



## Traditional Libraries and Contemporary Changes in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Libraries

### KEYWORDS

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### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to initiate discussion among a small group of university and college library directors being convened by the Digital Library Federation (DLF) and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) to explore how and why libraries and library use are changing. This exploration is envisioned as the first step in a larger initiative that includes conducting research and presenting the research results to library directors, their provosts, presidents and faculty. The ultimate goal is to facilitate understanding of how and why libraries are changing and better position the library to meet the needs and expectations of university and college administrators and library users.

In ancient times, the libraries were known as "Saraswati Bhandars" or "Pustak Bhandars". The person taking care of these Bhandars was called as the 'custodian' or 'Saraswati Bhandarika' who was responsible for their safety from theft. When the Libraries were established with a view to provide books to readers, the concept changed to 'Librarianship'. The first diploma course in 'Library Science' was started in India by Madras University in the year 1937 and thus the term 'Library Science' became popular in India in place of librarianship. Thus the term "Saraswati Bhandars" or "Pustak bhandars" changed its nomenclature to 'Librarianship' then to 'Library science' to 'Documentation' and 'Documentation and Information Science' and then to 'Library and Information Science'. In the ancient period, it is because of the absence of printing facility, only hand written books or manuscripts were available. The basic principle of learning was by Sruti and Smriti. The role of memory was important, but human mind is not able to store all the memories all the time in the mind or to store all knowledge in the memory. So, man invented ideas to store the knowledge in written form. For this purpose, he made use of 'Bhurjapatra' as a writing material. Bricks' seal made up of bone, ivory and terracotta; Tadapatra; Wooden Boards, Cotton and Silk Cloth, Leather, Stone, Metals like Gold, Silver, Copper, bronze etc. With the social, economic, political, cultural, educational and technological changes, the profession has also changed its philosophical and theoretical base. The profession of Librarianship has a long back history. In tracing its history, growth and development, the study of libraries in the context of its historical setting and historical importance is essential. History of ancient Indian education makes clear the history of emergence and development of Libraries in India. In 400, A.D. 'Nalanda University' was known as popular University and a popular place for learning. Nalanda was a famous Buddhist centre where it maintained a very big Library which stored every written material on Buddhist Scriptures. Gupta emperors were great patrons of the University. The University of Taxila, the Nagarjuna Vid-

yapeeth'- which was known as Buddhist centre of culture at Amravati in South India, also preserved the collection of the Library. Good Libraries are also started to have been attached to other well known seats of learning of ancient India, viz. Valabhi, Taxila, Vikramsila, Jagaddala, Odantapuri, Nalanda and Banaras, the last three belonging to the Brahmanical culture.

Establishment of National library paved the way for the growth and development of public Libraries in India because of its nature, characteristics and the policies.

### Trends in Traditional Input Measures

Budgets. With rare exception, libraries are experiencing slight increases in materials budgets, educational and general operating budgets, and staff salary lines. Operating expenditures have increased significantly to meet automation and electronic resource needs, which create shifts in staffing, resources, materials, space, and equipment. Collections. Most libraries are canceling serial subscriptions, purchasing fewer monographs, and to keep pace with user demands for more desktop delivery of materials - spending a growing percentage of their materials budget on licensing access to electronic resources. The decline in acquisitions may be due to the increased cost of materials, a more effective distribution of materials through collaborative purchasing (via consortia, organizational networks and inter-institutional agreements), or a shift in users' expectations of libraries. "Just in time" information delivery may be becoming an acceptable replacement for the traditional "just in case" archival imperative. Libraries are operating with fewer volumes per student than in the past, but there is no context in which to determine if this is good or bad.

Staff. Overall staff size is slowly declining, but many library systems departments are hiring more people to maintain the increasing array of library information technologies. Clerical positions are being eliminated throughout the library and positions are being created or reclassified at higher levels (with higher salaries) because more sophisticated technical or managerial skills are needed now than in the past. Typically, new or upgraded positions are accommodated by combining open positions because salary lines are insufficient to do otherwise. The need to retrain staff to keep pace with technological change adds the burden of finding increased funding for travel and training in an already strained budget. Libraries are operating with fewer staff per student than in the past, but again there is no context in which to determine if this is good or bad.

Equipment. The era of microform equipment, photocopiers, and the card catalog has been replaced with a growing array of hardware, software, and systems. Libraries need budgets and articulated replacement cycles for all of

this equipment. More often than not, the capital budget is insufficient to replace equipment before it becomes obsolete. Furthermore, libraries must find the financial resources to replace equipment purchased with one-time funding from grants. Aside from the budgetary concerns, traditional measures do not help libraries with equipment planning. For example, they provide no contextual information that would facilitate calculating how many computers the library should provide for public use based on the number of students who have their own desktop or laptop computer or the number of computers available in public clusters or laboratories on campus. Lacking this information, difficult and time-consuming queuing studies may be required to determine whether the number of public computers in the library is appropriate for the user population.

Space. Following years of reducing or eliminating user and staff spaces to accommodate growing physical collections, more and more libraries are looking to offsite storage to solve their space problems and wondering how to fund offsite storage from an already strained budget. Current library standards for user, staff, and collection spaces do not consider the space occupied by technology, for example, computers, printers, scanners, and fax machines. Traditional measures have been ineffective if not irrelevant in efforts to convince university and college administrators that the Internet and digitization are not a near-term solution to the library space shortage.

#### **Trends in Traditional and Emerging Output Measures**

**Materials circulated.**  
Use of print resources is decreasing. Use of video and other media appears to be increasing. Overall circulation is declining. In-house use of library materials is also declining. Why come to the library to check out a printed book or use a printed journal when you can find an electronic version of the book or journal or something comparable or good enough on the Web? In the absence of any data about student and faculty use of information resources provided by entities other than the library, what does a decline in circulation really mean in terms of supporting education and research?

#### **Reserve items circulated.**

The circulation of print reserves is declining rapidly, even in institutions that do not offer electronic reserves. In some institutions faculty are putting fewer materials on reserves. The decline in reserve items and usage may be due to the availability of full-text resources on the Web - provided by the library or by other entities.

#### **Reference questions answered.**

Use of reference service has been fluctuating, but appears to have dropped significantly in the past year. Traditional face-to-face reference service with a librarian is being transformed by information technologies deployed to reach an increasingly remote audience, for example, electronic mail, "chat" and "see you, see me" videoconferencing software. Reference services provided by the library are apparently being challenged by reference (or reference-like) services provided by entities outside of the library.

#### **Library instruction classes.**

The number of traditional library instruction sessions and participants was increasing until recently, but now appear to be on the decline, perhaps because distance-learning technologies are being deployed to deliver library instruction. Other environmental factors that may be affecting library instruction are the increasing technological savvy of

users who can transfer skills from one vendor's databases to another, or student and faculty use of information resources and services not provided by the library, in which case library instruction is not in step with user needs or behavior. Again, we lack the necessary contextual information to interpret what a decline in library instruction sessions or participants really means or why it is happening.

#### **Gate counts.**

Gate counts are declining. Why go to the library if you can find the information you need using your personal computer, create an Internet chat room to discuss your group project, or use a similar discussion facility provided in course management software like Blackboard that integrates your class syllabus, assignments, readings, quizzes, and grades?

#### **Electronic resource use.**

The demand for desktop delivery of materials is increasing. Use of electronic resources is growing more rapidly than expected. Use of older journal volumes in electronic format is increasing even more rapidly than use of electronic resources overall.

#### **Printing and photocopying.**

The trend appears to be that the volume of printing is increasing and the volume of photocopying is decreasing, probably because of the increased availability of full-text electronic resources and printing of electronic journal articles.

#### **Changes in Literate Habits**

Research indicates that a rapidly growing percentage of the use of electronic library resources occurs outside of the library. At some institutions, the percentage approaches or exceeds 75%. Remote use of library resources means that users of unrestricted resources and services may not even be affiliated with the institution. Where once students and faculty turned to libraries, they now turn to their personal computers when they need to find information. Faculty members appreciate the convenience of the Web, but know that often the best resource is still only available in print.

#### **Changes in the Technological Infrastructure**

Students clearly prefer desktop delivery of information and if they have a personal networked computer, in their eyes they may have no need to come to the library - hence the decline in gate counts and reduced circulation of traditional library materials.

Perhaps equipment configurations and replacement cycles are also a factor in library use. For example, students come to the library to retrieve electronic resources using obsolete equipment when their own computers are faster, better equipped to handle multimedia and loaded with all of the software they need to complete their assignments. Libraries typically restrict their public workstations to information retrieval tasks only, preferring students to go elsewhere to do email, word processing, programming, etc.

#### **Conclusion:**

In ancient time the structure of libraries are different from present time. That time readers want to read a particular book only so this was available in library and he do not need the other material which was related from their topic. In 21<sup>st</sup> century the scope of libraries are wide. Readers want different knowledge for a particular topic. So changes are continuously.

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