

EXPANSION IN LIBRARY SERVICES AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN KONKAN REGION

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Abstract:

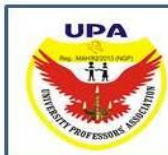
The COVID-19 pandemic affected each and every sector around the world. Especially the education sector affected by this pandemic very much. All public sectors affected and started working from home. The libraries cannot afford to close down their formal duties of providing information to users. During the situation of lockdown, the libraries continuously provided library services to library users with the support of available recent information communication technology and e-resources. This paper focuses on the types of services and communication tools used during COVID-19 crisis, apart from traditional services, to bridge the communication gap between libraries and users due to the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The primary goal of this study is to find out expansion in library services after COVID-19 lockdown and their significance for accomplishing educational and library objectives in college libraries in the Konkan region.

Keywords: COVID -19, Pandemic, Virtual books, Hybrid, MOOCs, FDP, Communication tools, Group wikis, Group forums, QR code, Telegram, Blogs

Introduction:

The college libraries play an important role in shaping and nurturing the academic fraternity among the students by providing the most specific, relevant, and exhaustive information. Therefore, by proving their worth and existence, they may rightly be called the heart of the college. Before the COVID-19 lockdown, academic libraries enjoyed working with their users.

The COVID-19 virus is having a significant impact on college library services. As a precautionary measure, the Union Government of India has declared a national level lockdown in four phases beginning 22nd March 2020. 1st Phase: From 25th March to 14th April, 2020 (21 days) 2nd Phase: From 15th April to 3rd May, 2020 (19 days) 3rd Phase: From 4th May to 17th May, 2020 (14 days) 4th Phase: From 18th May to 31st May, 2020 (14



days) to break the chain of COVID-19. These nationwide closures have impacted the student population. As educational institutes started working from home, libraries also planned to provide service from homes. Digital library services have been developed and enhanced for years, but the recent COVID-19 pandemic has made many users aware of these services for the first time. Especially, because of the closure of libraries during the pandemic, additional efforts have been made to promote digital libraries and their services as clearly visible and active libraries. Moreover, traditional libraries, or those without digital services, have the challenge of keeping their services active for their users virtually during this emergency. Thus, libraries have been engaging in new work practises to achieve such objectives from their homes or offices.

Libraries in the Konkan region are also affected by COVID-19. Konkan division comprises seven districts, namely Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, Thane, Palghar, Raigarh, Ratnagiri, and Sindudurg. There are 150+ aided traditional colleges in the Konkan region. By working hard, they are providing access to collections and services remotely, often investing time and efforts in updating websites and computer systems to deal with users' demands. While many libraries already have a strong digital presence, other libraries have also started such efforts. Hence, library professionals should also prepare to reopen the libraries along with COVID-19. Therefore, libraries have a huge responsibility to protect their users, staff, and library resources in a pandemic situation. After opening the lockdown library, continue all services offline and online.

Review of literature:

Abubakar, M. K. (2020). This paper has presented a broad exposition “Implementation and use of virtual reference services in academic libraries during and post Covid-19 pandemic: A necessity for developing countries”. This study presents an extensive synthesis of literature on VRS from different electronic databases, including Ebsco Host, Elsevier, Emerald, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Science Direct and Taylor & Francis Online. Consequently, four commonly used VRS communication technologies that can help ease the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in meeting library user’s information needs are presented. The main objective of this paper is to present an exposition of virtual reference services implementation and use in academic libraries in developing countries. Bharathkumar, V., Sangeetha, M. (2021). Virtual reference service through wiki: An effective tool for librarians in Covid-19 pandemic scenario. This paper reveals the responsibility of the library professionals in present world which is severely affected by COVID-19 pandemic. This paper explains how to serve students and the role of Librarians in COVID-19 pandemic situation. Also briefly explains how library professionals can provide effective virtual reference service to user community by using Media Wiki software and open access information sources. Wagwu, Victor., Obuezie, Adaora C. (2021). In a research paper “Social media information and role of librarians amid covid-19 pandemic: A Nigerian perspective”. This study explored the influence of social media on the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design. The objectives of the study are enumerated. This study determine how COVID-19 pandemic information is disseminated through social media in Nigeria, also determine the issues associated with social media misinformation on COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria and determine the role of Librarian played amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 252 female and 92 male librarians for the study. Findings indicate that Face book and WhatsApp were the social Medias frequently utilized by Librarians in Nigeria for retrieving and disseminating information on COVID-19.

Objectives:

- To study how the COVID-19 pandemic changed the library operations
- To find out the library services provided by the college libraries in the Konkan region during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To study the expansion in library services after COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Hypothesis:

- There is a significant change in college library operations during the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the Konkan region.
- College libraries offered various services through onlinemode during COVID-19 pandemic situation.
- There is significant expansion in college library serviceafter COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Scope of the study:

The present study is confined to the survey of traditional (Arts, Commerce and Science) aided undergraduate college libraries in the Konkan region. The study area of the Konkan division comprises seven districts namely Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, Thane, Palghar, Raigarh, Ratnagiri and Sindudurg. A total 150 + aided undergraduate colleges are under the Konkan region. Primary data for this study was collected through a structured questionnaire. A questionnaire was distributed among the study sample via Google form to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was distributed to all 150 college librarians in which 107 responses were received. Primary data were descriptively analysed and presented according to the research objectives of the study. A random sample were used for selection of sample. Data were analysed using simple percentage, mean, rank, chi-square test and standard sub-division.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents:

According to the survey results, the survey questionnaire was circulated among 150 colleges librarian through a google form. A total of 107 responses were received. Location-wise received data consisted of (56)52.4% from the urban area and (51)47.6% from the rural area.

Category	Responses	Percentages
Urban	56	52.4
Rural	51	47.6

Table 1. Shows the age group-wise number and percentage of respondents

Age group	Total	Percentages
20-30	1	0.93%
31-40	29	27.10%
41-50	50	46.72%
51-60	27	25.23%

Table 1 presents, there was 1 (0.93%) respondent in the age group of 20-30 years, about 29 (27.10%) respondents in the age groups of 31-40 years, about 50 (46.72%) respondents were in the age groups of 41- 50 years and 27 (25.23%) respondents were in the age group of 51-60 years.

Table 2- Automation status of library before, during and after COVID-19 pandemic situation in percentage.

Working Style	Before Covid-19		During Covid-19		After Covid-19		Chi-Square Value (Df-2)
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	
Manually	15	14.01	10	9.34	7	6.54	3.361
Partially Automated	44	41.12	48	44.85	47	43.92	0.305
Fully Automated	33	30.84	37	34.57	43	40.18	1.961
Hybrid	15	14.01	12	11.21	10	9.34	1.145
Significant value at 5% level							
Total	107	100%	107	100%	107	100%	

While observing above table in terms of significant change in having library automation status before, during and after COVID-19 pandemic situation, the above table represents only 15 (14.01%) college libraries were working manually before COVID-19 pandemic situation, whereas 10 (9.34%) libraries were working during COVID-19 and 07 (6.54%) are working after COVID-19 pandemic situation. Therefore, the study has not shown significant difference in manual working status of libraries before, during and after COVID-19 pandemic situations by the chi-square value 3.361 at degree of freedom-2 in the significant value at 5% (0.05%) level.

The study also denoted that 44 (41.12%) libraries were partially automated before COVID-19 pandemic situation, 48 (44.85%) libraries during COVID-19 and 47 (43.92%) libraries are in after COVID-19 pandemic situation. While testing statistical test chi-square in the study, there has not found significant difference in having partially automated library automation status during three stages of the study by chi-square value 0.305 at df-2 in significant value at 5% level.

Before COVID-19, the status of fully automated 33 (30.84%) and hybrid 15 (14.01%) libraries were very few but during the COVID-19, the number of fully automated libraries 37 (34.57%) increased and hybrid libraries numbers 12 (11.21%) were decreased. Following that after COVID-19, the number of fully automated libraries 43 (40.18%) have also increased and hybrid libraries numbers 10 (9.34%) decreased. But while comparing between three stages (before, during and after) of COVID-19, there have not seen significant difference in having library automation status of fully automated and hybrid libraries by the qui-square value respectively 1.961 and 1.145 at degree of freedom 2 with significance value at 5% level.

Table No. 3: Shows thepercentage wise library services, activities and best practices conducted by library during and after COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Sr. No.	Activity	Positive responses	%	Negative Responses	%
1	Online Quiz	82	76.64	25	23.36
2	Organize webinars, conferences and workshop	88	82.24	19	17.76
3	Online book review	57	53.27	50	46.73
4	Online Library Orientation	84	78.50	23	21.50
5	Library literacy sessions	72	67.29	35	32.71
6	Virtual book exhibition	57	53.27	50	46.73
7	Online library workshop for library users	62	57.94	45	42.06
8	Online library lecture series	49	45.79	58	54.21
9	FDP	36	33.64	71	66.36
10	MOOC Courses	21	19.63	86	80.37
11	COVID-19 awareness programme	71	66.36	36	33.64
	Total	679	57.69	498	42.31

Table No. 3 presents innovative initiatives activities, services, and best practises conducted in the college library during and after the COVID-19 pandemic situation in the Konkan region. The data found that a maximum of 88.24% of respondents responded with positive responses to the Organize webinar, conference, and workshop. Whereas (84)78.50% of respondents gave a positive response to the online library orientation. (82)76.64% of respondents gave positive responses to the online quiz activity, (72)67.29 respondents gave a positive response to the library literacy session activity, and (71)66.36% of respondents gave a positive response to the COVID-19 awareness programme, (62)57.94% of college librarians conducted online library workshops for library users, (56)53.27% of college libraries organised online book exhibitions, (57)On different occasions during the COVID-19 pandemic situation, 53.27 percent of college libraries conducted online book reviews. (48)45.79% of respondents gave a positive response to the online lecture series, (36)33.64% of college libraries conducted faculty development programmes out of the total respondents, and (21)19.63% of respondents responded to MOOC courses. After analysing the data, it was found that during COVID-19, library professionals conducted mostly webinars, conferences, and workshops, as well as an online library orientation, an online quiz, a library literacy session, and a COVID-19 awareness programme. Whereas FDP, online lecture series, and virtual book exhibition activities are used rarely.

Table 4: Shows the percentage-wise responses of using communication tools during and after COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Sr. No.	Tools	Never	Rarely	Sometime	Mostly	Mostly		
						Mean	Rank	SD
1	E-mail	3.74	6.54	14.02	75.7	3.54	3	1.06
2	Mobile phone	3.74	4.67	13.08	78.5	3.59	2	1.04
3	SMS	6.54	14.02	25.23	54.21	3.20	4	1.16
4	Conference technology	9.35	14.02	21.5	55.14	3.15	5	1.22
5	WhatsApp	4.67	4.67	6.54	84.11	3.63	1	1.06
6	Face book	20.56	27.1	19.63	32.71	2.57	8	1.30
7	Instagrame	32.71	26.17	19.63	21.5	2.22	11	1.28
8	Telegram	14.95	18.69	18.69	47.66	2.92	6	1.31
9	Blogs	25.23	23.36	23.36	28.04	2.47	10	1.30
10	Group wikis	31.78	28.04	24.3	15.89	2.17	12	1.21
11	Group forum	26.17	18.69	22.43	32.71	2.54	9	1.34
12	QR Codes	17.76	19.63	25.23	37.38	2.75	7	1.29

Table 4 presents the use of communication tools during and after the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Out of 107 responses, it has been observed, and the data found that mostly (90)84.11% librarian were used of Whatsapp application during COVID-19 crisis, (84)78.50% of respondents used mobile phones, and (81)75.70% of respondents used email communication tools, (59)55.14 % of respondents mostly used conference technology, (58)25.21% of respondents used the SMS service, (51)47.66% of respondents mostly used Telegram, (40)37.38 % of respondents responded to mostly used QR code, (35)32.71% of library professionals used Group forum, (35)32.71% of respondents mostly used Face book, (30) 28.04% of respondents gave a response to Blogs technology, (23)21.50% of library professionals used Instagram, and (17)15.89% of respondents used Group wikis tools and technology for communicating with library users during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. This study has covered twelve tools and received a questionnaire from library professionals about which tools you used during the COVID-19 pandemic situation and gave four options, i.e., never, rarely, sometimes, and mostly. After analysis of the data, it was found that WhatsApp, mobile technology, e-mail, SMS, conference technology, and telegram were mostly used by library professionals to communicate with library users during the COVID-19 crisis, and Group wikis, group forums, Instagram, blogs, Facebook, and QR code tools were rarely used.

Table 5 shown percentages wise students preferred to working nature of the library after COVID-19 in percentages.

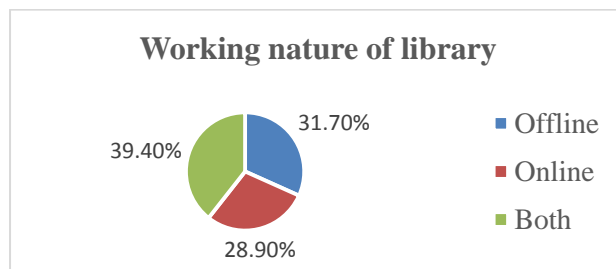


Table 5: Observation of the study shows that regarding preferred working nature of library after COVID-19 by students from the colleges of Konkan region of Maharashtra state. The above table denotes 526 student's questionnaire had considered for the study. Data collected from through online structured questionnaire with using Google form. Maximum users i.e. (207) 39.40% students suggested to both online and offline mode. (167) 31.70% of users suggested offline and (152) 28.90% of users suggested online. It is observed that most of the students preferred the both, offline and online working nature of the library.

Conclusions:

Throughout the COVID-19 lockdown, libraries continued to provide library services to library users using available information and communication technology and e-resources. Those libraries already offer online services, and the use of communication technology in libraries in that scenario increases the use of those services while also making many users aware of them for the first time. Further, traditional libraries, or those without many digital services, have been experimenting with new work practices in order to achieve such goals from the comfort of their own homes or offices. Those online services, e-resources, and various communication tools were used by the college library during COVID-19 due to lockdown, to bridge the gap of communication between the library and user. The majority of services continued after lockdown in the college library. All these services expand the boundaries of library services and are more useful for achieving library goals. After the COVID-19 lockdown, students became more familiar with all online and offline services.

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