

AN OVERVIEW OF I.T. APPLICATION IN SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES IN MODERN AGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of emerging role and importance of various IT application in special libraries and information centers in modern age. These days, special libraries have taken the prominent place with their enhanced importance and utilities with an expanded scope. Special libraries are fast growing as an efficient service providers with the application of information technology and contributing significantly in multiplying creative research and quest for knowledge.

Keywords: Information Technology, Special Libraries, Information Centers.

INTRODUCTION

In past few years, information and its multiple sources have developed rapidly. A new age has dawned popularly termed as a moniker, 'Information Technology Age'. But, with every innovation, new challenges arises. The data overload has brought in fresh challenges about ordering the data in meaningful ways. The problems related to collection, storage, bibliographical control and dissemination of information and knowledge due to explosion of information has seized the attention of information managers. Today, the need for systematized information is felt in all fields and it plays a very important role in human society. One can compare information technology as being the meru with its impact felt widely in every field. It has been more easier to handle the information with information technology (I.T.). Information technology provides accessibility to information systematically. Application of Information technology in the field of library and information/documentation centers is very useful in handling various aspects concerning space problem in libraries, time management and in the processing of information by spending higher amounts of physical and mental capabilities. All information oriented activities can be handled with ease if information technology is properly applied. Now-a-days many libraries and information centers are applying information technology in various fields like in acquisition, in accessing, in circulation, in reference services and in retrieval of information. Information technology (I.T.) is becoming highly useful to libraries and information centers. Special libraries have taken the lead and emerged as a vector of transformation in the changing society. The special libraries get converted as a pluri-tasking service provider with IT application.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology(IT) has changed the world of information. All activities based on information have been developed strongly with the support of information technology. Today, current age is known as Information Technology (I.T.) age. Use of I.T. has been essential need in maximum fields and has been common term in society in the scientific age. Various aspects of information as collecting, processing and transmitting can be managed effectively. The world has become borderless and interconnected. More and more persons are getting connected with application of IT. In the fields of research and development, IT is playing key role and reducing some undesirable and unnecessary time taking activities. With IT as a weapon, the researchers feel very capable and comfortable. They can access all required information with pressing single button. All traditional parameters have been changed due to the presence of IT. It has become symbol of speed, accuracy, efficiency and capability in modern age. I.T. has emerged as the life blood of postmodern society.

SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTERS(SLIC)

A special library is a source of subjective and specific information. It facilitates to get needful information in view of requirement of its parent organization. It offers very comprehensive information with its kind of field. It also prepares useful documents like news letters, abstracts, bibliographic details and subject's reference etc. SLIC are playing a vital role in R&D activities in our society. The main functions can be summed up as follows:

- Collect, maintain, store and retrieve information according to the need of its parent organization.
- Provides very comprehensive and specific information.
- Provides solutions to the related doubts and queries.
- Provides various types of useful documents.
- Performs as a documentation center.
- Provides abstracts, indexes and useful subjective references.
- Prepares accession list, bulletins, news letters, summaries, hand books or manuals.

A list of frequent users are as follow:

- Local staff, researchers of various fields.
- Outside individual and institutional users.
- Users of different branches and departments.
- Students involved at doctoral level, whose research topic is related with their subject or area.

IT IN SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTERS ENVIRONMENT

Libraries & Information centers are like the soul of academic institutions and organizations. Today, the forms of information have been changed with the wide use of I.T. in libraries and information centers after introduction of computers. The medium of collecting the information have taken new forms in past few decades. In new age, the paper media is giving space to electronic media. Libraries have been more and more spacious due to change in the form of information storage media with audios, videos ,graphic and text. The technology of optical disc was introduced as a very popular information storage media. The media as CD-ROM has become more vital during 1990's for collecting and dissemination of information with the greater capacity of storage. Information Technology brought new responsibilities to library authorities in special libraries. They should adopt and use I.T. in their work culture. In recent years internet did change the role of I.T. Many libraries are making online their documents and making it available across the world. The fields of key concern of a special library is growing fast and the I.T. application is making growth positively and effectively.

SPECIAL LIBRARIES/INFORMATION CENTERS

AREAS OF IT APPLICATION

Management of acquisition process
- Acquisition/Accession / reports generation /order processing

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Processing of Technical works (Cataloguing / Classification)
- Catalogue card/Barcodes generation
- Online catalogue

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Management of Serials
- Serials check in / out and claiming - Union / holding list

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Management of AV materials
- AV acquisition / cataloguing
- AV inventory control etc.

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Internal Management
- Accounting /budgeting
- Scheduling / planning
- Word processing / mailing
- Statistics / report

Information Storage / Retrieval

- Database construction
- Downloading / uploading
- Online database searching
- Indexing and abstracting
- Current awareness services (CAs)
- SDI services

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Administrative works

References / Information Services

- Bibliography listings
- Public access / computer literacy
- Library instruction

Information technology is being used widely in special libraries. Some of the areas are as follows:

- Improving productivity and efficiency of library services effectively (i.e. acquisition, technical processing, storage, controlling circulation, retrieval and dissemination of information.
- Provision of quality information (e.g. CAS, SDI etc.)
- Saving the space using the electronic storage (e.g. CDs and CD ROMs and faster accessing of information.
- Provision of the extensive information and maintenance.
- Improving co-operation in sharing of resources (e.g. shared acquisition, share cataloging etc.)

I.T. BASED INFORMATION/DOCUMENTATION CENTERS IN SPECIAL AREAS IN INDIA

In India, National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT) Programme envisages promotion and support to the development of a compatible set of information system on Science and Technology of various fields and interlinking these into a network. Today, all International and national information and documentation centers are adopting information technology. Subsequently, the utility of special libraries and information centers has been maximized in all dimensions.

I.T. based Information and Research Centers developed by NISSAT

Subject area	Acronym	Concerned institution
Food technology	NICFOS	Central Food Research Institute, Mysore
Leather technology	NICLAI	Central Leather Research Institute, Chennai
Machine Tools and Production Engineering	NICMAP	Central Manufacturing Technology Institute, Bangalore
Drug and Pharmaceuticals	NICDAP	Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow
Chemicals and Allied Industries	NICHEM	National Chemical Laboratory, Pune
Textiles and Allied Subjects	NICTTAS	Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association, Ahmedabad
Advanced Ceramics	NICAC	Central Glass and Ceramics Research Institute, Kolkata
Bibliometrics	NCB	Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre, New Delhi
CD ROM	MICDRO	National Aerospace Laboratory, Bangalore
Crystallography	NICRYS	University of Madras
Management Science	NICMAN	Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
Marine sciences	NICMAS	National Institute of Oceanography, Goa

NISSAT Access Centres to International Database Services

Place	Concerned Institutions
Bangalore	National Aerospace Laboratory
Kolkata	Indian Association for Cultivation of Science
Chennai	Central Leather Research Institute
New Delhi	NISCAIR
Pune	National Chemical Laboratory
Ahmedabad	Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association
Mumbai	Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute
Hyderabad	Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology
Thiruvananthapuram	Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation

I.T. based National Information and Documentation Centers in India

Subject Area	Acronym	Run Under
National Social Science Documentation Centre	NASSDOC	ICSSR
National Institute of Scientific Communication and Incorporation Resources	NISCAIR	CSIR
Defence Scientific Information and Documentation Centre	DESIDOC	DRDO

I.T. based International Information system for different areas

Subject Area	Centre	Acronyms	Established by
Agriculture science	International Information System for Agriculture Science and Technology	AGRIS	FAO
Nuclear Energy	International Nuclear Information System	INIS	UNO
Medical Science	Medical Literature analysis and Retrieval System	MEDLARS	National Library of Medical USA

CONCLUSION

Library and Information Centre is like the nervous system of any organization. It is responsible for exciting developments in society. Special libraries have been converted as a knowledge hub for particular subject or area of knowledge. Special libraries are providing good services to all type of users effectively with support of Information Technology. Use of IT in a special library environment has improve the overall library management activities and able to enhance the library services both qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Today, the Research and Development activities are being more regularized work with the IT based special libraries.

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