

TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND SCOPE OF LIBRARIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract : *COVID-19 pandemic has affects every element of our lives. In this situation, libraries have been the gateways of relevant information dissemination to readers in their respective subject areas. This Article put forth recent technological advancements and preventive measures taken in order to improve the knowledge of library professionals to promote library resources and services.*

Keywords: *COVID-19 Pandemic, Library resources, Library services, Information technology*

Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the today's world and everyone has to learn new skills and approaches in addressing the problems that the virus poses for us all in both our personal and professional lives. Mostly all libraries have boosted to digital services during the corona virus pandemic situation. However, the physical resources are often put on demand by the users. Libraries having significant number of e-resources may have enough opportunities to serve their users even in the lockdown period throughout the world. Major efforts has been done to boost access to the library resources online as well as offline, for example by increasing the number of E-Books/ E-Journals/CD-DVD, etc. in order to lower the risk of spread of corona virus.

Objectives of the Study :

The Primary objective of the study during COVID-19 pandemic

- To find out innovative ways to reach out library users
- To enhance learning and professional skills
- To explore opportunities to navigate through this challenge

Scope of the libraries :

Innovations and advancements in technological have transformed the traditional libraries to smart Libraries. Today's Libraries offer wide range of innovative services to the users for their information need in the pandemic situation. Transformation of libraries occurred in twenty first century. The major role of libraries in selective dissemination of Information and knowledge among its users. Libraries are the store house of knowledge recorded in physical/digital form. Libraries are

growing organism and therefore there is continuous increase in library collection and services. Unlike the traditional libraries present trends of libraries includes digital/virtual mode of library collection and also offer remote access facility for their users. The application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the Internet and particularly the World Wide Web have revolutionized library activities, hence there has been changes in the normal functioning of Libraries in the digital world. The present trend of library resources includes e-books, e-resources, digital library, e-services etc. The future prospects of smart libraries would involve utilization of skill and knowledge whereas the information is also recorded, stored, retrieved and disseminated in the e-format at a large scale.

Present trends of library services :

COVID-19 Pandemic does not seem to be eradicated completely. Librarians are looking forward, excited to discover new services and opportunities to build a stronger library-user interface in the future. In order to achieve these goals libraries need to be equipped with latest infrastructure, information communication technologies and skilled manpower.

Virtual library services

1. Virtual Reference service like chat/e-mail
2. Self check-in and checkout of books
3. Scanning of chapters from books, journals articles for remote users
4. LibGuide- List of resources available in the library
5. Update library website dynamic content and useful tutorials

About COVID-19 Virus and its spread :

World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 or Coronavirus Disease is being caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Old age people underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely prone to serious illness. The Common symptoms of COVID-19 include high fever, tiredness and a dry cough. Other symptoms include shortness of breath, aches and pains, sore throat, and very few people will report diarrhoea, nausea or a runny nose. The Spread of Coronavirus people to people occurs through spread of droplets like respiratory droplets when infected person sneeze in the public domain.

In the case of Libraries where books come in contact of many persons at a time, therefore, the chances of virus transmission can occur by direct contact with infected user and indirect contact with surfaces in the library or with objects used by the infected user/staff. To know more about the disease World Health Organization is releasing daily updates on the situation at the global level.

Handling of study materials in the libraries :

Although, there is a huge risk of infection through objects carrying corona virus, yet the use of library resources is equally important to carry out research on the current topics. Now-a-days Librarian has to extend library services on a safer mode by following the standard operation

procedure or the Government Guidelines. Some libraries have imposed a quarantine for Issue/return of books. Different handling procedure have been implemented like cleaning with alcohol wipes, etc.

Preventive Measures / SOP for Libraries during COVID-19 Pandemic :

Libraries are facing challenges and restrictions in the lockdown. Library professionals may take following preventive measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 through the libraries:

- Stay at home if you feel sickness
- Use appropriate sanitizer frequently
- Roster of staff duty
- Keep books at separate place at least for 48 hours when check in/check out
- Maintain social distance
- Follow good health and hygiene habits
- Limiting concentration of users in reading room allowing just two user per table
- Use mask and cover while sneezing or coughing
- Avoid sneezing or coughing while handling books
- Keeping surfaces clean, including toys and library computers surface like door knobs, switches and railing etc.
- Use online platforms or social media to share Knowledge/Information.
- Provide remote access of library resources to the users
- Promote paperless work culture in the libraries
- Frequently used items such as magazines and newspapers may only be accessible to people with gloves and masks, etc.

Essential links for Digital Library and E- Resources

All those library users who have developed or developing online reading habits, there are several digital libraries offering reading materials, the links are given below:


Sr. No.	Name	Description	Web Address / URL
1.	Internet Archive	Non-profit library of millions of free books, movies, music, etc.	https://archive.org/
2.	World Digital Library	Provides free access to manuscripts, rare books, maps, photographs, and other important cultural documents from all countries.	https://www.wdl.org/en/
3.	Open Library	an open source towards a web page for every book ever published.	https://openlibrary.org/




4.	Project Gutenberg	a volunteer effort to digitize and archive cultural works.	https://www.gutenberg.org/
5.	NDLI	Educational materials available for all subject areas like Technology, Social Science, Literature, Law, Medical, etc.	https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/
6.	Hathi Trust	a partnership of academic and research institutions, offering a collection of millions of titles digitized from libraries around the world.	https://www.hathitrust.org/
7.	Khan Academy	Non-profit educational organization. It provides short lessons in the form of videos.	https://www.khanacademy.org/
8.	Google Books	More than 100,000 books for consultation, download or on-line purchase	https://books.google.com/




Opportunities of Learning with the Virtual Platform/Webinar in the Libraries :

Now a days library professionals have to avail opportunities and improve their skills/ability for outreach in virtual environment by conducting virtual seminar online with the help of software it is called as the webinar. Web-based (virtual) seminar platform can be used to conduct online meetings, lectures and conferences. Webinar software provides online platform, where mutual interaction between the speakers and attendees takes place to carry out audio-visual communication. Downloading/connecting Links are given hereunder for few applications/software, most of them offer free trial/module and require simple process to run as indicated in the connecting links. Libraries can use these facilities for knowledge sharing purpose among the staff/researchers/users.

Following are widely used webinar hosting software worldwide:

Sr. No.	Platforms	Description	Symbol	Links
	Zoom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Interactive: up to 100 interactive video participants per webinar ✓ Integration: it can broadcast your webinars on Facebook Live and YouTube. ✓ Control: mutes/activates the audio of the participants, for full control over the meetings. ✓ Engage: surveys, questions and answers and live chat. ✓ Subtitles: Provide text subtitles to a hearing-impaired audience or people using deactivated devices. ✓ Practical: participants can join from almost every device, including desktop, mobile, 		https://zoom.us/

		<p>Zoom Rooms, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Multi language support: 9 languages. 		
	Cisco Web Ex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Webinar and video conferencing: this make it possible to host a wide range of live events, meetings and training sessions. ✓ Interactive: surveys, questions and answers and live chat. ✓ Chat and brainstorming tools: interactive whiteboard and other collaboration tools ✓ File sharing: ability to share files and apps for a better workflow. ✓ Recall: automated calls inviting people to join your webinar. ✓ Multi language support: 9 languages. 		https://www.webex.com/
	GoTo Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Live webinar: host live webinars and share recordings with participants later. ✓ Custom landing pages: encourage people to sign up for your webinars. ✓ Email notifications: to remind people of your webinar event. ✓ Engage: you can use live chat, surveys and send files to the audience during your webinar ✓ Analytics: reports and analysis on webinar performance. ✓ Multi language support: 6 languages. 		https://www.goto.com/webinar/join
	Demio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ “Stay registered”: allow people to register once for a series of webinars in progress. ✓ Video quality: streaming in HD. ✓ File sharing: upload the slides and files you want to share with your audience directly to the platform. ✓ Private chat: users have the ability to send private messages to event coordinators or public messages visible to all. ✓ Interactive: it offers room engagement tools. ✓ Custom registration page: to keep the look & feel of your brand. ✓ Live replays: automate your webinar replays to make lead generation. ✓ Analytics: deepen the results of your webinar. ✓ Multi language support: 9 languages. 		https://www.demio.com/

BlueJeans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Integration: possibility to broadcast on Facebook in HD quality. ✓ Engage: it provides the basic tools for a webinar such as chat, question and answer and surveys. ✓ Universal access: you can access it from any device connected to the internet. ✓ Marketing: thanks to its integration with Marketo, you can automate your marketing activities. ✓ Audio quality: Bluejeans Events collaborates with Dolby Voice, a technology that enables participants to communicate with clean, interference-free sound quality. ✓ Controls: during the live broadcast you can manage everything yourself, although using a director is always the best thing. ✓ Analytics: deepen the results of your webinar. ✓ Multi language support: 4 languages 		https://www.bluejeans.com/
Microsoft Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ File sharing: you can share files and documents, such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint presentations. ✓ Chat: chats can be individual or group. The deep integration of Skype videos into the application. ✓ Hub: Teams offers a shared workspace for various Microsoft Office applications. ✓ Cloud and security: Premium versions include 1TB or unlimited cloud storage, other productivity-enhancing apps and advanced security systems. ✓ Multi language support: 36 languages. 		https://www.microsoft.com/en-in/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software
Google Meet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Video: it offers the option to customise your video settings; you can lower the sending and receiving resolution and set the Standard 360p definition instead of the High Definition 720p. ✓ Engage: it provides the basic tools for a webinar such as chat and the option to share the screen. ✓ Accessibility: you can start a video call from a browser or mobile device using the free Hangouts Meet app, available for iOS and Android. 		https://meet.google.com/

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participants: there is the possibility to stream video to up to 100,000 viewers within one domain. ✓ Captions: you can activate the speaker's simultaneous transcription function. ✓ Recording: it is possible to record video meetings and save them directly to Google Drive. ✓ Multi language support: only English 		
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Conclusion :

The Internet and web technologies have created a new environment for library services in digital era enabling the libraries to enhance and strengthen the research, teaching and learning even in this difficult and uncertain time. Libraries on the web have become more competent and confident in terms of resource management and digitalization. Information societies are seeking information in digital format, therefore, library services depends upon skilled professionals. Libraries have acted smart even this time and evolved as a continuous learning factory. libraries are emerging as new genre of knowledge hubs capable of playing a vital role in supporting our nation to settle into a new normal situation.

We need to work with our technical people to update systems and to establish new digital capabilities. Around the world, decision-makers need to constantly review previous plans and to provide visionary thinking about how to move forward. We will find new ways to remember where we come from as we consider where we are going in the crucial years to come. This Article has provide an overview on preventive measures and current trends in libraries to play an proactive role and also have brought out opportunity to learn recent technological advancements in order to maximize the usage of library resources and services in worldwide lockdown and pandemic situations.

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