

Research Article

Pandemic Era is now an Opportunity for Library Professionals to Transform Libraries - Study

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A B S T R A C T

COVID-19 is a global health crisis, Pandemic extended as a wave in all continents. Library professionals were looking for the correct solution to provide possible services to these important situations. There is need to be familiar with the latest strategy to help pandemic users such as: several important strategies, including health awareness programs, provide research support and meet research needs from regular readers. During COVID-19, just like medical and emergency medical staff, library professionals also need to be ready, to provide the best possible service to students, teachers, researchers and other readers, because reading is a powerful tool, not only does it develop literacy, but it also has the capacity to think differently about the world we live in. But in the face of our new reality, reading is a powerful tool. Libraries needed to foster a new vision of making all services and information ubiquitous and flexible, regardless of geographic limitations or time and space challenges. The purpose of this paper is to understand various libraries, learn from the Pandemic and transform the change in library and library services. This study highlights Pandemic period moment is an organizing opportunity, for every library professionals to change the library. As above quote by Sun Tzu, guides us to look at this an opportunity to improve systems, processes and build a stronger tea.

Keywords: Library services, Pandemic period, COVID-19, Work and Home, Remote Servicing, Modern Information Networks, Virtual Library Service ICT Skill Development, Barriers

"In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity"-Sun Tzu.

Introduction

In response to the virus's dangerous effects, Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) such as universities, colleges, training centres such as ASC/HRDC, associations, and others have developed innovative academic online programmes and plans that make the most of home leisure time for academic and extension work, with the motto "access/research never stops." As a result, academics are involved in these activities, and they are familiar with online learning

methods/ tools, strategies, and engagement that will be valuable in their professional/ personal growth, and they may utilise themselves as a 'accessible resource' for the teaching community/ society.

Libraries around the world, the source of research activities, would have been wondering which services they should choose and how. Governments around the world are taking different approaches. Many states have advocated a complete closure of the system, but others have stated that they should continue to live as usual (IFLA, 2020).

In India government agencies, companies, corporate sector educational institutions have been observed to remain closed, to avoid a surge in coronavirus outbreaks, during the blockade. The library with the premises/ laboratory was also closed, so no physical access to printed or rented items was observed. Therefore, the concept of “working from home” would have been good opportunity to use home time as a quality time. Since then, several academic institutions/ groups/ associations have launched various online programs on different topics, including webinars, Faculty Development Programmes, Workshops, Quizzes, Training, Short Term Courses and more. People such as scientists, researchers, teachers, and librarians have tried to take advantage of this tenure of by, participating in these online programs and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there are significant changes to in services/ operations, including library services, before and after the blockade period.

The Crux of the Impact of COVID-19 on Library and Library Professionals

Academic libraries, like public libraries, have played an important role in the dissemination of information both inside their institutions and outside to the general public. This study demonstrates that libraries have always been a driving force, for academics and their community. Due to careful planning and adherence to a strict social distance policy, libraries were, a better support system for academics throughout any pandemic. Despite a number of setbacks, libraries have maintained their role in higher education throughout this pandemic period.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, tight coordination between libraries and academic publishers allowed libraries to play a significant role in the education sector, while also serving the goals of the government and institutions. Being prepared is the greatest way to, ensure that the preceding process is followed. Libraries have responded by launching a variety of initiatives, both during and after the outage. According to the report, virtualization was a critical component during the outbreak. As a result, digital libraries are planned to receive, more than half of the annual library budget.

Remote Servicing

Remote access has been a reality for libraries throughout the pandemic. India’s libraries experienced the same problem, as libraries across the world. During the crisis, libraries in India took all necessary safeguards to safeguards, library materials and library staff and readers. In terms of community development, academics and governments have benefited from the libraries’ engagement in, numerous awareness programmes during the pandemic. Many patrons around the world were new to digital tools.

An uninterrupted, continuous, fast internet connection would have been the main channel, for accessing online conference, along with other ICT infrastructure such as computer, laptop, smartphone, i-pod and power supplies.

Virtual Library Service

- Virtual referral service like chat/ email
- Self check-in and book check-out
- Give access to materials by libraries on online mode by scanning few pages of articles/ chapters (taking care of fair use)
- Lib Guide list of resources available in the library
- Dynamic content updates and conveniences for library websites tutorial.

Online Events Apps such as the webinars and other courses/ events are hosted online via the following web platforms/ apps/ software: Depending on the number of attendees and the length of the online event meeting, these platforms have free/ paid criteria. Adobe Connect, Airmeeet, Any Meeting; Cisco Webex, Click Meeting, Facebook Live, Google Meet/ Classroom / Hangouts; GoToWebina / GoToMeeting, jitsi Meeting, Microsoft Teams (MS Teams); Moodle; Skype, Telegram, Youtube Channel, Zoom and many more.

Resources for Library Service Some major Institutions/ Publishers/ Institutions/ Vendors had given benefit to the scholars and the general patrons, to strengthen their research missions and take advantage of the embargo period for reading and extended work. For communication, the libraries initiated WhatsApp groups, Telegram Channel such as Library2020, LIS Webinar Alert, MUCLA Maharashtra, FAMT Warrior, SUCLA, SUK Teachers, University Teachers, KRC Teachers, and UGC, NTA, CBSE, NET, SET, KOHA are searched daily.

UGC had notified in 2020 to support the culture of “working from home”, in faculty/ student studies and to, maximize and productively utilize difficult blackout periods. Swayam Online Course, UG/ PG MOOC, ePG Pathshala, UG Course e-Content Courseware, Swayamprabha, CEC UGC YouTube Channel, National Digital Library, Shodhganga, e-ShodhSindhu, Vidwan and more. In addition to the online information sources above, the DIKSHA e-learning platform/ Diksha mobile app. e-Balbharati/ e-balbharati app. NROER (National Repository of Open Education Resources), Global Digital Library, etc. Such ICT tools are “from the visualization of home learning. Open/ free electronic remote resource services available for readers such as:

Towards Modern Information Networks

Many libraries have been transforming their services from traditional libraries, to modern information networks. For example, in Denmark and the United Kingdom, restrictions on lending materials have been raised to achieve educational goals. Similarly, in France the redistribution

S. No.	Resource Service
1.	TIFR
2.	Springer-Nature
3.	SIAM
4.	Sage
5.	Proquest
6.	National Digital Library of India (NDLI)
7.	Jstor
8.	INFLIBNET center-- e-Shodh Sindhu
9.	IFLA-- COVID-19
10.	Elsevier
11.	Cambridge University Press
12.	Annual review
13.	American Society for Microbiology (ASM)-- COVID-19/ SARS-CoV-2 Research Published Across ASM Journals
14.	American Institute of Physics
15.	AICTE
16.	ACM Digital Library

of e-book budgets would have met the needs of their researchers. Publishers Macmillan and Penguin have created the easiest way for public libraries to buy e-books and access rentals. Similarly, some audiobooks were also available. The Internet Archive has also endeavoured, to provide researchers with large amounts of information during this difficult time. Hathi Trust also provides access to rent out materials in digital format (Ali & Gatiti, 2020).

Several universities also are presenting statistics literacy talents online to assist their college students to perform their studie sonline. One such instance is Hawai Lovel and Colorado libraries in the U.S. Imparting online studies during pandemic. France has also requested publishers to make online materials available for free. The JISC in the United Kingdom has made open access materials available. Some examples are the Australian Library Association and the Irish Library. They have negotiated with national level publishers to provide, online access to satisfy their customers.

Reappraisal of Library Environment

Libraries around the world face the challenge of providing access to their collection sand services. Libraries of all kinds are pushing digital offerings in times of the corona pandemic. However physical resources are often most requested by users, in research and development of medical/ scientific organization. Several libraries have released digital libraries, highlights of services and content

for holding Virtual Exhibitions, on the website and online Lets Read Together campaign. Much effort has also been made to improve, access to the Internet. Both online and offline library resources, such as Increase the number of e-Books/ e-Journals/ CD-DVD etc. To reduce the risk of spreading the virus COVID19 pandemic, does not seem to be eradicated completely.

The strategic planning of libraries would be, necessary to overcome the unanticipated changes, brought on by disasters such as the COVID-19 epidemic. Libraries must provide an equitable chance for each worker to learn new skills, understand the practical consequences of various library technologies and procedures, varied ways to engaging their communities, and establish connections in order to deal with unforeseen situations. In the library, staff professional development is just as crucial as collection growth and space design. Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, among others, are critical tools that assist library professionals, in reaching out to the users with information services.

Objectives of The Paper

Objectives of the present study are as follows

1. To explore ICT Skills (due to use of ICT technology during pandemic era) possessed by the library and information professionals, after the pandemic period.
2. To know/understand the opinion of Library Professionals towards Information Communication Technology.
3. To Identify barriers to applying ICT to library scenarios.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been formulated to achieve the objectives mentioned above:

1. Will use of ICT technology, during pandemic help to improve ICT skill levels of library professionals?
2. Technology, during pandemic help to improve ICTskill-levels of library professionals?
3. Is the reachange in library professionals opinion, towards information and communications technology?
4. What are the barriers in applying ICT to technology-enabled library scenarios?

Scope and Limitation of the study

This study is based upon the survey research method of 100 Library Professionals working in the higher education colleges/ institutions of government, autonomous/ self-financed acadmic colleges, offering General as well as Professional Education Courses, located in Mumbai. The library professional from the colleges, institutions and educational organizations located in the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation (GMMC), Thane Municipal Corporation, New Mumbai Municipal Corporation, Panvel

Municipal, Palghar Municipal Corporation, Virar Municipal Corporation, Vasai Municipal Corporation, Mira Bhayander Municipal Corporation, Kalyan Municipal Corporation, Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation and Ambarnath Municipal Corporation are contributed in the present work.

Research Methodology

The structured questionnaire was used to collect the relevant data from January-June 2022, from the library professionals working in the government, autonomous/self-financed academic colleges in delhi as mentioned earlier. The 200 questionnaires were circulated among library professionals via email and social media, 100 responses are received. MS Excel is used to analyze collected data. The questionnaire contains the psychometric rating Scale Likert five-point scale is used to, understand impact of COVID-19 on library professionals in Mumbai and Suburban area.

Table 1. Automation Status of Libraries

Automation Status	No. of Libraries
Hybrid	66
Fully Automated	25
Partial Automated	9
Total	100

Table 1, Skill development is necessary for automation of library functions and administration, 66 Respondents informed that, they are using the libraries that is Hybrid library, containing a mix of traditional print library resources and of electronic resources. 9 Respondents informed that, their libraries are partially automated. 25 respondent informed that libraries are fully automated.

Table 2. Method of Communication by Library Professionals

S. No.	Method	Respondents
1.	E-mail	17
2.	Social Media/ whatsapp Chat	53
3.	Via Phone Calls	30

In Table 2, shows method of communication used by library professionals of the study. As the world changes, so do our communication methods. Whatsapp would be a useful tool for library teams to communicate with users and prospects as well as follow up with other externals. Email (or e-mail) communication is the exchange of short informational messages over a computer network between at least two people. These are messages with plain text, images or document attachments. However, when it comes to communicating with patrons, emails remain the most effective method. After the study it has been clear that,

53 respondents mentioned that communication between library staff and library members continued and social media/ WhatsApp chat is comparatively more, as compared to via phone calls is (30%) and E-mail (17%).

ICT abilities are an critical requirement for pupil necessities for maximum expert roles. Also ICT abilities assist library team of workers arrange their workload, stream line processes, and get entry to virtual information. When performing administrative/ managing duties, improving ICT skills is a sensible way to give professionals a compet-

Table 3. Opinion about ICT skills by Library Professionals

S. No.	ICT Skill	Ex-tremely poor	Poor	Avg.	Above Avg.	Ex-cel-lent
1.	Asynchronous Library Services FAQ, Email, webform etc.)	3	5	23	33	36
2.	Cataloguing and Metadata	7	6	22	18	47
3.	Cloud Computing Based Library Service	9	10	23	31	27
4.	CMS	6	11	35	26	22
5.	DBMS	7	9	26	34	24
6.	Electronic Bulletin Board	11	9	23	29	28
7.	Information Retrieval	6	7	30	28	29
8.	Library Automation	3	0	17	24	56
9.	Ms-Office (Word, Excel, power-point)	3	0	17	23	57
10.	Operating System LINUX / Windows	7	7	21	37	28
11.	RDBMS	10	9	35	27	19

12.	RFID/bar-code Technology	11	13	19	17	40
13.	Subject Gateways	5	4	31	29	31
14.	Synchronous Library Services (VoIP, chat etc.)	8	14	24	31	23
15.	Web Page Design	8	8	37	22	25

itive advantage. ICT Skills of library professionals towards ICT analyzed and presented in Table 3, from Figure 1, majority of respondents have magnificent ICT Skills: 92% respondents opined for Asynchronous Library Services (FAQ, Email, webform etc.), Library Automation skills by 97% respondents, MS-Office (Word, Excel, Power-point) by 97% respondents, Subject Gateways 91% respondents.

ICT proved beneficial to do work in the library and library staff works quickly and application of ICT is necessary to provide quality, efficient and smooth functioning of library services. After analyzing and interpreting the collected data shown in Tables 3, reflected use of ICT technology during pandemic era, helped to improve above mentioned ICT skill levels of library professionals.

Opinion of Library Professionals towards ICT in above Table 4, total 87% respondents strongly agree and agreed that ICT applications increased during and after the lockdown period in the library. 84% Respondents feel, ICT has reduced functional work load of LIS professionals. 97% respondents expressed that, Application of ICT is necessary to provide-quality library services for library. Due to pandemic period, just like unemployment in other sectors, ICT reduces manpower requirements of the library, opined by 55%

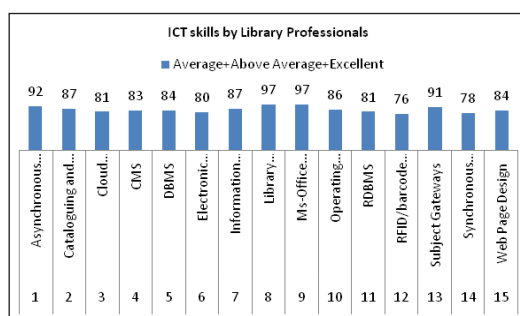


Figure 1. CT Skills by Library Professionals

Table 4. Opinion of Library Professionals Towards ICT

S. No.	Opinion towards ICT	Strongly agree	Agree	Un-decided	Dis-agree	Strongly dis-agree
1.	ICT Application Increased During and after the Lock-down Period in the Library	47	40	7	4	2
2.	ICT has Reduced functional Work-load of LIS Professionals	56	48	8	7	1
3.	ICT is Necessary to provide Quality Library Services	59	38	3	0	0
4.	ICT is beneficial to do Library Works Quickly	53	45	1	1	0
5.	ICT is Beneficial to do Library Works with Accuracy	42	50	6	0	2

6.	ICT reduces manpower requirements of the library	42	23	3	25	17
7.	Library Professionals cannot perform any task or activities significantly without application of ICT	4	3	3	40	50

2.	Lack of ICT skills among LIS professionals	11	18	6	57	5
3.	Lack of Internet Connectivity	17	54	7	11	8
4.	Lack of IT Infrastructure in Library	28	47	5	11	6
5.	Lack of Knowledge of New Technology	17	43	9	19	9
6.	Lack of manpower in Library	25	61	3	7	1
7.	Lack of Motivation	10	49	6	21	11
8.	Lack of Support from Library Staff	6	24	3	46	18
9.	Not facing any Challenge	9	14	7	46	21
10.	Unwillingness	11	27	8	36	15

respondents. 98% respondents feel that ICT is beneficial to do library works quickly. Even though Lack of manpower in Library, 90% respondents disagree and strongly disagree that, Library staff cannot perform tasks and activities without the use of ICT. library staff continued to perform their task or activities with same spirit. After analyzing and interpreting the collected data shown in Table 4, change in library professionals opinion is visible clearly.

The study is not possible without barriers, about the application of ICT in the Library Scenario to use technology, it is based on a small focus group in college level, given in Table 5, In challenges to use technology, most of 87% respondents, strongly agree that they have to spend additional time and work in study. 32% respondents felt that there is lack of ICT skills among LIS Professionals. Total 74% professionals reported that there is still lack of smooth internet connectivity after the lock down period. 78% respondent felt that there is lack of IT Infrastructure in

Table 5. Barriers in applying ICT to technology enabled library scenarios

S. No.	Barriers	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Additional Time/work	27	57	3	8	2

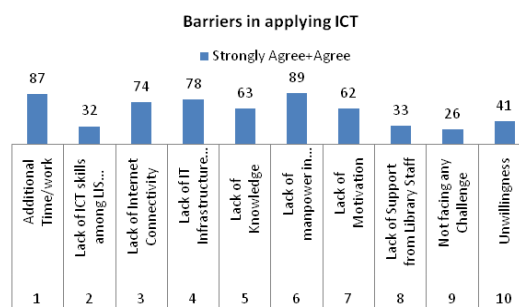


Figure 2. Barriers in applying ICT

library. 63% respondents feel still there is lack of knowledge of new technologies. 89% respondents have experienced that after lock down pandemic period, lack of manpower is found in library. 33% respondents expressed that even after pandemic period have not getting support from library staff and 62% Respondents didn't felt motivated. Table 5 and Figure 2, reflected upon the barriers in applying ICT to technology enabled library scenarios need to solve problems.

Conclusion

During this corona crisis, pandemic period teaches that is day-to-day, professional, and research tasks are completed under the maxim "working from home" through digital transformation in online mode. It also teaches that a positive attitude, faith, and hard work are important life tools for dealing with life's crises. Therefore, the situation among scientists is moving towards "digital citizenship." In the future, the emergence of technology and needs will greatly increase the space for such online events. Great anticipation or we can say a chance to learn from the pandemic for the library professionals, in relation to resources, services, skill building, service providing. Recommendation for considerations are such as financial resources to develop library systems that can be used during a pandemic, awareness of emerging technologies for library professionals, access to online databases and publishers by competent authorities that can be used during any pandemic. An intensive training program for library users and for librarians. A public awareness program by library staff that can educate customers about the pandemic.

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