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Innovative Practices in Academic Libraries in ICT Environment

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ABSTRACT

This is the modern era of advances in almost all fields of human growth. Emerging information explosion and the revolution in science - technology and communication are affecting day to day transactions and interactions all over the world. Worldwide social, economical, political, educational, industrial and cultural organizations are proving as backbone of the sole existence and development of human being. Libraries and information centers are playing an important role in keeping well informed these organizations and the society as whole, with most up-to-date information. Therefore services provided by such information centers are very significant. Also in this IT era, the role of the libraries and information centers has been changed drastically. They have to deal with all types of novel technology. They have to be familiar with the new and universal trends in handling the information and providing prompt as well as accurate services. In field of higher education, the Academic Libraries have vital role to play. Library of Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce, Pun is a leading commerce library in Maharashtra, shouldering its responsibility towards catering the information requirements of upcoming leadership in the field of commerce, trade, banking and economics. In our paper, taking BMCC library as a case study, an attempt has been made to highlight the innovative practices adopted in the mode of delivering the library services.

KEYWORDS: Academic Library, ICT Environment, Innovative Practices, BMCC Library.

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INTRODUCTION

ACADEMIC LIBRARY: Academic library is defined as "Academic library is a library that is attached to the higher education institutions which serves two complementary purposes, to support the curriculum of the institute and to support the research of the university faculty and students". Academic libraries are playing a very essential and fundamental role in higher education. It acquires, processes, organizes, the basic information sources and disseminate the vital information to students, faculties and the research scholars for the growth of the higher education. Ultimately it supports the research work going on in various branches of knowledge all over the nation. Information explosion and the emerging information and technology has changed the higher education scenario worldwide. Therefore the academic libraries are also on the verge of changing its conventional and traditional approach in view of the ICT environment.

ICT: ICT is defined as, "Information and Communication Technology, is the technology required for information processing. In particular in the use of electronic computer and computer software to convert, store, protect, process, transmit and retrieve information from anywhere, anytime." It consists of technology such as radio and the newer digital technologies like computers, satellite, mobile phones and the internet. Also it comprises the Electronic collection, editing, storage, distribution and presentation of information.

ROLE OF ICT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIS: Information explosion and the emerging ICT revolution has changed the higher education scenario and the academic libraries to the larger extent. Development and the application of the automation software and implementing the information and communication technologies (ICT) in library operation has changed the traditional activities of the libraries. Libraries are now automated i.e. all the housekeeping operations are now performed by using computers.

ICT is used in libraries and information centers for the development of new information services and computerization of library services. ICT is useful in great extend. It is useful for improving productivity and efficiency of library services effectively. It provides the quality information and also saves the space of the library and save the time of its users. Now a days academic libraries on large scale, utilizing

advance scientific ways and know-how and adopting ICT for the best and innovative practices to cater to the needs of the researchers also accomplish the objectives of the higher education.

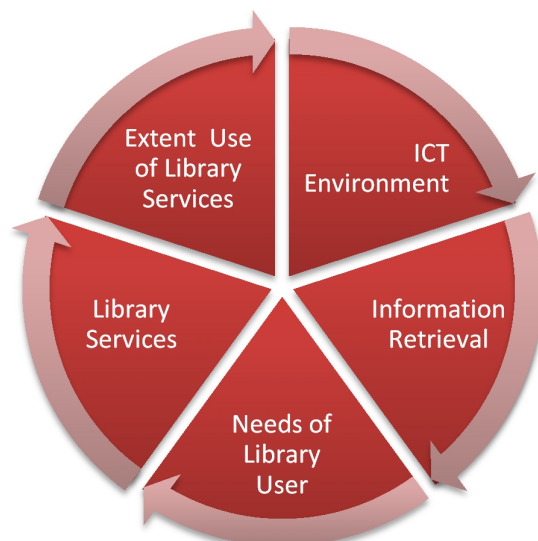


Fig. 1. Impact of ICT Environment. Academic Library

BMCC

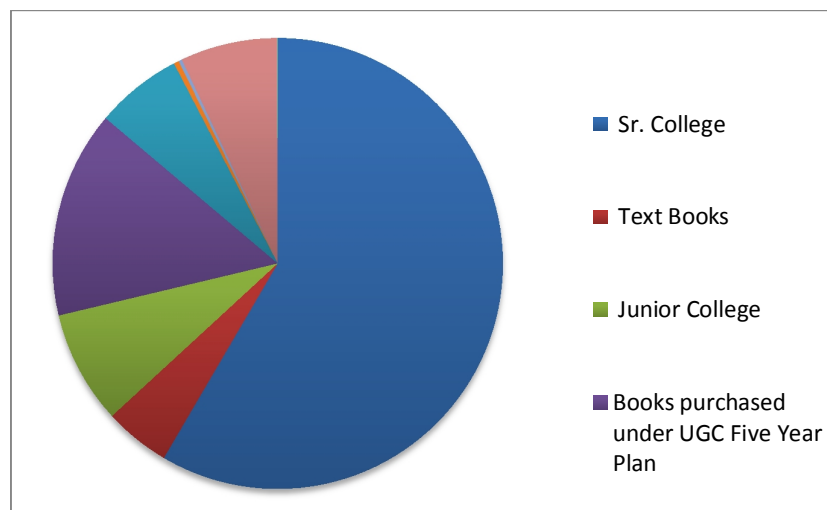
The Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce is a pioneering, premier Commerce College in Maharashtra. It was established in 1943 by the Deccan Education Society, Pune with view to provide enlightened leadership and trained manpower in the field of commerce and business which will support to strengthen the economy of our nation. BMCC is the NAAC Accredited “A” Grade College and one of the best commerce academy. It has the glorious history of about 70 years and very proudly continues the rich heritage of the Deccan Education Society.

BMCC Library: The College has a unique and independent two-storied library building, having total area of about 14500 sq ft. This colossal library building was inaugurated at the hands of late Shri. N. A. Palkhiwala, the eminent jurist of India on the 25th November 1973. It has rare, varied and rich collection. It subscribes to 103 regional, national and international journals. There are 80,000 books available. BMCC Library is recognized today as one of the best and well equipped library in Commerce and Economics. The first Librarian of this library was Pralhad Digambar Kulkarni. During 38 years of his devoted service he has developed and organized this library scrupulously. BMCC Library has been growing over the years. Now it has undertaken several measures and adopting modern scientific techniques and know-how to perform day to day tasks. Most of the traditional services have also been replaced by new ICT-based services. This library applying various innovative practices in providing the best services to its users.

PRESENT COLLECTION OF THE LIBRARY : (TOTAL BOOKS 94,188)

BOOKS:

	Series	No. of Books
	Sr. College	55040
1	Text Books	4459
2	Junior College	7644
3	Books purchased under UGC Five Year Plan	13992
4	Books purchased under Non-Grant	5867
5	M. Phil Dissertation	352
6	Ph.D. Thesis	226
7	Bound Volumes	6539
8	Brail Books:	69



LIBRARY USERS

Students of Junior, Senior, PG Wing and teachers of all the faculties also the non- teaching are the regular members of the library . About 4000 students of all the faculties and about 120 teachers availing the services of the library. Ex-teachers, Senior citizens, educationalist and research scholars are visiting the library. As it is one of the leading library in commerce, various persons of banking, trade and economic sector also visited this library from last 40 years.

LIBRARY STAFF

The present staff positions of the library are as follows:

The Librarian	1
Asst. Librarian	1
Library Clerk	1
Library Clerk (Non-Grant)	2
Library Attendant	8

LIBRARY AUTOMATION AT GLANCE

BMCC Library initiated its computerization since 2008. The present automation status of the library is as follows.

- 1 Libraries Database includes of Books, Periodicals, Theses and new additions.
- 2 Library has SMART-Lib software to run its computerized functions.
- 3 About 11 computers are in use for automation work.
- 4 Installation of OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)
- 5 Installation of Barcode system for Members I-D and Circulation System.
- 6 Other administrative aspects of the library.

BMCC LIBRARY SERVICES

The teachers, research scholars, students and the other staff are the main users of the library. The majority of the under-graduate and post-graduate students depends on the services of the library. For convenience of the readers, the service of the library is made available from 8 am to 5 pm on all working days. Reading- Hall remain open till 8 pm during examination period. Besides the books in the stacks for lending, the library has special collection of textbooks for issue and reference purpose. Reprographic services are provided to the readers on nominal charges to enable them to copy the required materials. The library provides Internet services to the readers for browsing the regular material.

Innovative practices / best services of the library.

New innovative practices have been introduced in the delivery of services by the library.

- Creation of the databases of the books and other material using library application package like SMART Lib
- Automation of different housekeeping operations of the library.
- Providing OPAC as tool for browsing & searching the library collection.
- Provision of services in electronic environment.

- Developing Local Area Network
- Providing online access to leading E-Journals and E-books to library users/readers at no cost.
- Access to the full text of the journals;
- News Paper Clipping Depository : Scanning the daily news.
- INTERNET & E-Resource Centre providing internet connectivity enabling the users access to global information resources;
- Adopting Barcode System in Circulation and for the I-Cards & B-T Cards of the library members.
- Joining the INFLIBNET-N-List Programme enabling the academic and research community access to more than 6000+ E-Journals and 97000+ E-Books.
- Improving existing service conditions;
- Helping towards promoting E-Learning as well as E-Literacy among the scholars
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the library.
- Making library management more systematic to serve the users conductively.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Innovation and transformation are important concept in today's libraries especially in light of the libraries' ongoing transition from acquiring serials in print to providing access electronically, thus moving toward the virtual library (Carr, 2009). In order for libraries to remain relevant to their customers, they must follow the fundamental rule of business, that is, to supply what is demanded by their market. Library staff skills and library services all have to shift from book-centric to user-centric. As the academic library continues to redefine its role in the digital environment, it needs to leverage its strengths and innovate to create responsive and convenient services (Li, 2006).

In business literature, the importance of involving customers in service innovation and development has been the subject of innovation theory over the last decade or so (e.g. Alam and Perry, 2002; Alam, 2002). For example Bitner et al. (2000) recommend close involvement of customers in the design process of technology-based services.

This paper contributes to the debate on innovation in libraries by particularly focusing on user roles. Other studies have focused on innovation in libraries, but they have taken different perspectives such as employee creativity (Castiglione, 2008), developing knowledge innovation culture in libraries (Sheng and Sun, 2007) or changing customer demands and library's ability to innovate and respond to them (Brindley, 2006; Li, 2006)

COMPUTERISED LIBRARY SERVICES

All activities in the library are done through computer only. All the books have the Bar-code stickers. Students Identity Cards are also Bar-coded. There are & computers having LAN in the library. Out of these two are for library users i.e. for the students and teachers to search the book through OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) The task of issuing the books, indexing, reports generation, statistics and section wise computerized library functions and services are become faster and easier due to computerization.

LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

Bar-coded and laminated Identity Cards are generated in the library and issued to the students. Through this card they can borrow the books. Library membership cards are also provided to the students to facilitate the issuing. Total of students from Junior wing, UG and PG classes enrolled in the library in the current year.

LIBRARY WEBSITE AND E-MAIL

Library has a separate Website with the Linkage to College website. A user can check any book sitting at home from any corner of the world. www.bmcclibrary@vsnl.net is the name of the website. The E-Mail address of the library is bmcclibrary12@gmail.com Users can interact with the library staff through the e-mail for their short term and long term information query and library services.

LIBRARY USER GROUP

To inculcate the reading habits among the students to encourage them library organizes Library Users Groups. Every year many interested students register their names for LUG. Library Issues a Card to them for extra reading.

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP

In view to assist the research work and develop the current awareness of the library users, library has taken the institutional membership of the following organization. They provide the important books and information about the recent developments in different subject all over the world.

- MACCIA (Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture)
- MCCIA (Maratha Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture)
- BCL (British Council Library, Pune)

- INFLIBNET – N-LIST Program

BOOK EXHIBITION AND LECTURE SERIES

The larger amount of the budget is spent on purchase of books through exhibition. Principal, Professors and students select and recommend the books for purchase. Lecture series has been organized every year along with the books exhibition.

LIBRARY ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

Library arranges the Orientation Program twice a week. To acquaint the students about the library rules, collection and services. It helps them to know the library, its information sources, searching tools and facilities thoroughly.

INTERNET AND E-RESOURCE CENTRE:

There is a well equipped computer lab comprising 20 computers. Library provides internet facility to all students free of cost. Due to this magnificent computer lab the traditional appearance of the library has been changed thoroughly. It has become the knowledge hub for library users. They can browse and access worldwide information through the internet facility. Near about 80 students surf the universal information every day. They can read online databases, online journals, full text current information sources. There is overwhelming response from students community for this facility.

BOOK BANK SCHEME :

There is a 'Book Bank Scheme' for the needy and deserving students of all classes. A set of text-books is issued to the students for the whole academic year. Students avail this unique library facility and a number of students apply for this scheme every year.

REFERENCE AND REFERRAL SERVICE :

Library provides the long-term and short-term reference service to all its readers. Reference desk deals with all sort of authentic and important reference books, dictionaries, manuals, directories, indexes, annuals. All types of queries are promptly responded through reference desk.

DISPLAY OF NEW ARRIVAL

Library periodically displays the newly purchased books and journals for the readers. This is to inform the readers about newly published books journals. List of newly added books is displayed every month for students and faculty.

BOOK DISCOUNT SCHEME :

Every year the college gives a special Book Discount to students for purchasing new books from the book exhibition. There is overwhelming response from the students for this scheme.

NIGHT LIBRARY :

Reading-Hall of the library remains open till 8.00 pm during examinations. Students take the advantage of this library service on large scale. More than 500 students avail the facility every day.

INTER-LIBRARY LOAN:

Library exchanging its information sources with the leading libraries in Pune City. Research, academic and university libraries like BJ Wadia Library of Fergusson College, Jaykar Library of University of Pune, Library of Bhandarkar Institute, etc's are sharing its information sources with our library.

STUDY CUBICALS FOR TEACHERS.

For teaching- staff members the arrangement of study cubicles has been made in the Library. A computer with internet is provided. They can browse the INFLIBNET-N-LIST and other online journals and full text information sources for their do research.

DIGITIZED NEWS -PAPER –CLIPPING SERVICE

Scanning, classifying and organizing the daily national and international news regarding trade, commerce, banking and economic sector is an important service provided by the library to its users. News paper clippings provide the latest and current information in trade and commerce. It is the Current Awareness Service which keeps the users informed about the Governments new polices, rules and regulations, fluctuations in the Nation and International trade, market and economy. Students and teachers ask for this information frequently.

DISSERTATION, THESIS and REPORTS.

Library has preserved valuable collection of M. Phil. and Ph. D. theses since 1985. There are near about 352 M .Phil. dissertations and about 226 Ph. D. thesis arranged in the library, which is now properly organized and listed in OPAC. Researchers and students can refer to these important information sources.

E- JOURNALS & E-BOOKS UNDER INFLIBNET N-LIST PROGRAMME

Library has subscribed to INFLIBNET N-LIST PROGRAMME. There are 97000 leading national and international e-journals and 6000 e-books are available full text. Library users are provided the USERID

and the PASSWORD to search, brows , refer or to down load the articles of their interest. This gives a very comprehensive and most recent information of different area of knowledge.

OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)

Every single document, print and non-print is entered in the OPAC. Users can search their title in the OPAC. This Online Public Access Catalogue is an important tool for searching the exact source of information preserved and organized in the library. Various options are provided to search the title i.e. Author, Title, Publisher, Accession Number, Keywords etc. Users find it very convenient and time saving to locate their title through OPAC.

COMPETITIVE EXAM SECTION

There are near about 108 books related to MPSC, UPSC, NET, SET, CET and other competitive examination acquired and kept in special section for the concerned students and the teachers preparing for the exams.

CONCLUSIONS

The above state of affair presents the current status of the BMCC Library. With the introduction of new innovative practices, the mode of delivery of services of library has changing. Users are really taking advantage of these new practices in the library services. BMCC Library is serving as model for other academic libraries. Technology alone cannot help bring about the required changes. Attitudes, practices, and policies need to change if libraries are to truly benefit themselves and their community of users by the application of new technologies.

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