



To study the challenges public libraries, confront in closing the digital divide

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Abstract

The term "digital divide" refers to the widening disparity between regions of the world that have easy access to technology-based knowledge, information, ideas, and information and others that do not. Similarly, Salina (2003) defines the "digital divide" as the difference between people and/or groups who can improve their quality of life using electronic information and communication resources, such the internet, and those who cannot. At first, the term "divide" described the rift that was developing between the wealthier and less fortunate segments of society. Nonetheless, some were discussing the digital gap as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon, while some disputed its existence and others asserted that it will go away on its own. The World Bank (2002), cited in Ani, Uchendu, and Astseye's (2007) paper, asserts that developing nations lose out on opportunities if they postpone expanding their access to and utilization of information technology (IT), which is the collective term for ICT, in the quickly changing electronic world. The research asserts that ICT is essential to economic growth and development because it provides chances for global integration while maintaining traditional nations' identities. ICTs may also empower people and communities, improve the economic and social well-being of the impoverished, and raise the efficacy and efficiency of the public sector.

Keywords: Information Technology, Electronic World, Efficacy, Dynamic

Introduction

Basic circumstances for life learning, autonomous decision-making, and the cultural development of the individual and social community are provided by the public library, the local knowledge hub. It serves as a local information hub, providing its members with access to a wide range of expertise and information. It is a vital force for knowledge, culture, and education as well as a vital tool for promoting interpersonal harmony and spiritual well-being. The following public library missions were proposed in the 1994 UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. In essence, these represent the public library's dedication to society (IFLA/UNESCO, 1994).

Self-education centre of the society

Public libraries contribute to giving the general public the chance to educate themselves informally, without any formalities, constraints, or impositions. It implies that a public library can help someone without a formal education by providing him with the means to educate himself and an

opportunity to grow creatively. Furthermore, those with formal education might also benefit from the public library. They can use the public library's resources to retain, enhance, and broaden their knowledge regardless of their educational background. A person's formal education ends at a certain point, but the extent of self-education offered by the public library is lifelong learning.

Community information centres

Meeting the informational requirements of the community it serves is one of a public library's primary duties. It should guarantee access to all of the local population's information demands. Communities in different places may differ from one another. Therefore, all aspects of the community in question should be taken into account while planning community information services. The two categories of information that society needs are:

1. A person's information needs concerning his basic necessities, including food, clothing, health, shelter, the environment, travel, etc.

2. Details about people' social, economic, and political obligations and duties, as well as the operations of local self-government, etc.
3. Community information centers ought to focus on the social, economic, and cultural advancement of rural residents.

Cultural centre for the society

One of the primary functions of public libraries is to promote intercultural communication and the diversity of cultures within society. Public libraries should accommodate the cultural needs of the community and host cultural events or performances of all visual and performing arts to draw patrons and preserve the cultural diversity of society. The IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines state that the public library plays a crucial role in fostering the community's creative and cultural growth as well as in forming and preserving its cultural identity (IFLA/UNESCO, 2001). Public libraries ought to be respectable, sophisticated gathering spots.

Centre for recreation and healthy use of leisure time

There is an increasing risk that people are not paying enough attention to local life, failing to participate in elections and other community or neighborhood activities, and instead choosing to live a virtual existence that suits their own interests. Given that the public library serves as a hub for community gatherings, enjoyment, and the wise use of free time, libraries can help close this gap in this case. The UNESCO Manifesto states that the public library's mission is to "refresh man's spirit by providing books for relaxation and pleasure" (IFLA/UNESCO, 2004). Books for leisure reading, spiritual growth, travel, biographies, sports, and games are all available at public libraries. In summary, public libraries offer everything needed for leisure time that is spent in a healthy way.

Supporting role of public library in literacy activities

One of the goals of public libraries is to eradicate illiteracy from society. By offering the following resources, public libraries actively participate in postliteracy initiatives.

1. A distinct classroom dedicated to neoliterates
2. An excellent selection of audiovisual and literary resources for neoliterates.
3. A consistent budgetary allocation for neoliterates in libraries
4. Neoliterate information services
5. Skilled employees who have received the necessary training to meet the needs of neoliterates.

Statement of the problem

In this study, the state of library automation libraries is to be examined. This study examines the usage of electronic resources in the libraries of arts and science colleges, including the state of library services in automated libraries, library networks, electronic access points, electronic databases, and e-journals. One could gauge the availability of electronic sources like DVDs, CDs, audio cassettes, and video cassettes. The status of library automation with regard to book purchase, annual stock verification, access to bibliographic databases, circulation, and OPAC is taken into account in this study.

Objectives of the study

1. To research the challenges public libraries confront in closing the digital divide.
2. To make recommendations for appropriate measures to reduce the digital divide between rural and urban areas.
3. To learn how college library customers in the surveyed environment feel about the library's services and amenities.

Review of literature: A study by Das, K. C. & Satapathy, B. K. (2015) ^[1] evaluated the several facets of public libraries working with literacy programs to improve the rural development of Odisha's tribal communities. Data was gathered via a questionnaire. According to a study, the tribal population is not fully aware of public libraries. Because the tribal members lack literacy and are unaware of their signatures, they find it extremely difficult to interpret written documents and information. According to the report, the government ought to give public library development in tribal districts top priority and create and maintain infrastructure for communication assistance.

As a model public institution, the Prague Municipal Library's public library services and efficacy were assessed by Stejskal & Hajek (2015) ^[2]. For the study, a questionnaire survey approach was used. The worth of the library was assessed using the contingent valuation method. According to the study, family income, alternative costs, and usage frequency all affect how valuable a public library is. The advantages and disadvantages of every single item in the library fund were also examined.

A study by Karkee, P. & Majumder, K. (2014) ^[3] examined library awareness among non-users of government and government-sponsored public libraries in West Bengal's Darjeeling area. A questionnaire was used to gauge their reasons for not using the library, their knowledge of the local public library, and their awareness of free reading. The outcome indicates that better public library services might persuade non-users to join.

In order to assess the usage patterns of the library's information services, Kishorekumar, S., and Lokeshanaik (2014) ^[4] performed a study among patrons of the Tumkur district central library in Karnataka. One study tool that was employed was a structured questionnaire. According to the results, the majority of library patrons attend to read magazines and news articles, with approximately 35.4% of respondents being between the ages of 21 and 25. Fiction and general knowledge books are of interest to users. Users are generally happy with the Karnataka public libraries' resources and services.

To assess the utilization of information resources and services, Reddy, S. (2014) ^[5] carried out a study in Karnataka's district central libraries and branches. The research instrument for gathering data was a questionnaire. The study assessed the branch libraries' fundamental infrastructure, human resources, and information resources. According to the report, men between the ages of 10 and 30 who have completed at least 12 years of schooling make up the majority of public library patrons. The main cause of infrequent library visits is a lack of facilities. It was suggested that Karnataka libraries urgently need to be developed in terms of their infrastructure, information resources, and services.

Research methodology

While any studies is performed, it's miles on any detailed populace. Population manner every and each entity which is to be protected under the examine or the result of the studies is supposed for those. Population of a observe may be the folks, organizations, items, events, and many others. Inside the gift look at, there are three classes of population i.e. special libraries, their customers and their library staff. General populations of unique libraries are 20, of Delhi/NCR.

The first questionnaire (For Library staff) was disbursed amongst seventy six (seventy six) respondents together with library experts, IT specialists and non-experts. Library staff in the level of peon and attendant turned into excluded. Out of the seventy six, most effective sixty (62) respondents has returned crammed in questionnaires. Some other set of questionnaire (for library customers) have been allotted to 1750 library users, out of those 1114 customers have responded the same with the reaction rate of 64%. Observation of the libraries have been also done o recognize numerous components associated with IT programs in libraries. Gathered records have been tabulated and coded the use of MS excel. Further, the statistics were analyzed the use of SPSS and MS excel software program.

Present observe has followed Descriptive-analytical method i.e. survey approach. Questionnaire approach turned into selected as the tool for survey. For carrying out this examine, units of the established questionnaires had been organized and distributed for collecting the data. Earlier than dispensing the questionnaires, a pilot observe became performed to test the validity of the questionnaire. At the bases of the result of this look at, a few amendment and correction were made in the questionnaires. Consequently, together the questionnaire have been accordingly pre-examined and finally structured maintaining in vision of targets off the have a look at.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Importance of Library Specific It Skills

Library specific IT applications	Mean	Std Dev	Rank
Open-Source software/Open access	4.434	0.117	1
Bar Code Technology	4.257	0.144	2
Digitization	4.224	0.143	3
Information search through Internet	4.118	0.113	4
Database management	4.084	0.125	5
Building Digital library	4.982	0.422	6
Managing E-Resources	4.973	0.126	7
Communal media	2.453	0.232	8
RFID Technology	2.127	0.126	9

Skills of library staff on IT based Resources/Services/tools

Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge of specific tools, services, and resources that are offered in libraries.

Table 1 shows the results of the same. The identified aspects were listed in the table from those on which respondents Building Digital Library (4.928) have the highest level of skills to those on which they have the lowest level of skills RFID Technology (2.127). With a mean score below 4, it can be noted that library staff members have lower skill levels for OPAC/Web OPAC, social media platforms, computerized indexing and abstracting services, library networking, e-resource management, and library consortiums. The respondents' skills in the remaining areas are on the upper side, with a mean value over 4.

Table 2: Skills of Library Staff

IT based Resources/Services/tools	Mean	Std Dev	Rank
Desktop	4.92	0.89	1
Printer	4.82	0.90	2
Laptop	4.77	0.88	3
Scanner	4.55	0.84	4
CD/DVD/VCD	4.32	0.92	5
Bibliographic databases	4.24	1.19	6
Full text databases	4.22	1.15	7
Search engines	4.19	1.21	8
Library related Software	4.03	0.99	9
Statistical data base	4.02	1.15	10
OPAC/Web OPAC	2.87	1.15	11
Social media sites (Like blog, orkut etc.)	2.84	1.15	12
Computerized indexing/ abstracting services	2.74	1.02	13
Library Networking	2.71	1.03	14
e-Resources (e-Books, e-journals)	2.63	0.96	15
Library consortiums	2.52	0.92	16

A comparison of the competencies by staff category. In all circumstances, it is discovered that non-professionals' skills are on the lower end. For computerized indexing and abstracting (mean 2.74), OPAC/Web OPAC (mean 2.87), statistical databases, full text databases (mean 4.22), and bibliographical databases (mean 4.24), library professionals have stronger skills than IT experts. The skills of IT workers are superior to those of librarians for the remaining categories.

Prominence of Library Websites

Websites play an important role in communicating and promoting products and services in today's world. With the importance and utility of websites in mind, librarians have spent a long time developing them for their libraries, providing users with access to information resources and services, library news and events, reference services, an online catalog, and information about other library activities.

Only when a library website is prominent and visible on the institutional website, and when a direct connection from the institute's homepage to the library website's homepage is provided, is it effective.

Table 3: Prominence of Library Websites

Prominence Library Websites		No. of Libraries	Test Statistics
Available	Yes	80 (88.8%)	$X^2=80.050$; $p=.001$
	No	10 (11.1%)	
	Total	90 (100%)	
Type	Separate Website	35 (38.8%)	$X^2=47.054$; $p=.001$
	Part of Institutional Website	50 (55.5%)	
	No Website	5 (5.55%)	
	Total	90 (100%)	

Table shows the many elements of library websites, including their availability, the type of website created to offer information, the platform used to host the library websites, and experience in maintaining library websites.

According to the survey, 80 libraries (88.8%) have websites. Since most information is now available in digital format and libraries are leveraging technology to provide information services, the library website has become the de-facto window for obtaining information. The chi-square test found a significant difference ($X^2=80.050$; $P=.001$) between website availability and non-availability, with website availability having a very high frequency.

The study also looked into whether the library's website was part of the institution's home page or if it had its own. The institutional home page was found to be part of 50 (55.5%) of the library websites. In most cases, the institutional website included a secondary link to the library webpage. Thirty-one libraries (38.8%) had their own or distinct webpages. The chi-square test found a significant difference ($X^2=47.054$; $P=.001$) between the frequency of having the institution's websites was high.

Conclusion

Now all the library authorities are understanding that there may be no way to escape automation among all the libraries. They're finding numerous methods to finance their library automation tasks. Librarians are also realizing that they cannot stay in one-of-a-kind to the trade; in any other case they will be classified old. Despite the fact that wide ranges of generation/products are available, it's miles vital for librarians to maintain a watch at the trends and to pick appropriate generation relying on the desires. Additionally, it's miles very crucial for librarians to have interaction with laptop specialists because the library automation at all degrees wishes good co- ordination amongst both these professionals.

The outcomes of the survey could be used as input for a overview of the existing statistics literacy application and library's verbal exchange strategies with the users to enhance the efficiency of library. The library area has been going through negligence from the control of and the library government due loss of their cognizance about advantage and gain of the modernized libraries for boom of studies and improvement. For that reason, libraries are not being developed at rapid pace. On this age of ICT the special

libraries must be have to be redesigned to satisfy the users' desires and to provide cutting-edge statistics offerings facilitated with the aid of ICT.

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