human mind in a society determines its intellectual development. When we decide to use knowledge as resources for, meeting the basic need of every individual, we find it is the practical knowledge is no less important. In recent time, we have noticed that human experience and insights, value and contextual information are applied in situations and organizations in order to derive better organizational norms and

suitable results for human welfare. We therefore notice that with the changing priorities, knowledge is becoming practical in its role in life

The recent phenomenon of globalization and the information revolution has opened the doors of knowledge worldwide, some at a price and some without a price. However, it has become clear that though the Internet knowledge can be imparted to millions of people simultaneously. Poverty can be removed through lifelong learning and the use of knowledge skills.

### **Knowledge Society**

Nowadays, knowledge about a discovery can be made available to a large number of users at a very low cost around the world and its application can result in economic development. It can support a poor economy. A poor economy can be transformed into a knowledge-driven economy. Small-scale individual enterprises can grow extensively as knowledge become available to the public freely and unemployment levels can decline drastically.

The economic implications of knowledge give rise to knowledge economy and this has been seen in many countries including the countries in Southeast Asia. Obsolescence of technology and its replacement by improved technology gives rise to new products at less cost. This environment gives rise to competition and expansion of the market activities. Those who have access to precise knowledge create new and better products, market them well. Attract finance, use raw materials effectively among other benefits. They in turn become part of the growing knowledge economy.

Knowledge is the key to the economic development of an individual or a region. While the rich are using it for wealth generation, the poor can use it for poverty alleviation using the public library services. The public libraries can provide the latest known-how about the better technologies and arrange expert advice.

A knowledge Society can grow only if knowledge is accessible freely to people, even the illiterate will become educated. "The man who does not read books has no advantage over the man who cannot read". We have therefore to transform our society into Knowledge Society which is equitable in nature. In it every person can contribute at the local level in terms of experience, initiatives or needs and this can result in local and national development with the use of practical knowledge. The need for gaining access to appropriate knowledge and the skills associated with it can also grow faster. Every skilled person, creating or marketing a product becomes a contributing member of the knowledge Society. As their competencies grow, innovative changes in the products take place and the economy flourishes.

### **Organization of Knowledge**

The processes involved in the organization of knowledge are the key factors that help in converting libraries into knowledge centers. This also includes knowledge networking and sharing of it at national and international levels. The libraries end to identify knowledge their users are interested in, acquire it, classify it according to an international scheme, catalogue it and store it for regular use.

Sharing of knowledge also bring in reward provided appropriate conditions exist along with the infrastructure. The transformation in society, which leads to the growth of health communities.

#### **Knowledge Assets**

'Knowledge Assets' are such resources which are important for the users of library. Knowledge Assets of one library could be of little use to another library. Thus knowledge assets fall into two categories: explicit or tacit. Explicit Knowledge Assets including patents, trademark, business plans etc. Any Knowledge that is documented and archived for dissemination purposes is a knowledge asset. In case of tacit knowledge, it comprises ideas or experiences that are contained in people's minds. It is important to document this knowledge, it comprise ideas or experience that are contained in people's minds. It is important to this knowledge also for sharing purposes.

## Knowledge Innovation

Librarians do not indulge in knowledge innovation processes which are normally done in industrial house. It involves the creation and application of new ideas into products that are marketable in a society. In a knowledge society, Knowledge is the key to progress. Institutions, especially industrial houses convert this knowledge into useful products. Libraries are not industries. But libraries can documents knowledge on a given issue in a historical perspective in any discipline, and enable users to use it

The performance of each library in organizing knowledge depends upon how it uses knowledge management tools in evolving new knowledge. This mean that knowledge expert will have to go on analyzing knowledge in order to create new knowledge innovation, we have to understand the job of knowledge innovation, we have to understand that simple Library Science experts, who are quite different than Library Science professionals. This means that we have to transform Library Science experts into Knowledge Experts.

### Main Objectives

The computer and communication technologies can help technologies can help in networking knowledge and people in complex permutations and combinations provides we have the desired content and the requirements of users available with us in machine readable form. Knowledge Technology helps in matching user's needs with knowledge resources. It also helps in matching users needs with knowledge resources. It also help in taking decisions in global and futuristic perspective.

The establishment o Knowledge Centre should result in:

- a. High employment generation outside the Government;
- b. Higher industrial growth;
- c. Higher productivity;
- d. Higher standards of line in the rural and semi-urban sectors;
- f. Appropriate use of finances through banks and other funding agencies;
- g. Higher growth in human development;
- i. More revenue for the Government; etc.

These objective can be fulfill by transforming Libraries into Knowledge Centre There is also the need to establish the National Knowledge Centre in order to coordinate the activities of the knowledge Centers.

### The Basic Principles

The following approaches need to be adopted in the development of a Knowledge Centre:

#### The Resources

1. Knowledge adds value to a library. The more it holds knowledge in different formats and on different subjects the more important it is;
2. Skill knowledge is available with highly experienced individuals. Collect it;
3. Knowledge assets of Libraries to library. They also depend upon the qualified staff that the library has for collecting knowledge resources for the library. Thus every good library with a potential to become a Knowledge Centre should have good knowledge assets and control access mechanism to access knowledge available in other parts of the world.
4. Provide assistance in creating and maintaining the knowledge Map in each discipline in which you are interested;
5. Develop the means for libraries to store/ facilitate access all knowledge sources;
6. Select content which is most appropriate to the needs of the user;
7. Add value the content as an ongoing system. Make it available in digital form with best search facilities;
8. Package knowledge for every user;
9. Information resources available in different language are tapped;

## Technical Services

1. Knowledge Management helps in transforming information, data and other knowledge resources into “useful knowledge”. Adopt it.
2. The Technologies to be adopted include: Web portals discussion and chat technologies, electronic message board, synchronous interaction tools, and search and data mining tools.
3. Contribute to the struggle of your organization for introducing new techniques.
4. As global competition intensifies, there are great expectation that knowledge that knowledge-based computer systems (e.g. expert systems or decision support systems) could be employed as knowledge Managements tools.
5. Innovation is one of the attributes of knowledge management and libraries have to be more innovative so that they can achieve a competitive advantage over those libraries and institutions that are not modernized.
6. produce a Knowledge Centre Current Awareness Bulletin and service leaflets.
7. Arrange expert advice. Information can be incomplete without appropriate inputs to it which are based on the experiences available in the heads of individuals (implicit or tacit) and their files/records (explicit) on a given subject. Information becomes value added as a result.
8. Barriers in the creation and dissemination of knowledge need to be removed. Be part of strategic knowledge networks;
9. Coordinate with a large number of decentralized information centers in India and abroad;
10. Bridging of information on a given issue, human experience available on that issue and the precise requirements of users interested in that knowledge needs to be achieved by the knowledge Centers.

### Manpower

1. Arrange training for staff regularly to manage changes. Use of human expertise and modern systems should work hand in hand.

### The Users

1. The users should not be subjected to unnecessary information overload. Focus on customer satisfaction which leads to customer success.

As such each issue or concept needs to be dealt with in such a way that any user can get access to knowledge available on that issue or concept without facing the barriers of any kind. The Knowledge Centers will have to achieve this in order to let users make best use of available knowledge.

### The New Content

Every day new development are talking place in the knowledge sector. These have to be captured on each subject and preserved and presented in the digital form. Eventually a library of topic in digital form in chosen fields will get developed with link and in house resources all ready for the users twenty four hours thought the year. It should also include in a Public Library.

- a. knowledge for the Unemployed;
- b. Knowledge for the Disabled;
- c. Knowledge for the Old Population;
- d. Knowledge for the Low Income, with Low Technical and Educational skills;
- e. Health and Welfare (primate information on health sanitation, water, environment, etc.
- f. Agriculture (Appropriate Information on seeds, herbs, crops, seasons, etc.;
- g. Education (Language and literature, teaching, aids general science, geographic information, general history current affairs, etc.);
- h. General Information (information on marketing of agriculture produce ,government policies within the State and in other States, transportation, employment, development programmers, finance and credit, legal etc.; and



i. Small Scale Industries (information on establishing small scale industries and units for marking every individual and family financially self sufficient).

The content to be demand drive and should cover the precise required has to be demands drive and should cover the precise requirements of the community. The information provided to the users has to be area specific so that it is used for development purposes. The information provided to the users has to be area specific so that it is used for developmental purpose. The information such as prices of agriculture products, market information, health care facilities available, details of financial centre etc. which are area-specific are useful to Knowledge Centers serving a community. A Knowledge Centre can use different types of methodologies for collecting information, processing it and making it available to users. Value is added to the raw information by using various methods, including the translation of text, inputs from experts, use of multimedia, use of broadcasting, use of wide area network facilities etc. In a wide area network information can be uploaded through local units, kiosks and the necessary exchanged fast.

## **Knowledge Centers**

### **Knowledge Centre Facilities**

In order to provide access to appropriate knowledge, knowledge Centre facilities need to be started in libraries. The main objectives in promoting Knowledge Centers would be to;

1. Coordinate with Knowledge Centers in different States In the country;
2. Serve the National Knowledge Centre;
3. Promote the development of collections on important subject in libraries;
4. Create databases, development catalogues and index in machine readable form using international standards of physical and electronic resources;
6. Give integrated access to information available on the subject and collect relevant information on such subjects from other sources.
7. Connects each components of knowledge with a set of expert and development an active database on the basis of opinion gives by expert;
8. Develop links with resources both physical such as institutions and individuals, and, electronic such as electronic resources available through the internet;
9. Capture knowledge from projects, assignments, gray literature, case studies, etc. on gives subject and make that knowledge accessible in database form;
10. Give as much information to the users as the users need to complete their assignments;
11. Make each Knowledge Centre as a one-stop centre for accessing knowledge on different subjects or topic of interest to users In the public libraries; and
12. Trains every user in accessing information and guide the users to appropriate resources.

### **The Link**

Thus knowledge centre will develop link to :

- a. Already existing resources;
- b. Online Journal;
- c. Web sites;
- d. Full text resources including e-books;
- e. Updates of online resources: and
- f. Interactive Websites on issue of interest to users

### **Types of Knowledge Centers**

The type of the Knowledge Centre will change in application and resources from rural to the urban setting, from trading to the industrial setting, from illiterate to the literate settings among a host of setting that each social and cultural environment brings with itself. This will also include the user's inputs and their interactions with the specialists.

Among the core range of services to be provided by the Knowledge Centers, growing information resources would be great help on each and every topic research. It would keep in view the latest developments, comparisons, and advantages of the new technologies and the requirement.

### Concluding Remarks

Sums up the new role of public libraries as knowledge centre by taking virtual in addition to physical roles, offer free access to large-scale data banks with competence in guiding retrieval of valuable versions freely and transport public libraries into informal knowledge centre in close collaboration with knowledge partners. The public libraries will have to public. Various agencies can undertake this role. Public Libraries are however, well suited for this job and need to play a major role in this important mission. Thus the transformation of public libraries into Knowledge Centers becomes essential. Such centre's should be opened in every village and town, the departments of libraries into knowledge mission. Thus the transformation of public libraries onto Knowledge Centers becomes essential. Such centers should be opened in every village and town. The Departments of Library and Information Science in the University will have to be converted into the Departments of Knowledge Technology. Liberal initial support needs to be given by the Centre and State Governments for modernizing public libraries as Knowledge Centre's; and for opening new Knowledge Centre's. Appropriate content needs to be developed bearing in mind the specific requirements of each Centre. It is hoped that in course of time Knowledge Centre's will also act as private enterprises and can serve the knowledge society. The popularity of a Knowledge Centre will depend upon its efficiency in giving qualitative knowledge to people. With the National knowledge Commission taking major interest in the modernization of libraries, it is hoped that the Government of India and State Governments will give priority to public libraries and modernize them slowly into knowledge Centre's.

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