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Address for correspondence:
Mangesh R Ubale
Shri R.L.T College of
Science, Akola
Email: mangeshubale@gmail.com

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Role Of National Knowledge Commission in Libraries

Mangesh R Ubale

Shri R.L.T College of Science, Akola

Email: mangeshubale@gmail.com

Abstract

The role of libraries in providing widespread and inclusive access to knowledge is widely acknowledged. In today's context, libraries have to play two distinct roles- to serve as local centre of information and knowledge, and be a local gateway to national and global knowledge. In order to achieve this goal, existing libraries must modernize their collection, services and facilities, become more pro-active and collaborate with other institutions, agencies and ngos in order to develop a community-based information system. Libraries play a crucial role in ensuring equitable and inclusive access to knowledge in a knowledge-driven society. In the contemporary digital environment, libraries are expected to function both as local knowledge centers and as gateways to national and global information resources. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) of India emphasized the transformation of libraries through modernization of collections, services, and infrastructure, along with the adoption of information and communication technologies. This paper examines the role of the National Knowledge Commission in strengthening libraries and promoting a knowledge-based society. It highlights the initiatives recommended by the NKC, such as the development of e-resources, digital libraries, collaborative networks, and community-based information systems. The study also discusses challenges faced by libraries, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained manpower, and the need for a well-defined e-reference policy. The paper concludes that effective implementation of NKC recommendations can significantly enhance the role of libraries in knowledge dissemination and national development.

Keywords: National knowledge commission, knowledge pentagon

Introduction:

The National Knowledge Commission is a top advisory group that works with the Indian prime minister. Its goal is to help turn India into a knowledge-based society. During its three and a half years of work, the commission made around 300 suggestions covering 27 main areas. Even though the commission's term has ended, the government is now working on carrying out its recommendations at both the national and state levels.

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) is an Indian think tank that focuses on policies to help India gain an advantage in knowledge-based service industries. It was created on 13 June 2005 by the late former Prime Minister of India, Dr. Man Mohan Singh. The main job of the commission was to advise the Prime Minister's office on policies related to education, research institutes, and changes needed to make India more competitive in the knowledge economy. The commission was asked to suggest changes in the education system, research labs, and laws on intellectual property, as well as to think about whether the government should use better techniques to make its work more transparent.

Objectives of the National Knowledge Commission: The main goals of the National Knowledge Commission are to help develop India as a whole.

One of the main goals is to ensure that people have access to knowledge. Access to knowledge is a key issue in education and society. This includes school education, vocational education, higher education, medical education, legal education, management education, engineering education, and open and distance education. Advances in knowledge and applying it are the result of human effort. All the skills and abilities of people help India become a strong knowledge economy. Knowledge is important for science and technology, intellectual property rights, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Education in these areas is both a goal and a way to achieve progress in important sectors like traditional knowledge, industrial knowledge, agriculture, education, and health.

Other issues that need to be addressed include finding proper e-reference sources, creating and maintaining IT infrastructure, lack of trained people, lack of training facilities, lack of interest from staff and users, lack of a clear **e-reference policy**, lack of cooperation between librarians and computer staff, lack of resources, and lack of support from top management

There is also a lack of cooperation among librarians.

Initiatives: It is true that e-resources, especially e-reference sources, are very important in the digital world.

All institutions, regardless of their size or resources, need to build e-reference sources and offer various e-reference services. These initiatives can be carried out in steps. Some of them include:

1.1 Website of the Library:

It is important for librarians to set up a full and interactive website for the library that is connected to the main website of the organization.

Resources, including e-reference sources, should be available under the Intranet or Internet depending on the institution's e-policy. The website should have a professional look and be easy to remember. It is suggested that the websites of major libraries around the world should be studied and reviewed first to create a good website for users. For example, the website of the Harvard University Library shows links to e-resources, making it easy for users to access them. Another good example is the website that provides links to e-resources.

1.2 Identification of Related E-Reference Sources:

It is necessary to find e-reference sources that are useful for a specific organization.

Libraries need to have special staff who can handle digital library activities. These staff members can be assigned tasks to prepare lists of e-reference sources, both free and paid, and group them based on user needs and organizational interests.

1.3 Providing Related Hyperlinks:

Currently, it is easy to provide access to e-reference sources by linking them on the library's website.

This can be done for both free and paid sources. The Central Library of IIT Madras has provided various hyperlinks to useful e-reference sources on their website, which are widely used by users.

1.4 Periodic Presentation:

It is important to organize regular presentations by library staff to help users learn about e-reference sources and use them effectively. The Central Library of IIT Madras has taken several steps in this direction, such as organizing staff-user meetings, providing presentations by e-resource vendors, by experts, by librarians, and through e-announcements.

1.5 Developing Collaborations:

There is a need to create better cooperation and collaboration between libraries at the local, regional, national, and international levels to provide more e-resources for users.

Indian science and technology libraries, especially its, are actively involved in providing access to e-resources through the INDEST Consortium. The screenshot of INDEST is given below

Selection Process:

The way e-resources are chosen mainly depends on what users need now and in the future, the IT setup of the institution, and the policies followed by the library or university. We have found that making a systematic study of how different organizations handle their web resources can help find the best e-reference materials. We have noticed that many e-reference sources are available for free. All that is needed is to provide a link to the main library website. Based on this, we have found various e-reference sources that our users can access through a special web page created for e-references. The screenshot of this page is shown below.

When deciding on e-reference sources for an institution, the following factors should be considered:

1. Keeping the hyperlinks updated regularly
2. Maintaining continuous subscription to e-reference sources
3. Careful review of digital licensing terms
4. Providing for the exchange of e-reprints for academic use
5. Ensuring enough online help and guidance
6. Providing regular and frequent training to users and staff
7. Conducting periodic information literacy programs
8. Giving training handouts to end users
9. Avoiding duplication in the coverage of e-reference sources
10. Arranging for a trial period for limited time
11. Installing necessary software
12. Managing multiple authentications

Organization of E-Reference Sources:

It is important to organize e-reference sources in a way that reflects the priorities and preferences of the institution and its users. For example, an institution focused on Chemistry should first focus on e-references related to Chemistry and then on related areas like Chemical Engineering. Keeping this in mind, we have identified various e-reference sources in the area of electronic citations, which will greatly help our faculty and research scholars who submit their work through online sources for publication in e-journals. These electronic citation sources are very helpful for users in citing papers electronically. The following screenshot shows the available citing e-resources at the Central Library of IIT Madras:

Framing E-Reference Policy:

There is a strong need for a well-defined e-reference policy in an organization to effectively and efficiently build e-reference sources and to deliver solid and up-to-date e-reference services.

The following points can be considered when creating such a policy:

1. Whether the sources are fee-based or free

2. Availability of networking printing facilities
3. Use of e-commerce
4. Creation of online forms
5. Tracking usage
6. Restricting or allowing unlimited access
7. Collaborative development of e-reference sources

Delivery of E-Reference Service:

E-reference sources are the foundation for delivering e-reference services globally.

In the digital era, researchers and faculty are lucky to get answers to their reference questions from their own desks, saving a lot of time. In developed countries, several university libraries offer various specialized e-reference services. Recognizing the importance of e-reference services, the Central Library of IIT Madras has started providing the following major e-reference services:

1. Virtual reference desk
2. Ask the librarian
3. E-reference sources
4. Online document delivery service
5. Web-reference form
6. Frequently Asked Questions / Help

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that properly managing e-resources leads to user satisfaction and ensures excellent collections and services.

Librarians need to take the initiative to create comprehensive and interactive websites for their libraries. They can assign staff for this task and develop good collaborations with other libraries to provide effective and efficient e-reference services and solutions.

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