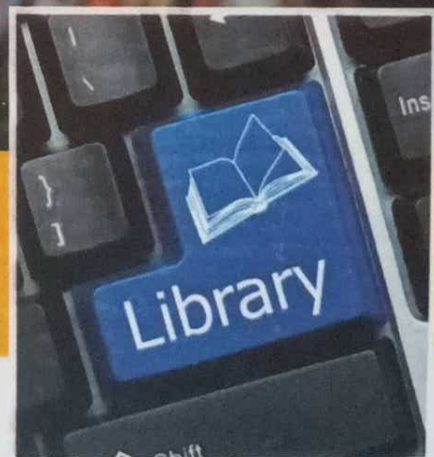
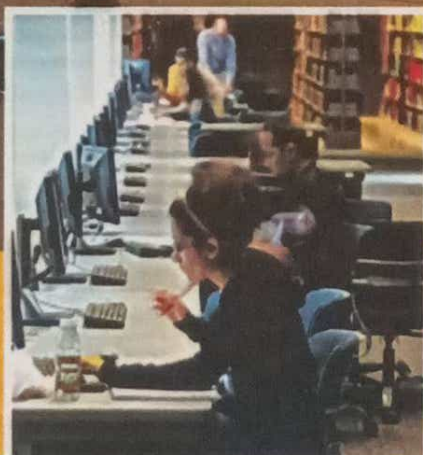
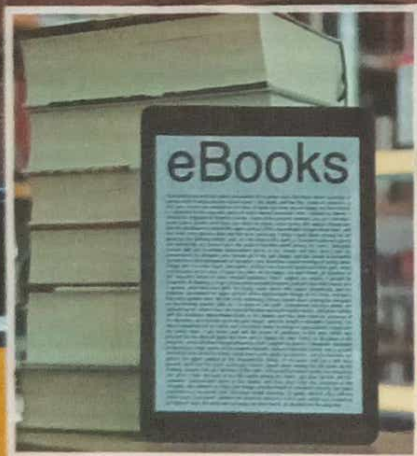
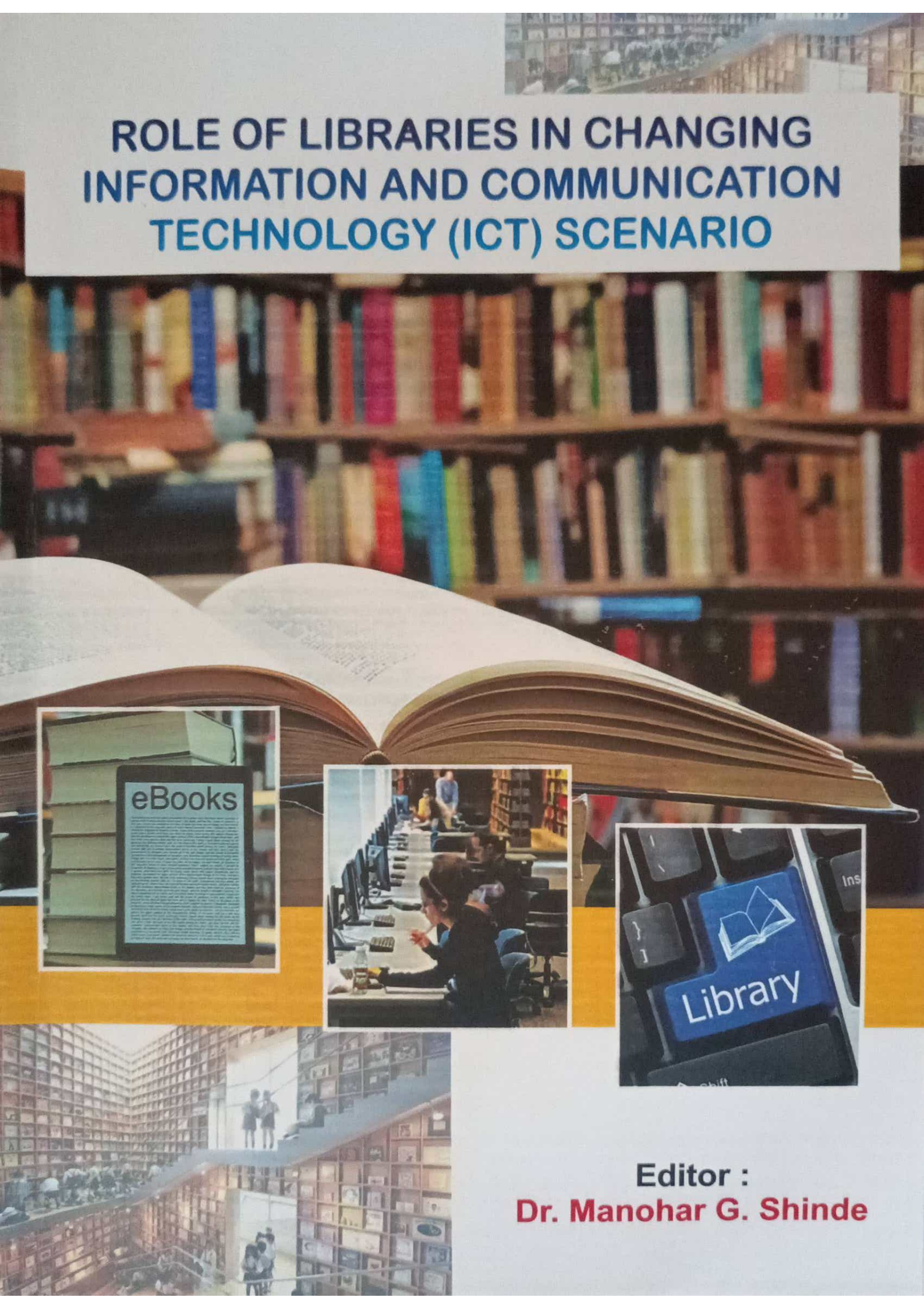


ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN CHANGING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SCENARIO



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CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN MODERN ERA

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Kavathe Mahankal, Sangli

Abstract

The basic goal of library and information profession has always been to provide access to information to those who need it. The activities realizing this goal have evolved and transformed over the years. This includes - Available technology, and need of an evolving information society. Information activities have been guided by the developments in the field of storages, presentation and archiving of knowledge, collection development and organization of knowledge, information explosion and computers in information retrieval. Librarian and information professional involved in information gathering, storage, retrieval and dissemination on one hand and on the other hand the computer specialists who supports the library and informational professionals in this endeavor. For successful implementation of Digital Library, it is essential that LIS professionals are well trained and possess requisite knowledge and skills in this respect.

Key Words: Library and information science, Traditional library, Hybrid library, Librarianship, Profession, etc.

Introduction:

Traditionally librarian is known as a person located in the library building carrying out the tasks like acquiring, organizing, preserving the printed documents besides helping the readers in locating the information needed by them. In the last decades of the twentieth century this picture has rapidly changed under the influence of advances in computer and communication fields. The paper collections have given place to networked, computer resident, user searchable collections like bibliographic databases, Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC) obliterating the need for the user to visit the library building. With the digitization of ever increasing number of collections and advances made in computer/communication hardware and software seamless access to digitized information located in geographically diverse locations has become a reality. The walls of library are thus pulled down and a "Virtual Library" in Cyber Space came into being. The Virtual Library brought in its wake new flavors in the form of digitizing not only printed material but also pictures, maps, scenarios, paintings and sounds and presenting them all in a lively show in a theatre like environment. Where do librarians stand in this scenario and where their profession is headed is the nagging question faced by one and all in the profession. This article tries to focus on the impact of Internet and World Wide Web on the traditional library profession and on the opportunities and options open to the librarians. Traditionally librarians have been information providers for centuries. They now have the opportunity to use modern tools to provide quicker, more complete, and more sophisticated service to the users. Databases and reference sources can be queried via the Internet and World Wide Web. Perhaps no innovation has impacted the library profession to such a great

extent as the Internet, World Wide Web and networked resources. The interconnection of world through the use of Internet and Web has changed the fundamentals, paradigms and culture of libraries and librarian once for all.

Traditional Library:

Traditional Libraries gives emphasis on storage and preservation of physical items, particularly books and periodicals those in which librarian were a custodian of the library. Information is physically assembled in one place; users must travel to the library to learn what is there and make use of it.

Hybrid Library:

Hybrid library is a term used by librarians to describe libraries containing a mix of traditional print library resources and the growing number of electronic resources.

Automated Library:

A library where access points and housekeeping operations are computerized is called an automated library. The graphic records are still print-on-paper publication.

Electronic Library - Digital Library:

A digital library is a special library with a collection of digital objects that can include text, visual material, audio material, video material, stored as electronic media formats. The access point as well as the graphic records are in electronic/digital form when these electronic/digital libraries are connected via various networks, particularly the INTERNET, this is called virtual library.

Digital library is not only digitization of physical resources, but also thoughtful organization of electronic collection for better access. Such organization provides coherence to a massive amount of shared knowledge base. Essentially a digital library deals with organization and access of a large information repository. In all probability, digital libraries are likely to augment traditional libraries, such as an on-line card catalogue augments, rather than strictly replacing, a book collection. The reason for this could be that the digital medium tends to be better for searching and the physical medium better for reading.

Advantage of Digital Library:

Digital library has certain characteristics, which make them different from traditional library. It has expansive and accurate system of searching with large volumes of text, image and audio-video resources. Digital libraries do not need physical space to build collection and it can be accessed from anywhere, any time. Different people can access same source at the same time. The advantages of digital libraries are mentioned herein below:

- Nearly unlimited storage space at a much lower cost
- Re-allocate funds from some staff, collection maintenance, and additional books.
- No physical boundary
- Round the clock availability
- Multiple access
- Enhanced information retrieval.
- Preservation for some print material
- Added value
- Universal accessibility
- Offering online learning environment.
- Making short the chain from author to user.
- Save preparation/ conservation cost, space and money.

Disadvantage of Digital Library:

New technology has brought many advantages but simultaneously it also has certain disadvantage

- Costly affair
- Technology obsolescence (Hardware & Software)
- Storage media relate
- Lack of constant and consistent power supply and Internet facilities.
- Lack of preservation of a fixed copy (for the record and for duplicating scientific research)
- Lack of preservation of "best in class"
- Difficulty in knowing and locating everything that is available, and differentiating valuable from useless information.
- Job loss for traditional publishers and librarians
- Costs are spread and many become hidden.
- Lack of screening or validation
- Security against hacking & sabotage
- User education and training

Types of Resources:

The resources provided by the libraries through internet can be divided in three types purchased or subscribed, from different publishers or through consortium and open access resources. These resources get access to the full text materials by two methods:

- a. Username and password
- b. Internet Protocol (IP) address based Access

Librarianship: As a Profession:

In ancient civilizations, librarians were called by different names as keeper of books, keeper of tablets, custodian of books, and master of books. But these custodian role of ancient civilization was added scholar role, when the ancient libraries were under the charge of scholars.

Today, Librarianship is a combination of various kinds of attainments and personal qualities. He is an administrator and scholar who work for people. The librarian of today is concerned not only with the collection, preservation, analysis, storage and dissemination of information, but also performing the professional work.

Originally, the term 'Profession' comes from the term 'profess' which means to confess religious belief. This term denotes the body of knowledge, skills, and many more characteristics.

In western countries, many studies on the aspects of librarianship have been made. Melville Dewey was perhaps the first person, who realized the professional role of librarian in 1876. The first systematic approach to librarianship in India can be dated from Dr. Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science. Dr. Ranganathan and his followers worked very hard for standardizing librarianship as a profession. Dr. Ranganathan always worried about the social functions of librarians and their status in the society. Government of India has accepted the recommendations of UGC and librarians in India were socially recognized as teachers. Today, the librarianship has following professional characteristics

- 1 Specialized knowledge, skill and intellectual activity
2. Research and continuous updating knowledge.

3. Standard terminology and philosophy
4. Social necessity and recognition
5. Professional organization and membership
6. Stability of profession as career
7. Code of ethics for practitioners
8. Autonomy and authority of profession

Changing Role of Library Professional in Digital Age:

The ready availability of information on the Internet, and its widespread use, really presents Librarians with an opportunity, not a threat. Technology Savvy users realize they need help, which Librarians can provide. Librarians now face difficulties and complicity challenges due to new trends in information access.

In the present technological/Internet era the professionals have to change themselves as the information profession is being changed. Now information specialists have to work as e-information resources in which various professional groups are expected to map strategies that leads to produce, manage, maintain and service the information. Information professional has to work as:

Librarian- In addition to being library manager, they also act as collection development, technical processors and so on, taking care of information quality.

Information Manager- To meet information need of the user they should know how to manage and deliver appropriate information services.

Information adviser/instructor- Ensure that user/staff know how to access relevant sources of information (literacy).

System & Networking- For delivery of information to their users in an appropriate manner develop and design appropriate systems.

Skills, knowledge, competencies required for LIS Professionals:

Following skills have to be develop by every library professional to provide desire information to the user from all available sources.

I) - Knowledge & Skills:

Librarians need to know understand -

- Knowledge resources (books, journals, i.e. resources, Internet)
- Teleological facilities and resources (computer, online catalogues, websites, LANs file servers etc.)
- Financial resources (Budget) Human resources (Skills for manpower training)

II) - Competencies that required possessing in LIS professional:

- Acceptance of change.
- Knowledge of user interaction with knowledge resources.
- Provide quality service.
- Be adoptive, flexible and resistant.
- Be resourceful
- Posses excellent communication skills, constantly update personal knowledge base by keeping in touch with the latest development
- Create awareness among the users, make them accept the changes
- Be an information management strategist, etc.

III)- Technical Knowledge required :

- Operating systems - Windows, UNIX, LINUX.
- Word processing, Graphics, Spread sheet & Presentations.
- Database Management Systems including the skills in Bibliographic Database Management Systems.
- General purpose programming, Networking
- Web page Development and Content Management
- Information Retrieval software for online, CD-ROM and Internet.
- Library software packages, acquaintances with Digital Library Tools.

Conclusion:

Academic Librarians profession has reached the height of a full-fledged discipline in present era. This discipline is also changing according to social and technological changes. After independence, due to the need of qualified library personnel, a number of LIS schools started in India. Through the divine and service oriented activity, this profession is globally accepted and increasing day by day. Thus the future of library professional is very bright. It cannot be hired by any other profession.

The role of librarian has changed in the digital library era. It is, therefore pertinent on the part of the librarian to acquire new skills required for developing and managing the digital libraries. The library and information professionals are required to acquire such knowledge and skills as the library is one of the highly IT influenced service profession. The empowerment of library and information professionals with IT skills is aimed at providing services that are expected of from the clientele in the new environment.

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