



THE CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN MODERN SOCIETY: A SHORT REVIEW

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Abstract:

This research paper explores the dynamic and evolving role of libraries in modern society. Libraries have been integral to human civilization for centuries, serving as repositories of knowledge, cultural hubs, and community spaces. In the digital age, the role of libraries has undergone significant transformations to adapt to the changing needs of society. This paper reviews the historical context of libraries, examines their traditional functions, and investigates how they have embraced technological advancements to remain relevant. The paper concludes with an outlook on the future of libraries in the context of rapidly evolving technologies and societal changes.

Keywords: *Library and Information service, Society, digital library, Knowledge*

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Introduction:

Libraries are often regarded as the quiet, unassuming pillars of society, yet their role is nothing short of transformative. In the tapestry of modern civilization, they are the custodians of knowledge, the keepers of stories, and the gateways to a world of information. As we delve into the essential role of libraries in society, we embark on a journey that transcends the dusty shelves and the hushed whispers within these hallowed halls. Libraries are not merely repositories of books; they are vibrant hubs of learning, innovation, and cultural enrichment.

A library is not only a building with bunch of books and several types of materials, it also plays a vital role in supporting the educational and research activities of society, promoting culture, disseminating information, building up a value system for every individual, etc. In a library, every book or other materials of the library are meant to be used by the users or readers as well as

every reader needs to find his/her own book. Without the collection of books, readers or users and library staff, the library is empty. A library offers books with no cost and a quiet place to read, which also influence and increase reading habits. A Google can find 100,000 answers or solutions of every individual's question online but a library professionals can find you the right one in right time.

In the Modern Age, with abundance of information, libraries assist the modern society by maintaining and disseminating the relevant information as and when required. It offers relevant and authentic information and record of knowledge created and accumulated by the past generations, because in this modern era, the information explosion has led us to confusion in choosing relevant information from the pile of information available throughout the several platforms. Libraries has an important role in the modern society as regarded as the 'Gateway of Knowledge for the



Community'. Modern Society has various needs such as education, research, cultural achievement, various types of information, etc. Society has founded various institutions to serve these needs. Among them the library occupies a prominent place, while other institutions are designed to meet one or few of the needs, the library is able to meet all of them in equal measure. The resources and services of the libraries offer and create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are essential for the creative and innovative society.

Background:

1. Evolution of Libraries:

Libraries have been fundamental institutions throughout human history, evolving in response to societal changes and technological advancements. From ancient repositories of scrolls and manuscripts to contemporary digital hubs, libraries have played a pivotal role in preserving and disseminating knowledge.

2. The Digital Revolution:

The latter half of the 20th century witnessed a profound shift with the advent of the digital revolution. The rise of the internet, electronic databases, and digital publications transformed the landscape of information access. This shift prompted discussions about the relevance and future of traditional libraries in the face of unprecedented technological advancements.

3. Changing Information Landscape:

In the 21st century, the information landscape continues to evolve rapidly. The proliferation of smartphones, ubiquitous internet access, and the emergence of social media have altered how individuals seek, consume, and share information. Libraries, once predominantly physical spaces, now find themselves navigating a dynamic and digital information ecosystem.

4. Rationale for the Study:

Amidst these changes, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the role of libraries in modern society. Understanding how libraries have adapted and innovated in response to the digital age is crucial for both library professionals and the broader community. This research seeks to contribute to this understanding by examining the multifaceted functions of libraries, their integration of technology, and the challenges and opportunities they face in serving contemporary needs. By delving into the historical context and the transformative forces shaping libraries, this study aims to provide a comprehensive foundation for evaluating the current state and future prospects of libraries in the modern era.

Needs of Modern Society:

Modern society is a dynamic and rapidly evolving entity, shaped by technological advancements, shifting demographics, and changing values. As the world hurtles forward, the needs of contemporary society are equally transformative. To ensure a prosperous and sustainable future, it is crucial to comprehensively recognize and address these evolving needs.

1. Education and Lifelong Learning:

Education stands at the forefront of contemporary needs. In an era characterized by information abundance and automation, individuals require foundational knowledge and the ability to adapt and learn continuously. Lifelong learning has become essential to keep pace with the ever-evolving job market and technological advancements. Modern society needs accessible, adaptable, and quality education systems to empower its citizens for a rapidly changing world.

2. Technology and Innovation:

Innovation is the engine that drives progress in modern society. The need for breakthroughs in various fields, from renewable energy to healthcare,

has never been greater. Furthermore, access to digital technology and the internet is now considered a basic necessity. Bridging the digital divide and fostering innovation is imperative to ensure equitable growth and economic development.

3. Sustainable Practices:

The urgency of addressing environmental concerns has never been more apparent. Modern society requires sustainable practices and solutions to combat climate change, reduce waste, and preserve natural resources. Sustainable agriculture, renewable energy sources, and eco-friendly transportation are just a few examples of how society's needs align with environmental preservation.

4. Healthcare Access:

Healthcare is a fundamental need in any society, and modern society is no exception. Access to quality healthcare services, affordable medications, and preventive care are paramount. The ongoing global health challenges have underscored the importance of a robust healthcare system that can respond effectively to crises while providing routine care to all.

5. Social Equity:

Modern society must strive for greater social equity. This includes addressing issues of racial and gender inequality, economic disparities, and social justice. Ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities and access to resources is essential for a harmonious and just future.

6. Mental Health and Well-being:

The pressures and complexities of modern life have elevated the importance of mental health and well-being. The need for accessible mental health services, awareness campaigns, and destigmatization efforts is critical to support

individuals facing various emotional and psychological challenges.

7. Cyber security and Data Privacy:

As society increasingly relies on digital systems, robust cyber security and data privacy measures are needed. Protecting personal information, critical infrastructure, and digital communication networks is essential to safeguard society against cyber threats and ensure trust in online interactions.

Libraries in the Covid-19 pandemic:

During the Covid-19 pandemic, when countries around the world are implementing several measures to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, from national quarantines to institute closures, libraries are also severely affected like so many other institutions in the wake of growing pandemic, which led to hard choices around which services to offer and how, depending on several measures of pandemic, as school and colleges are trying to do operations online as much as they can. But, even in that harsh situation, several library associations themselves did their great job to inform their members and support them in difficult times, such as – offering online training related to both related to Covid-19 and professional development, launching campaign around misinformation about Covid-19, etc. And when cases around the world started to decrease day by day, the libraries adopted several steps or moves to reopen by limiting concentration of users, promoting hygiene, keeping users and staff safe, etc.

Review:

In a world without libraries, it would be difficult to do advance research and preserve human knowledge or the world's cumulative knowledge and heritage for future generations. Libraries are pillars of education and it is natural to expect that digital libraries will provide new opportunities for innovative educational practices. The demand for library services is slowly moving from print media to digital, but the relevance of libraries in the digital age lies in their ability to offer

everyone access to all forms of media. Libraries offer a means by which we can gain access to knowledge. Libraries have proven in the past to be adaptable and versatile in making libraries fit with changing environments, and they'll keep doing just that.

Conclusion:

This research paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the role of libraries in contemporary society, shedding light on their historical significance, traditional functions, and their ability to adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age. By examining the social, educational, and cultural contributions of libraries, the paper provides a comprehensive understanding of their evolving role and their continued importance in shaping informed and engaged communities.

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