

EDITORIAL

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LIBRARY MODERNIZATION – A NATIONAL NEED

The art and science of documentation and record keeping have been practiced in our country for several centuries now. Spoken word and memory power carried through generations of teachers and students of the ancient 'Gurukula' system have been gradually replaced by records by writing on clothes, palm leaves, metallic inscriptions and sculpted writings in monasteries, temples and other monuments of learning. Invention of paper and the printing press has really revolutionized and modernized the information-communication system by which the spread of knowledge became far and wide. It also incidentally helped to bring to the fore the unexploited potential of many men of letters, arts, science and philosophy to bring out documents of immense merit to be shared not only by a few select peer groups, but to the community and general readership at large. Right from the ancient historic period of Nalanda University, written records in the manuscripts have been preserved for the benefit of posterity in various institutions across the country. With the growth of library science as a specialized discipline, classified information is presently available in many libraries of international repute, to name a few, the Madras University Library, Connemara Library, Madras Veterinary College Library, Coimbatore Agricultural College Library and national libraries at Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly and National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal. Subject-wise and author-wise indexing and ready access to books and periodicals through computerized, conveyer belt system is in vogue in many modern libraries at present. In the progressive development of library and information/communication technology systems, the scenario with which we are faced today can be summarized as follows:

1. There is ever-expanding, explosive accumulation of knowledge and information in all fields of science, arts and literary fields, both in depth and width.
2. There is availability of specialized information relating to various specific fields which need to be documented, preserved and protected.
3. There is a perceptible increase in the number of professional societies, associations, institutions and individuals which bring about journals, periodicals, books and other forms of documents such as pamphlets, booklets, bulletins and proceedings of conferences and seminars.
4. The space required for storing such information in the form of hard printed copies is so large that it would be nearly impossible to create shelf space for their storing and their instant retrieval, what to mention the efforts needed to protect and preserve them and if needed, edit and improve upon them.
5. Computer-aided, internet-accessible information in all fields of knowledge is so large that its spread has eventually become both equitable and universal, with almost negligible cost.
6. With such easily accessible search-cum-retrieve facility becoming available, the students, scholars and researchers are less inclined to visit libraries to reach out to original sources of information which is becoming more and more cumbersome and weary. What could be accessed through touch of buttons in a computer, from the net services, has to be reached with enormous efforts on travel to libraries, incidental cost and time involved and manual handling of heavy volumes of precious literature.
7. The redeeming feature is that science and technology has simultaneously exploded in the field of ICT in such a way that modern technologies could be successfully exploited to bring about a paradigm change in our approach to the entire system of library and information access system. Today, science is knocking at the doorsteps of nature to find further avenues for efficient and speedy storage and retrieval of information meaningful

to the society. In place of the conventional, well understood and adopted binary electronic technology, methods based on DNA used by the living beings is being explored to meet the ever enlarging need for storage of library information.

8. More than anything, the enormous use of paper and other stationery used is considered detrimental to environmental degradation in terms of trees and bamboos utilized for the manufacture of tons and tons of such stationery and timely and appropriate disposal of waste resulting out of printing and processing of the manuscripts in the form of hard copies and enormous cost involved in their despatch through postal and other means of delivery.

Thus, it is high time that the modern technologies available are put into use speedily to restructure and modernise our library and information-communication systems with a forward looking, positive approach. The various technologies available can be enlisted as follows:

1. Online publication of books, journals, periodicals, reports, newsletters and other forms of write-ups and avoid hard copies publications to maximum extent.
2. Promote online access to such publications by facilitating online for enrolling membership and for cash transfer.
3. Digitization of publications by electronic means for easy storage in the form of CD ROMs.
4. Provide ready access to archival journals and books online.
5. Micro-filming of old volumes of journals and books and procurement of such micro-films if such efforts have been already made elsewhere.
6. Facilitate submission of papers and their peer reviews online to save stationery and postage.

When teaching and examination systems have already started using modern electronic aids in a large way, transformation of the library system to cater to the modern needs will speed up universalization and equitableness of education and bring the entire globe as one family under one roof. It is with this long term perspective, the IVJ editorial office has ventured upon establishing a library block in its premises. The primary activities involved were:

1. Progressive transition of the publication of IVJ into an online mode.
2. Preserve and protect valuable treasure of archival volumes of IVJ since 1924 by micro-filming and digitization.
3. Create a full-fledged library in its premises to enable the readers and scholars to utilize the documents and facilities of IVJ Library.
4. Establish a small museum on the history and growth of veterinary profession in India and display the information available on these aspects in various pages of the archival IVJ issues.

Our humble efforts have culminated in the inauguration of the IVJ Library Block in its office premises by Dr. S. Ayyappan, Secretary, DARE, Government of India and Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research on 23rd February, 2013 at Chennai. The proceedings of the inaugural function are reported separately with full details and photographs in this issue. The need for modernization of the IVJ publication and library facility thus created has provided us with an opportunity to share our thoughts with our readers, on such modernization of all valuable libraries in India. The well attended inaugural function bears testimony to the fact that IVA and its official organ, i.e., IVJ are moving in the right direction and leading the right to path to follow by our other professional brethren of sister disciplines as well.

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