

**Challenges and  
Opportunities  
for Libraries  
in  
Twenty First Century**  
*(Festschrift Volume in Honour of  
Dr. Madhukar Garad)*

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# **IFDP ON LIBRARIES' RESPONSE TO COVID-19: ENHANCED ONLINE LIBRARY SERVICES: A CASE STUDY**

– *Dr. Subhash P. Chavan, Dr. Dattatraya Trayambak  
Kalbande and Dr. Priya Suradkar*

## **Abstract**

The whole world is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the countries have declared lockdown for more than 60 days. People are forced to work from home. Use of internet, e-communication platforms are at a peak everywhere. In this situation it would be interesting to know how library professionals around the world are coping with this situation, what innovative services they are providing to the virtual community, and what is their view on future Library services and the LIS job market. This paper highlights how libraries are coping in the COVID-19 pandemic. It further gives detailed case study of IFDP programme carried out by SNTD Women's University's Knowledge Resource Centre, SHPT School of Library Science in association with J.W. Sadhubella Girls College and MUCTA .The case study may be considered as a pilot project for developing different programmes under the umbrella of IFDP for the Librarians. This was the first international FDP programme organized in India on virtually. The results of this IFDP will be useful for LIS teachers, librarians and academic community to know how the situation is handled around the world in this pandemic situation and which precautionary measures need to be implementing at the time reopening the libraries after post covid.

**Keywords:** Faculty Development Programme for Librarians, COVID-19, IFDP, online library services in Covid-19, Security Measures for librarians in Covid-19.

## Introduction

Presently all the educational institutions are closed due to COVID 19. All types of Libraries including National Libraries of about 160 countries are also closed. Library professionals were, and are, at the forefront to navigate the treasure of knowledge available on all subjects through open sources arranged online training programmes for the faculty members, research scholars, students. The mediums that are used to impart learning are Zoom, Google Meet, Google Class Room, Skype, Cisco Webex, Facebook Live, YouTube Live etc. to name a few. Different webinars are arranged by the Library Professionals to highlight the treasure of knowledge that is available and yet to be explored.

Large number of countries have laid down the policies for libraries to be adopted during and post COVID period as moves towards the reopening of libraries are increasingly on the agenda, as countries look to lift broader restrictions. Decisions will of course need to be based on overall assessment. It seems that India is yet to lay down any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for assuming the functioning of National Library, Higher Education Institutional Libraries like Universities, IIT's, IIM's, NIT's, Public Libraries and other Libraries. Libraries are public places where we can find heavy rush during 24×7 hours. We have to take certain measures and also to make necessary changes to Library Policies in order to check the spread of COVID- 19 and at the same time to take such measures so that faculty members, scholars, students etc. may not suffer for want of reading materials. ( Abdul Majid Baba, 2020).

Dr. S.R. Ranganathan's fifth law of Library Science says that "Library is a Growing Organism". As there is a change and growth in all the fields of academics, this change has influenced the importance of libraries in the academic institutions remarkably. The society at large still has the old image of academic librarians which needs to be changed and improved in a positive direction. The entire responsibility of changing our own image and the image of the profession lies on us, the librarians and the information professionals. (Akhtar Parvez & Meeta Rathod).

## **Need of the Faculty Development Programme for Librarians**

Education, knowledge, information, and learning are important facets of academic institutions. The advancement of information and communication technology in the curriculum of academics has brought significant change not only in the library and information services but also in the changing roles and expectations from the librarians and information professionals. Customer-focused and user-oriented approach has replaced the traditional librarianship which requires specialised subject knowledge and skills. It implies that either by compulsion or willingly, continuing learning is the need of the day for the library and information professionals.

### **The objectives of the International Faculty Development Programme :**

1. To equip librarians with new skills and knowledge for the nascent IT developments that are essential for providing better library services to the users in COVID-19 Situation.
2. To maintain and enhance library effectiveness in pandemic age;
3. To help librarians to fulfill academic responsibilities in lockdown period;
4. To create research and collaborative network between LIS professionals and
5. To help the participants in understanding the IT discipline for merging the library science and IT knowledge for the better functioning of libraries from the worldwide.

## **International Faculty Development Programme for Librarians on Libraries' Response to COVID 19: Enhanced Online Library Services: A Case study**

The Bharatratna Maharshi Karve Knowledge Resource Centre and SHPT School of Library Science, SNDt Women's University in association with Sadhubella Education Society's j. Watumull Sadhubella Girls College, Ulhasnagar, Thane and Mumbai University

and College Teachers Association (MUCTA) successfully conducted an International Faculty Development Program (IFDP) on “Libraries’ Response to COVID 19 : Enhanced Online Library Services” from 12 -18 May 2020. The IFDP was conducted on Zoom online platform. This IFDP was also made live on YouTube. Total 2722 participants registered for the IFDP, that includes 26 participants from Abroad i.e USA, UAE Qatar, Saudi Arabia , Bahrain, Indonesia, Pakistan, Guyana, Zambia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria , Nepal and within Indian territory, got participation from Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal , Karnataka, Telangana, Kerala, Odisha, Gujarat, Haryana, Tamilnadu , Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Goa etc.

## **Outline of the Programme**

The programme was scheduled as per the convenient time by the foreign countries speakers. Some sessions arranged on 11.00 am as per the Indian time, some on 2.30 pm and on 5.00 pm. which included virtual technical sessions followed by question and answers.

### **Technical Session-1**

The speaker of the first technical session Dr Kalpana Shankar, Professor, School of Information and Communication Studies, University College, Dublin, Ireland conducted very informative and interactive session on Future proofing information societies during and after the global pandemic. She started her session by asking whether it is possible to future proof information societies during and after a pandemic and said that the simple answer is that it is not possible. She talked about there being an information scarcity, about COVID 19 and aspects of the pandemic which was ironic given that we live in an age of information overload or rather infodemic. In addition to this there has been so much disinformation and misinformation going around on all the social media about the virus, the statistics, about cures etc. In fact, people are using social media to spread so much information that that sometimes the false news travels twice around the globe before the true news emerges. Elites, governments are positioning false choices are: economy, health/welfare, and civil liberties and sometimes there is a lack of proactive policy responses by governments and other

bodies. The voices of expertise and intellectualism are not being heard clearly and sometimes a partial bit is amplified by the social media. Today Journalism/journalists are playing complicated and numerous roles. The LIS professionals clearly have a role to play in trying to sift through this information and give accurate and authentic information. The talk was followed by question answer session. The Session was successful as more than 4,500 views were seen on YouTube channel.

## **Technical Session-2**

The speaker was the second technical session Mr. Prashant Pandey, Director of Library Services, Flinders University Library, Adelaide, Australia. His topic for the discussion was Transforming Academic Libraries and his talk was divided into three areas namely environmental condition in higher education leading to demand for change, Transformational ways libraries can respond to this demand and case study of how Flinders University Library is responding to current situation.

His talk focused on how the higher education system is changing globally, types of funding coming to higher education in different countries. He also emphasized on an open school concept and commented on the employment situation in general.

Mr Pandey said that there were challenges for the library professionals to be creative and provide library services while going from print to digital transformation and in automating libraries. He also talked about going from generalized LIS skills to specific skills required in librarianship, for e.g. data analytics, communication experts, blended librarianship and thus getting trained with the right skills for the right job.

Dr Pandey also mentioned that there will be disrupters in every profession including LIS, but LIS professionals should take these as challenges and turn them into opportunities. Libraries should be user centered and provide customized services. He also talked about how the Flinders University is coping up with the COVID- 19 pandemic and started offering education in online mode. His talk focused on what actions the library has taken like putting up signages for safe distancing in the library at multiple locations. Another service



provided by the library is 'Book a librarian' where they can have dialog with the librarian. In the current situation there is an increased demand for the Book a librarian service compared to last year in 2019. He also mentioned about creating a road map of what to do once libraries become onsite. Key-takeaway from his talk is that LIS Professionals have to accept changing demand in current COVID-19 pandemic and reach users wherever they are by providing services in an online mode. The Session was successful as more than 4,500 views were seen on YouTube channel.

### **Technical Session-3**

The speaker for the session third was Dr. Graziano Kratli- Digital Projects and Technology Librarian at the Divinity School Library under Yale University, USA. Mr Graziano talked about the Personal Librarian Program (PLP) at Yale University, which is a library outreach initiative that was launched in 2008.

He highlighted his engagement in the program since 2009, He also shared the initiatives taken to support research activities of the faculty members at Yale University. In his talk he focused on the origins, the implementation, and the assessment of the program, with particular attention to its main aspects, its impact and its challenges. He also presented a scenario on the potential of the programme in the Covid 19 phase. He spoke about how the library reconfigured its operations during the lockdown to support the new teaching and learning scenario where most of the staff were working remotely from home. It was interesting to know that this program is giving a more intimate link with the library staff. They act as a mentor to the students and in the beginning also support them psychologically. The students are encouraged to seek assistance especially now when the physical library is closed.

### **Technical Session-4**

Mrs Hina Mehta, She works as Library Media Specialist, in Benjamin Franklin Middle School, Teaneck, NJ USA was the speaker for the session fourth and Mrs. Hina gave overview of her school library and library tasks involved, such as acquisition, processing, circulation, report analysis etc.. Some interesting and innovative tasks that she

has started include book clubs, makerspace & robotics and Girls who code. Her collaboration with teachers, involvement in curriculum development and integrating resources and media and teaching research skills were also discussed. She mentioned the primary online services that are offered during the covid crisis and how support is provided through online classroom platform, emails, chats and online meetings. She also spoke about her contribution towards the community in the form of face shields prepared by using makerspaces in the library. She ended her talk by discussing how the library should be prepared post COVID and what strategies should could be applied.

### **Technical Session-5**

Dr. Muhammed Mezbah-ul-Islam, Professor, Dept. of Information Science and Library Management, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and Mr. Kishor Ingle, Head Information Services Division, Tata Consultancy Services, Pune Branch was the speakers for the session five. The session was very informative and interactive. Dr. Muhammed Mezbah-ul-Islam talked about Library and Information Science Education in Bangladesh. He highlighted the history of Library and Information Science in Bangladesh and presented statistics of the overall courses run by the Universities in Bangladesh. He talked about current trends and changing paradigms in LIS education and touched upon the challenges, training required and availability of job opportunities in the field of LIS in Bangladesh.

The second speaker, Mr. Kishor Ingle presented informative lecture on role of librarian in 21st century. He highlighted many skills and competencies that required to the LIS professionals in today's era. He stressed that today's librarian is not only gatekeeper but he is a knowledge manager. Smart work and timely information is expected in this internet age for that he has given many skills and competencies such as hardware and software skills, internet surfing skills, managerial skill, Presentation skill, analytical ability, teamwork skill, and so on.

### **Technical Session-6**

The resource person for the technical session sixth was Mr. Zakir Hossain, Teacher-Librarian ICS Inter-Community School Zurich, &

IASL Regional Director for International Schools, Switzerland. Mr. Zakir's speech was divided into following areas namely Open Access Databases, Open Access e-Journals, Open Access e-courses, Open Access IRs and copyrights issues, Open access resources for school libraries and role of the Librarians in Covid-19 situation regarding fulfillment of users need. He focused on Open Access Initiative as well as various forms and types such as e- journals, e-books, Electronic Theses & Dissertations, Directories, e-print archives, digital repositories, open education resources, search engines and blogs etc. All these resources are scholarly and useful to support our academic and research work and are available on the web. Most of these being free, can be accessed without any restrictions at the user end.

Mr.Zakir explained the use of open access resources and spoke about specific skills required in searching open access resources for e.g. Emerald Database is a closed access database but if anyone wants a particular paper, he or she can get it through Authors Website or Research gate . He also mentioned that there will be need to take care of Copyright Issue as well as fair use. He also showed how organizations can make their own websites and also how much data has been curated by organizations and even by governments.

## **Technical Session-7**

The Speaker for the session seventh was Dr. Nasim Iqbal, Record management specialist at Australian public service, Canberra Australia and his topic was Record Management is not rocket science.

Dr. Nasim Iqbal began his session by giving basic details about records management and its history. He mentioned that records management had existed for 7000+ years and that India had already known records keeping much earlier than European Countries. The benefits of record management can be seen across all sectors on a large scale. The process of managing records involves capturing, storing, retrieving and protecting the records in whichever form it exist. He further discussed record management standards. Dr. Iqbal also threw light on the information management framework. He discussed record management need analysis with the help of a flow chart.

## Findings

The findings of the study have been gathered from the written and verbal feedback of the international faculty development programme Workshop which was attended by 2722+ participants across the world like USA, UAE Qatar, Saudi Arabia , Bahrain, Indonesia, Pakistan, Guyana, Zambia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria , Nepal and India.

## Feedback from the Participants

The event was totally useful and helped us a lot for developing our knowledge in various spectrum. Please conduct this kind of programmes for betterment LIS professionals by Naheem, K.T from Pondicherry. This is the first programme in India conducted on large number of participants as well as main attraction was all the speakers from foreign countries, so this is the history in the profession by Dr. Rameshwar Pawar, and another one best feedback from Mr. Anil Lahane i.e Experienced Knowledge fest! To become an errant We are not afraid. Though embraced by difficulties Service remained undivided. The seven-day international webinar, that being said, has been the subject of much admiration. This webinar hasn't been a series of stuffy words that spreading information only but a knowledge fest in the series of the rite of growing flowers on a rocky plains. A genuine librarian, I feel, is he who finds always the best to read for his readers and provides it to them in any kind of circumstances. This webinar has underlined the service value of librarians all over the world even in the time of lockdown. In fact, when the whole world is stopped by the global epidemic, bringing together several librarians from all over the world and engaging them is not as easy as it may seem. But, Dr. Subhash Chavan made it possible through organizing such a successful international webinar. My heart felt appreciation and congratulations to the whole team for their painstaking efforts!

The feedback gathered from the participants was overwhelming. Participants expressed their gratitude to the organizers and appealed to extend support and encouragement for continuing with such international development programme for LISc professionals. The participants was from different age groups and rich professional background expressed happiness over the IFDP proceedings. In a nutshell, the IFDP achieved its objective of bringing people together

for a common professional cause and had proved to be a memorable event.

## Conclusion

Library Professionals/Libraries or Knowledge Resource Centers worldwide are devoting vast resources to mitigate the public health impact of COVID-19 by providing the relevant Information at right time to the Scientists/Doctors and other stakeholders in order to combat the COVID-19. The Covid-19 crisis has acted as an inflection point, throwing into sharp relief the many benefits of digital/open libraries. There is no doubt COVID-19 has put brakes to academic activity, but libraries are and will ensure the continuity of academics.

The above study reveals that regular faculty development programme, workshops and training programmes are the need of the day particularly in this pandemic situation. No doubt, at present a number of online programmes are being conducted at different places on different digital platform or tools like Zoom, Webex, etc.

As per the Guidelines given by World Health Organization (WHO), America Library Association, Indian Library Association, IFLA and other Librarians related to resuming library services post lockdown which precautionary steps need to follow in ahead age like use of hand sanitizer, face shield, face mask, thermal scanner, book isolation box, gloves, counter shield, disinfectant spray, Surface cleaning including library computers, staff and users encouraged if they are not feeling well, providing useful links to reliable information on their websites, implementing quarantine policies on returned printed books, steps to be taken to open the limited number of sections/divisions especially in large libraries, not touching the books which users plan to borrow, over dues/fines are to be waived off for the books which cannot be returned due to COVID- 19, libraries during COVID period apply four elements viz. Predictability, Calculability, Efficiency and Control, great care is to be taken as the journey of printed book has to cross several stages from publisher's shelf to reader's hand, Procurement/ Acquisition division staff has to take care as they deal with the material coming from different cities of the country and different countries of the world, no one is expected to return books until things return to normal, Physical distancing of at least 2 meters for users of library and

staff, Anyone with fever or cough should stay at home, After handling of books, hands should be washed for 20 seconds etc.

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