Growth & Development of Medical College Libraries and Library Networks in Punjab and Chandigarh in the Era of ICT: An Overview

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Abstract: *The growth and development of any country and institution majorly depends upon the four factors: human resources, physical capital, natural resources and technology. The present study is an attempt to gauge the impact of technology especially the Information and Communication Technology. The survey method is used to analysis the impact and role of ICT on growth and development of medical college libraries and library networks in Punjab and Chandigarh. The current paper presents an overview on growth and development of medical colleges, their libraries and library network in the country then in Punjab and Chandigarh. The extensive review was done to collect the relevant information and presented point-wise in the paper. The study concluded that there is a dire need to study all the other factors influencing the growth and development pattern before drawing any conclusion.*

Keywords: Growth and Development, Medical College, Libraries, Library Networks, Information and Communication Technology, Punjab, Chandigarh, India

1. Introduction

The growth and development of any country generally influenced by four factors: human resources, physical capital, natural resources and technology. The economists agree that the countries which are highly developed pay more focus on these areas and the less-developed countries, even those with high amounts of natural resources, will lag behind when they fail to promote research in technology and improve the skills and education of their workers (Woodruff, 2019).

The present study is an attempt to know the impact of fourth factor i.e. 'Technology' especially the Information & Communication Technology (ICT) on growth and development of any educational medical institution and its library systems. Due to ICT, availability of information has been increased in manifolds, yet there is a lack of availability of authentic, reliable and managed information. The libraries and information networks are playing vital role in this ICT based society to provide authentic and managed information to their users. The libraries of medical colleges are special kind of libraries and the users of libraries are medical students, teachers, allied staff members and patients, where it is important that the authentic and more pinpointed information be provided without delay at their door steps as the information is concerned to health of the people (Rani & Lal, 2019). The modern medical libraries have started joining hands with various networks to meet the demands of their users. In Punjab, a library network viz. Health Sciences Library Network (HSLIBNET) is also established by Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot with the similar objectives (Manhas & Rani, 2011).

Library networking as a mean of resource sharing has its beginning in late 1970's and developed during 1980's. It is no wonder that libraries in all countries of the world have adopted one form or the other of networking (Sivaraj, Esmail & Kanakaraj, 2007).

2. Need for the Present Study

The ever increasing number of people accessing e-resources coupled with availability of information resources in electronic formats and especially with the advent of ICT may have considerable implications for teaching, studies and research. Teachers and students are depending more and more on the electronic information resources for their various educational purposes. The present study is, therefore, an attempt to assess the status of medical college libraries and library resource sharing networks established and used in the Punjab and Chandigarh and what role they actually plays in this era of ICT to meet the needs of modern educational system.

A review of literature reveals that there is a good amount of literature available on the use of libraries of medical colleges, but no depth study has been done on growth and development of medical institutes, college's libraries and library networks. The present study is an attempt to clearly establish and exhibit the present status of medical institutes, college's libraries and library networks in supporting medical studies and research.

3. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To trace the historical development of the medical college libraries and growth pattern of their collection development;
2. To examine the impact of ICT on growth and development of medical college libraries.

4. Growth and Development of Medical College Libraries and Library Networks

The developing country like India is not in a position to procure all the resources of information. This issue led to the development of library networks in India. The first initiative towards this movement was the development of Calcutta Library Network (CALIBNET) by National Information Systems for Science & Technology (NISSAT) in 1986. The Developing Library Network (DELNET) and Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) were established during 1988 (Manhas, 2010).

In India, there are about 460 medical, 309 dental and around 1656 nursing colleges training, educating and fabricating health professionals (Wikipedia; Dental Council of India; Indian Nursing Council, 2017). In Chandigarh, there are 2 medical colleges and in the state of Punjab there are 8 medical, 14 dental, 7 physiotherapy, 3 paramedical sciences, 1 sports medicine and 111 nursing colleges (Wikipedia; BFUHS, 2017).

There is still countable number of states of India like Karnatka, Gujarat and Delhi, which have taken initiative to establish network of health science libraries. Similarly, Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot, a state medical university of Punjab, has also established Health Sciences Library Network (HSLIBNET) consortium in the year 2010 to network all the health sciences libraries under one umbrella to provide access to quality medical related information resources in a very cost effective members to meet information need of medical professionals (Manhas, 2010).

Medical College Libraries are special of their kinds and exclusive in many ways viz. nature, needs of the users, nature of information resources and types of services provided to the patrons (Walia and Chada, 2007). The growth and development of medical libraries were influenced by many historical factors.

4.1 Historical Development of Medical Libraries: Ancient Period

The History of medical libraries is traced throughout ancient & medieval civilizations and medical collections date back to thousands of years before the birth of Jesus Christ. The clay tablets were recovered from the library of King Assurbanipal of Assyria (668-626 B C). The tablets are said to date back to 2000 B C but their actual age is not known. In Babylonia and Assyria, libraries were controlled by court dignitaries, priests and persons from the educated class. The trade relations between Mesopotamia and Egypt began as early as 3000 B C. This cultural exchange includes exchange of medical knowledge too. Some of the Egyptian temples were particularly known as the centers of healing and housed collections which are considered Medical Libraries. Many Medical papyri have been found during excavations of old ruins. Among them, the Khuri Medical papyrus is the oldest one dating to 1900 B C. The Smith papyrus of 1600 B C deals with surgical case reports intended for the surgeries use. The Ebers papyrus of 1500 B C consists of a collection of recipes intended for

the physician's use. Knowledge flourished to Greece. The Greeks were advanced in Medical writings. The value of books as a medium of communication was recognized. Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine created a private library. Aristotle had a private collection which includes medical works. The libraries were usually located in temples. Medical schools started growing. The greatest medical school was the Alexandrian school of medicine (Birchette, 1973).

4.2 Historical Development of Medical Libraries in Other Parts of the World

The period between 500 to 1000 A D is considered the middle ages. This period was called "Dark Ages" in Europe because of the decline in learning. The Year 432 A D saw the flight of the Nestorian culture in Syria and Persia. In 970 A D there were 70 libraries in Spain. At the beginning of the thirteenth century medicine was taught in three universities viz, Montepellier, Paris and Salerno. Between 1370 and 1540, development in medical publishing was significantly made. The nineteenth century saw the establishment of various British Medical Societies. In twentieth century established World Medical Association. In USA, between 1898 to 1958, the number of libraries grew. In twentieth century, Medical libraries have been sophisticated enjoying the benefits of computer assisted indexing and abstracting services and are forming networks (Birchette, 1973).

4.3 Historical Development of Medical Libraries in India

Medical libraries in India have developed along with the development of Medicine system. The Ayurveda system of medicine is the oldest system in India. In 1788, John Peter Wade suggested the formation of medical library at Calcutta. The first medical/school was started at Calcutta in 1824, later it was converted into a Medical College in 1835 without a library. By the end of 19th century, there were ten Medical Colleges the number increased to twenty five by 1946. In 1947-50 there were eight and between 1951-55 eleven Medical Colleges were established. The number of Medical Colleges rose to 71 by 1963 and to 89 by 1965. In 1971 the Government of India set up a statutory Central Council of Indigenous Medicine and Homeopathy.

A landmark development took place in 1966, when the central library of Director General of Health Services, Delhi was designated as National Medical Library. During 1970 and 1980 there was a tremendous growth of medical Libraries in India and the total figure of medical colleges reached 118 by 1989 (Walia, 1993).

An overview of Lt Col McDonald's Report on the conditions of the libraries included 25 Medical colleges and 7 Research Institutions in India, in 1945. Today their number is more than 1000 of various types such as Medical, Dental, Nursing, Pharmacy, Ayurvedic, Homeopathic, Unani, Siddha etc (Bhatt, 1983).

4.4 Historical Development of Medical Libraries in India

In 1998, Government of Punjab has taken decision to establish Baba Farid University of Health Sciences established at Faridkot district under an Act of Punjab State Legislature (Punjab Act No. 18 of 1998) in the name of great Sufi Saint Sheikh Farid Ganj-E-Shakar, (1173 1265 A.D.) for purposes of affiliating, teaching and ensuring proper and systematic instruction, training and research in Modern Systems of Medicine and Indian Systems of Medicine. Two private deemed universities viz. Adesh University, Bathinda and Sri Guru Ram Das University of Health Sciences, Amritsar have also been established by the Punjab Government to admit students for medical streams since 2016-17 onwards. In Chandigarh, there are two medical institutions viz. Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh and Government Medical College, Chandigarh. In total, there are 10 medical colleges in the Punjab and Chandigarh has attached a medical college library to support the teaching, academic and research related activities (Manhas, 2010).

Health Sciences Libraries Network (HSLIBNET): A Medical Libraries Consortium of Punjab

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot realizes that scholarly and professional information resources like journals and books are expensive and hence building a comprehensive collection at every college was unaffordable besides leading to undesirable duplication. The solution had to come from networking the libraries in all the colleges under the university and the consciously promoting a culture of co-operative procurement and resource sharing. HSLIBNET – Health Sciences Library Network is conceived as the consortium of all the teaching and research institutions affiliated to the university to pursue this need for networking and resource sharing in 2010.

5. Conclusion

ICT is one of the major factors in growth and development of any institution. The present study highlighted the various stages of development of medical colleges, libraries and library networks worldwide and in the developing country like India. There is a great scope that other factors in combination of ICT may also studied in future studies so that comparison of these factors may also be drawn.

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