

Chapter 1

ICT Skills among Library Professionals: A Case Study of Universities in Tamilnadu, India

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ABSTRACT

ICT has changed the traditional methods of library activities and services providing new dimensions for teaching, learning and research in higher educational institutions. With the help of ICT tools, it is possible to store, retrieve, disseminate and organize information by creating websites and databases. Information is now published both electronically and by print making it accessible to users according to their demands. The study shows that out of the total 172 respondents, 53.48 per cent of them belong to the age group of 30-40 years and 20.93 per cent of them come under the age group of below 30 years. In this study, 22.58 per cent of the respondents have above 4 hours of access to internet. Majority of the respondents (37.03%) in the age group 40-50 years have above 4 hours of access to internet. The study reveals that librarian take the first position in their overall expertise in system analysis and design, assistant librarian the second, deputy librarian the third, technical staff the fourth and ministerial staff the last.

INTRODUCTION

Stands for “Information and Communication Technologies.” ICT refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. It is similar to Information Technology (IT), but focuses primarily on communication technologies. This includes the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums. In the past few decades, information

and communication technologies have provided society with a vast array of new communication capabilities. For example, people can communicate in real-time with others in different countries using technologies such as instant messaging, voice over IP (VoIP), and video-conferencing. Social networking websites like Facebook allow users from all over the world to remain in contact and communicate on a regular basis. Modern information and communication technologies

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have created a “global village,” in which people can communicate with others across the world as if they were living next door. For this reason, ICT is often studied in the context of how modern communication technologies affect society.

Over past few decades, the library environment has changed considerably in terms of collection, organization and services. The e-resources (both online and offline) have occupied a considerable space in the library collection, the transaction of library materials are fully automated, new web based services are offered by libraries to attract users participation in redesigning the library system and services and so on. These changes are mainly due to the development and impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in libraries which have also made sea changes in all walks of life. The ICT tools and services are being used in libraries to manage libraries more efficiently and to cater users demand properly. In this changing library scenario, the library and Information professionals must possess adequate ICT skills to manage the modern libraries, more specifically the academic libraries . They need to acquire continuous knowledge and skills on the fast changing Information Communication Technology to provide better library services to users. (Satpathy, Sunil Kumar and Maharana, Rabindra K, 2011).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Suku and Pillai (2005) present the results of a survey to assess the status of automation in the university libraries of Kerala. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the Librarian/Librarian in- charge of the Central libraries of six universities. The survey mainly cover various aspects of library automation such as information technology infrastructure, in-house activities, information services and their usage, manpower development, and budget. The study also deals with the role of INFLIBNET Centre in

supporting the automation activities of university libraries. It is seen that library automation has been rather slow in Kerala due to various reasons like absence of University Librarian in most of the libraries; and lack of adequate qualified professional staff. 50% of university libraries in Kerala introduced comprehensive automation of housekeeping activities. LAN facility is available in all university libraries. All university libraries in Kerala are using computers for their services. All the libraries, without any exception, are using only personal computers for the entire range of automation activities. The survey also reveals that all university libraries have conducted sufficient number of training programs to its staff members before acquiring the new technology.

Walmiki and Ramakrishnegowda (2009) in a survey of University libraries in Karnataka outline the status of ICT infrastructure of selected six University libraries. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from the University librarians. The data collected include details of hardware infrastructure like availability of servers, PC’s, Laptops, printers, scanners etc. Software facilities for automation of housekeeping operations, digital library activities are included in the survey. Availability of campus LAN and internet facilities to provide access to information sources are detailed in the study. The survey reveals that most of the libraries lack sufficient hardware and software facilities, and internet with required bandwidth. The University libraries have to plan, implement and develop ICT infrastructure to exploit the benefits of digital information environment.

Singh, Sharma and Negi (2009) reports a study of the current state-of-the-art use and applications of ICT in LICs in Noida. The study is based on 25 LICs of public, government, corporate, public, and private enterprises in Noida. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire through mail/e-mail among the librarians of selected institutions. The study tries to find the opinion of the librarians about the barriers in application of ICT in LICs and their attitudes towards adopting

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