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“A LIBRARY IS NOT A LUXURY BUT ONE OF THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE.” – HENRY WARD BEECHER

AUTHORED BY - NAZMEEN KAUR BRAR

Abstract

Libraries are a prerequisite of every thriving civilisation. Humans have gathered information since time immemorial. Earlier libraries used to be mere collections of books and other print media. However, modern libraries have went long beyond that. Digitization of libraries has become the need of the hour at this moment. This article delves into the nuances of digitization along with its needs, the positives and the negatives. It also critically analyzes the IPR risks associated with the open access of materials in public libraries. The article also sheds light on the issue of empowering school and public libraries. The future prospects of libraries in this digitized era has also been discussed in the writing. This is a detailed description regarding libraries in this day and age.

Introduction-Libraries, a house of hope.

The term library is based on the Latin word ‘liber’ for 'book' or 'document', contained in Latin ‘libraria’ 'collection of books' and ‘librarium’ ‘container for books’. Libraries are more than mere collections of books, as they are defined to be. They serve as a place where we, whatever our situation, can feed our ideas and develop our dreams. They are free and open to all elements of society, be it young or old, poor or rich, formally educated or uneducated. Every person, irrespective of their background or circumstances can approach a public library anytime to widen their scope of knowledge.

Modern libraries provide access to not merely books but other sources of information as well. They have newspapers, video recordings, audio recordings and films in many formats. These can be provided in both forms, hard copy and soft copy as per the requirement. Libraries are managed by various bodies including the government, an institution, a corporation or a private individual. Public libraries are open to the general public at large, however those managed by an institution, corporation or individual are accessible to selective members only. Libraries usually function as a quiet resolute from the world to study and think. Libraries are managed by professional staff known as ‘librarians’ who are adequately trained for the purpose. As in

the words of, Neil Gaiman, “Google can bring you back 100,000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one.” In this age of information, libraries are but a necessity.

Digital transformation in Libraries- the modern era knowledge hubs.



With the age of digitization, the libraries have as well been adequately equipped to keep up with the modern times. Previously, libraries used to house merely physical form of information. That has, long since, been changed with the era of modernization.

Digitization means process of translating a piece of information such as book, sound recording, picture or video into bits. Bits are the fundamental units of information in computer systems. Turning information into these binary digits is called digitization. In digitization process traditional documents such as books, papers, manuscripts are converted into electronic format i.e. image format which are machine readable. Digitization of libraries began in India in the 1989s with the introduction of computers. However, it has become a large scale project with today’s developments in Information Technology. Digitization of libraries is the need of the hour in today’s day and age.

Need for Digitization:-

There are several reasons that facilitate the need for digitization of libraries. To enumerate a few:-

- Digitization allows for materials to be accessible to everyone.
- Digitization makes information available anytime and anywhere.
- Same file can be accessed by various number of users simultaneously.
- Users do not have to physically travel to the library to procure a source of information at any time.
- Digitization allows us to access materials that are too fragile or hard to access to the public¹.

¹ Digitization of Libraries:Benefits and Challenges by Dr. Subhash Dhule

- It helps to preserve artifacts of sensitive nature, including many personal documents with historical importance.
- It provides benefits of space management in physical libraries.
- It provides for ease of use and better and wider access to information to the public.

Thus, the process of digitization of libraries serves more purposes than one. The academic libraries are now changing into global libraries, hence digitization is an important aspect of current global information system.

Advantages of digitization:-



There are a legion of advantages of digitization. Some of the multifold ones include:-

- Digitization supports preservation of fragile and old artifacts in digital form where they can be easily accessed.
- There are myriad of institutional and strategic benefits to digitization of libraries.
- Digitization makes it easier for pupils to research and analyze through tons of sources of information.
- Digitization of information provides for round the clock availability of sources to everyone.
- Digitization helps to preserve space availability in physical libraries.
- It allows users to access older documents without causing any harm to the original document.
- Digitized documents allow the user to search the whole text of the document.
- Digitized documents can be used to serve multiple purposes unlike the physical ones.

Disadvantages of digitization:-

Though the benefits, digitization faces several challenges as well. To name a few:-

- Digitization violates copyright laws as content of one author can be accessed by multiple people online.
- The initial cost of digitizing i.e. the cost of hardware, software, training and leasing communication circuit is very high.
- Digital libraries lack the ambience of peace and quiet in physical libraries. Many people prefer printed material to digital versions of information.
- A digital library might not be able to keep up with the rapid technological advancements in this age. Thus, it may soon become out-of-date.
- Appropriate technical know-how shall be required to operate a digital library. Not everyone might be equipped with such knowledge.
- Massive funding shall be required to regularly update the online databases. Thus, it could be quite an uneconomical endeavour².

The issues regarding copyright and infringement shall be discussed in detail in the upcoming extract.

Considerable factors:-

To make digitization a smooth sailing project, several factors must be kept in mind while implementing it. These include:-

- Special orientation and training programs must be organized for the library staff to provide them with the necessary knowledge.
- Ample funds and timely grants must be provided to keep the systems up-to-date with the rapid advancements in technology.
- Special policies and plans must be brought into action to convert the library resources to digital resources.
- There must be specific laws regarding copyright infringement and protection of original authors' rights.

² Digitization of Library: A Brief Introduction by Mrs. Shashikala S Angadi

Open access and IPR-Battle of the axes.



Libraries are a source of open access to information. Digitized libraries promise access to information to everyone, at all times, free of cost. This goes in convergence with the concept of IPR (Intellectual Property Rights), that is based in ownership of one's information.

IPR is designed to protect the monopoly of the creator over their invention for a fixed period of time. Contrary to it is the concept of open source, meant to provide full and free access to information to everyone. The two concepts happen to be diametrically opposite.

To go into a bit of detail, the intellectual property rights can further be divided into numerous sub – categories such as Patents governed by Indian Patents Act, 1970; Copyrights governed by Copyrights Act of 1957; Trade Marks governed by the Trade – Marks Act, 1999; along with numerous miscellaneous intellectual properties such as Trade Designs, Trade Secrets et cetera³.

These aim to protect the rights of an individual over their property.

Copyright laws stand as a significant hurdle in the way of digitization of libraries. Projects are being hampered because it is often difficult to get permission to make the material available in digital form. Negotiation, is a hard and painful task. Different formats have different rules applying to them. Masses of content held by licensing authorities are unavailable for digitization. Distance learning programmes where permission from the right holder is usually required are hampered for digitization. This is because the copyright owners are untraceable, so called orphan works⁴. A number of issues and concerns are associated with the usage of digital information, including single articles verses full issues of e-journals, user friendliness, incompatible hardware and software, formatting, graphics, scholarly recognition, and obsolescence. With both open access and IPR being antithetical of each other, it is quite hard to find an equilibrium between the two.

³<https://ksandk.com/intellectual-property-rights/traditional-ip-vs-open-access-initiatives/>

⁴ Teresa, H. (2005). Learning with Libraries and Copyright issues. Information meeting on Educational content and copyright in the Digital age in conjunction with the thirteen session of the WIPO standing committee on copyright and related rights (SCCR). 21 November 2005, p. 1-5.

Striking a balance:-

The balance between the open access and IPR may be challenging. Creators may want to profit from their IP while also considering the implications for the greater good, and how a particular creation can benefit society as a whole. Here a few measures that can be taken to ensure harmony between the two concepts:-

- **Digital Signature Technology:-** Digital signature includes identity of the sender and or receiver, date, time and any unique code. This sort of information will be used to bind digital content to a single place and added to digital products. It is a signature in electronic form and its usage lies in the fact that it will be useful to authenticate the identity of the sender of a message or of the signatory of a document. It is one the important tools to authenticate that the digital content conveyed has not been changed in any condition. This technique is very much effective in protecting the digital content in the libraries. Digitally signed fingerprints guarantee document authenticity and prevent illegal copying in today library's use as there is a big issue of IPR prevalent everywhere to prevent digital content.
- **Digital Watermarking Technology:-** Digital watermarking is a digital signal or pattern inserted in to a digital document. A unique identifier is used to identify the work. The message might contain information regarding ownership, sender, recipient etc. or information regarding the copyright permission. This technique enables the protection of ownership rights of digital information and thus justifies the usage of digital content transferred via the platform of libraries ensures correct usage and discourages infringement of digital content.
- **Electronic Marking:-** The electronic marking and identification techniques are applied to the online digital content so that illegal copying can be stopped or discouraged by the system administrator. For this purpose the system generates some sort of codes and the hidden words that can be applied to all the parts of the same work that will be very useful to make them bind at a place. This system also registers the recipient of an illegally copied document. This technique is very useful in the case of digital content storage in the libraries' database and in the same way in digital content creation, publishing and distribution where documents are printed, copied or faxed.
- **Cryptography and Encryption:-** Encryption is a technique of converting the plain textual digital content available in any format in to incomprehensible encrypted format, rendering it unreadable for everybody except to those who have special knowledge to use it. This technique ensures secrecy of digital content and restricts its use up to the

limit of the rightful user so that the libraries may not become the center of transferring the useful information without any authentication⁵.

IPR Policies in Education- A new world.



In today's technology-driven era, it is of paramount importance that everyone be made aware of IPR and its importance. In the same line, the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 puts major emphasis on ability enhancement and skill development with an approach to teaching-learning processes accompanied by creativity and innovation. The purpose of IPR is to provide protection for the results of investments of individuals and stimulate innovation thereby rewarding and encouraging creative work in the development of NEP 2020. In today's era, it is very important to create IPR awareness within academic institutions among faculty members and students so that they can patent their innovative research work and consequently benefit the stakeholders. Hence, appropriate propagation of IPR knowledge and its implementation is of paramount significance in the context of NEP 2020⁶. Experts believe that it is necessary to introduce concepts concerning IPR in school curriculum at early ages.

- Ingraining IP Awareness in children begins at a young age.
- The foundational awareness regarding the rights of a creator need to be developed in students from the school level.
- IPRs should be a part of academic curriculum in educational institutions.
- Institutions need to be able to share and protect their own intellectual outputs as well as maximise the value of their own assets.
- By appreciating the significance of IP laws, institutions can capitalise on value of their expertise and help exploit innovative opportunities in an increasingly competitive environment.
- There is a need to ensure appropriate legislative framework on IPR in conformity with the changing dynamics of innovation.

⁵ SRELS Journal of Information Management, Vol 52(1), February 2015, p. 47-48

⁶ Vol. 27 No. 6(2022): Journal of Intellectual Property Rights

- There needs to be enactment of laws on issues such as anti-counterfeiting, trade secrets, financing of IP assets and educational copyrights⁷.

The relationship between education and technology is bidirectional as education enhances technological innovations and vis-a-versa technology improves the educational processes and outcomes. The sheer creativity of teachers, scientists including students in the development of brainstorming technological techniques will influence society in many ways in the future. The thrust of the interventions for technology will be the purpose of improving teaching, learning and evaluation processes. The NEP 2020 aims at making India a leader in research and innovation by enhancing the quality and quantity across all disciplines ranging from literature and arts to mathematics and sciences to languages to agriculture. The best practice to implement these goals is to train the stakeholders about IPR and conduct awareness⁸.

Empowering School and Public Libraries- Bridging the divide.



Our society may have no greater obligation than to ensure that every young person develops the academic, social, and personal attitudes and capacities that will lead to a fulfilling and successful life, and there is no greater institution that serves this purpose than a library. The impact of libraries in the learning of young children is significant. Libraries are treasure troves of information. In the modern era, libraries have expanded their offerings to include digital resources, providing learners with access to eBooks, academic journals, multimedia content, and more. This accessibility has been transformative, particularly in the modern era. Modern libraries play a critical role in bridging the gap between technology and education. The current status of school libraries in India reflects a complex landscape marked by both progress and persistent challenges. There is a wide difference between the current state of rural and urban libraries in India. The disparities between the urban and rural school libraries are stark.

Challenges faced by libraries in India:-

School libraries in India face severe challenges in today's time. Urban libraries generally

⁷SlideShare by Dr. Amit Hemant Mishal on IPR and Education

⁸ Vol. 27 No. 6(2022): Journal of Intellectual Property Rights

benefit from better infrastructure, resources and trained library staff while such amenities are scarce in rural areas. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that all students have access to the resources needed for academic success and lifelong learning. Some of the prominent challenges include:-

- **Inadequate Funding:-** this is a serious issue plaguing rural libraries. It hinders all processes from acquisition of new books to the upkeep of the library infrastructure. This seriously hinders the functioning of libraries as learning centers for both students and teachers alike. The lack of funds has a direct impact on the quality of resources available, resulting in outdated collections as well as poorly maintained facilities.
- **Staffing Issues:-** The shortage of qualified staff is another shortfall facing Indian libraries. The libraries are often maintained by unqualified or inadequately trained staff, leading to the failure of libraries in serving as education centres. Furthermore, the lack of opportunities for professionals development of existing librarians exacerbates the problem, preventing the continuous improvement of library services.
- **Lack of uniform library policies:-** The lack of a standardized library policy across the nation contributes to the inconsistent quality of school libraries across India. Every state happens to have a different library policy due to which some states witness significant development whereas others lag. A uniform library policy is essential to ensure that students all across the country, irrespective of location, have access to well-resourced and effectively managed libraries that support their educational needs.
- **Poor ICT Infrastructure:-** In the digital age there is a dire need to inculcate the Information and Communication (ICT) into school libraries. The rural areas often lack such infrastructure due to low internet connectivity. The lack of such infrastructure hinders the ability of school libraries to offer modern, technology-driven services that are essential for developing students' information literacy and preparing them for a digitally connected world.
- **Lack of Awareness:-** There is huge lack of awareness regarding the importance of libraries for students' holistic development. This leads to libraries often being undervalued and seen as supplementary rather than integral to the educational process. There needs to be widespread awareness regarding the necessity of libraries as the education centers that they are⁹.

⁹ Trends in Information Management 12(2) pp 76,84

Uplifting public libraries:-

Several steps can be taken by governments and individuals alike to empower the public libraries. Addressing the concerns is essential to ensure that all students have access to the resources needed for academic success and lifelong learning. Some measures in this direction would be:-

- **Required Funding:-** Libraries need to be provided to ensure apt functioning of the libraries as the beacons of learning that they happen to be. Adequate funding would ensure availability of latest books, journals and magazines. This would also allow infrastructural development of libraries enabling them to have modern and up-to-date computer and internet services. This would be first step in ensuring the proper functioning of libraries for students and teachers.
- **Adequate Staffing:-** libraries need to have well-trained and qualified staff for their upkeep and management. Proper staff is essential in efficient functioning of public libraries. This is especially necessary for libraries in rural areas where staffing is a major issue. Proper staffing would make it easier for everyone to have access to all the resources of a library.
- **Digital Accessibility:-** Libraries must be provided with recent technological developments. Newer generation students are hardwired to explore information digitally across various platforms. Technology within school libraries can include everything from computer stations to interlibrary lending, digital versions of resources and more. Digital resources pay back in astounding ways.
- **Awareness Programs:-** There need to be large-scale awareness programs to familiarise people with the importance of school and public libraries in fostering a learning environment for everyone. Government needs to take initiatives to aware people regarding the importance of libraries in a child's life as well as the society in general.
- **Legislative Measures:-** There needs to be a uniform legislation regarding libraries throughout India. A uniform ruling shall ensure uniformity in all states and there shall be comprehensive development across all states. It shall mean that no state shall be left behind and there must be equitable development everywhere.

Open Libraries-repositories of infinite possibilities.



Be that as it may, the most broadly acknowledged meaning of an open library was detailed by UNESCO in 1949, which was reconsidered in 1972 and again amended in 1994, and is known as the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. The meaning of an open library as indicated by this statement is as per the following:

- It is an open library which being the nearby entryway to information, gives a fundamental condition to long lasting learning, independent choice making and social improvement of the individual and social gatherings;
- A living power for instruction, society and data, fundamental operators for the cultivating of peace and profound welfare through the psyches of men and ladies;
- The nearby focal point of data, making a wide range of learning and data promptly and uninhibitedly accessible to its clients;
- Open for all, paying little heed to age, race, sex, connection, nationality, dialect or societal position;
- What's more, in conclusion, the libraries which have accumulations and administrations, a wide range of fitting media and current advances, and in addition customary materials with brilliant and have significance to nearby needs and conditions. Material must reflect current patterns and the advancement of society, and the memory of human attempt and creative ability.

This definition covers each and every aspect of open library administration. In an open library all material is provided to all sections of society free of charge.

Development of open libraries:-

Humans have, since time immemorial had inquisitiveness for knowledge. Open libraries are a culmination of those necessities. Several factors have contributed towards the development of open libraries. A handful of those are:-

- Urge for learning; Literacy;
- Universal government funded instruction;
- Enlightened administration and charity;

- Rapid headway in science and innovation; and
- Fruitful usage of relaxation.
- Inclination for knowledge
- Widespread Public Education
- Edified learning and Philanthropy¹⁰

Elements of an open library:-

There are several key elements of an open library that need to be studied. Some of the significant ones are:-

- **A Free Library:-** An open library does not charge its clients any expense for any of its administrations like counsel of books on its premises or credit of books for home perusing or for rendering reference administration or for giving entertainment through a film appear or whatever other social project. In this way, an open library is special in presenting a privilege to each native to have free access to its books and other data assets.
- **Financed by Public Funds:-** One might then wonder how does a public library sustain itself? The money required for the foundation, upkeep and advancement of open libraries is secured generally from open assets. That is, the legislature under the tradition that must be adhered to imposes a circuitous assessment known as library access, which is demanded as additional charge on property or area controlled by a man or pay gathered on callings or livelihoods or on vehicles possessed by a man. For instance, in Andhra Pradesh, the Government of Andhra Pradesh demands a library access of 8 paisa for each rupee on house assessment and property charge. A man who claims a property when he pays the property assessment pays likewise the library access. In this way every property holder by implication adds to the Library Fund in an indirect manner.
- **A Mandatory Institution:-** A free library, should be built in tradition, adhered to by a skillful power like the Parliament or the State Assembly. A free library must ought to be constructed in every free country in all territories. In India, ten states, viz., Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Manipur, Kerala, Haryana, Mizoram and Goa have instituted library laws to give open library administrations.

¹⁰ Vol. 5 No.2(2017):International Journal of Reviews and Research in Social Sciences

- **A center of Information:-** Open libraries serve as a source of free information to the general populace. This helps in upskilling the vast Human Resource our country possesses. We need to give data suiting to the needs of people and gatherings, just about at their entryway step and in a dialect reasonable to them. This shall ensure rapid spread of information and development of our country's general masses.
- **A center for Self-Education:-** A vital capacity of an open library is to function as a middle for self-instruction. An open library provides free information concerning varying subjects to any person at any time. A man can have multiple hobbies in which he might want to look for learning at a pace or time, which suits his circumstance. Open library is the organization which gives self-instruction suiting one's hobbies for the duration of one's life compass. Such a self-training advances a man's life in more ways than one¹¹.

Future of Libraries-reimagined and reinvigorated.



Libraries have existed for 5,000 years, but what does their future look like in an ever-changing world? The recent advancements in technology have led some to ponder over the future of these shrines of knowledge. However, one fails to consider that libraries have existed, and thrived, long before any of the recent technological advancements. These developments would nothing but, aid in the enhancement of libraries. Technology is at the forefront of libraries' future¹². Many libraries are setting up things like makerspaces and recording studios. Not only are these spaces offered, but classes with professionals from the community are available to teach patrons how to use these spaces effectively. During the recent lockdown era, many libraries pivoted to offering more digital resources and online programs. The era in which libraries' primary function was to house dusty stacks of books is quickly receding. Today,

¹¹ Vol. 5 No.2(2017):International Journal of Reviews and Research in Social Sciences

¹² The Future of Libraries by Nikki DeMarco

patrons expect intuitive and user-friendly digital spaces like apps and websites, complemented by in-person branches designed around their needs and safety, not those of the library's collection. The rapid emergence and adoption of artificial intelligence technologies, for example, has given libraries the opportunity to take the lead and become — "a resource for the practical and responsible application of generative AI"¹³. These emerging technologies, will only become more ubiquitous and woven into the fabric of our everyday lives, something public library systems must vouch to keep up with. Media and digital literacy are other critical factors that the libraries of tomorrow must address — and one that feels more important than ever. Out of the confusion of modern developments, exciting new library trends have emerged. Visionary institutions are rising to the challenge, dreaming up new kinds of community spaces designed around modern needs. Digital spaces like websites need to be designed just as welcoming as physical ones. However, digitization isn't the only concern plaguing the libraries in today's era. To curb any future public health emergencies like the previous one, touchless and self-service amenities are an obvious choice, as are kiosks, curbside service, layouts that leave plenty of space for social distancing, and bookmobiles spread out around the community. No matter what, one must remember that digital touchpoints may be more important than ever, but physical spaces aren't going anywhere just yet. Libraries might look a bit different in the future, however, they shall be of just as much importance as ever.

Conclusion-pioneering frontiers in Information.



Libraries have always been of aid to the masses, however their importance rises a notch higher in the digital world. The digitization of libraries offers only newer prospects to patrons to excel in their knowledge. Libraries promise a safe haven from the world, a place to work, a meeting-hub of like-minded individuals and a vault for treasures of knowledge. Libraries have long served as evolving ecosystems of knowledge and creativity. Digital age, brings with it, promises of a future which transforms the boundaries of knowledge and learning. A library is more than just a collection of books; it is a foundation of civilisation. Libraries, i.e. public libraries that are free, open and accessible, will not become extinct, even though they face new

¹³<https://blog.pressreader.com/libraries-institutions/future-of-libraries-is-upon-us>

competition from the rise of the Internet. Libraries will not turn into mausoleums and reliquaries, because they serve a civic function that extends well beyond the books they hold. There will be more books transferred to offsite storage, but there will also be more ingenious methods of getting these books back to readers. There will be an emphasis on opening rare books collections to greater numbers of readers. There is a greater investment in digital collections. New technologies are taking books and libraries to places that are, as yet, unimaginable. Where there will undoubtedly be new wonders to catalogue¹⁴.

“Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation.”

-Walter Cronkite

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