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E-Libraries: A Need of the Era

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic situation has restrained people at their homes and now a day's work from home is the new mode of functioning of all offices. Even the Hon'ble Supreme Court has been pleased to issue directives and guidelines for functioning of the Court through Video Conferencing, which will be hereinafter referred to as V.C. and in such case the role of E- Library and its up-gradation and digitalization becomes imminently important for the assistance of, not only the court as well as the but also of the students, research scholars, journalists, etc. The present paper focuses on the importance of e-library in the present pandemic situation.

Keywords: *Virtual Libraries, digitalization, e-libraries.*

1. Introduction

An e-library is a physical site or website that provide around the clock online access to digitized audio, video, and written material. It provides free copies of books, journals, etc. available to the users. Normally these materials are classics which have no copyright digital formats (as opposed to print, microform, or other media) and accessible by computers. The digital content may be stored locally, or accessed remotely via computer networks. An e-library is a type of information retrieval system. E-libraries are an increasingly popular research area that encompasses more than traditional information retrieval or database methods and techniques. An e-library is electronic information, library organizers usage of the catalog, tag and search books, and journals. It maintains a database as the collection of e-materials and provides services in digital form.

E-libraries play a unique and integral role in the shaping of the quality of the education system at all levels by virtue of their unique collection of data, books, dictionaries, Journals etc. The digitalization of such data is pivotal point of disseminating the functions of various organs of the private and government sectors. E-Libraries and the librarians are endowed with the role of initiating the process of data collection, protecting such data, making such data available at the hearth stone of aspirants, maintaining the quality of information at a reasonable cost and ensuring equal access to such information at all levels.

From the constitutional point of view this e-libraries would also provide equal opportunity and have equal access to all such library at any point of time and the said spirit is implicit under the provisions of Article 14 of the Indian constitution read with section 2(d) of the protection of human rights act 1993.

At the present moment to address the need of the hour is to digitalize the libraries and to provide online information's to the seekers at a single point of time and in one 'go' without

incurring any wastage of time in physically finding such referred items and also avoiding the chance of getting infected by the COVID-19 virus by getting exposed to or coming in contact with any documents or books which has been touched by any infected person.

2. Analysis of Problems:

There is no gainsaying of the fact that legal information is widely available in different website and social networks like Orkut, Twitter, Google search and other search engines but one should not rely upon the online blogs, opinion expressed in the social media and search engines which do not bear any liability of authenticity and quality of any case citation, judgment, information or data available at their disposal. Therefore, there is every chance of the general public, litigations, Ld. Advocates and perhaps the court to become a prey to their misguidance, mistake and / or misconceived notion and such act of placing reliance upon those data and information is fatal to the students, researchers, lawyers, journalists, etc. Moreso, the e-libraries would save time and money of the students and would afford an opportunity to make wide range of references from extensive range of stored data in the digital archives at one point of time which in turn would provide fast disposal of litigations. But at the same time, it would be the ardent duty of the librarians to keep the e- library updated so as to quench the thirst of knowledge of recent development of science and also to make them readily available so that could be referred to at any point of time.

Therefore, to curb this menace the need of the hour would be to establish e-libraries and to make such data available to the aspirants through their official website controlled centrally with the assistance of the law librarians, whether free or at a nominal cost, at 'one press of the button',

throughout India by adopting user friendly software.

3. Concept, Nature, Scope & Need of E- Library:

National Diet library, Japan is defined the "electronic library concept" as "a library which provides primary and secondary information electronically through communications networks and the basis for this purpose." Putting emphasis on the library as a mode of service, electronic library service, including in-library services, is broadly defined as "service which enables library users to directly access electronic data via telecommunications networks."

Now, creation of e-library does not mean and include the process of digitized collection of data by any utility tool rather it attributes to the collective endeavor and the intelligence invested by the librarians and technocrats to select, collect, quantify, analyze, truncate, scan, tally and secure the collected data in digital form in a digital archive, so that such information or data is open and easily accessible.

The nature of e- library can be attributed to a branch library, delivered digitally on the web which offers more than traditional library websites in many ways and which consists of genuine and authentic collection of information and having real staffs, building and a real community in and around.

The scope of e-library is to provide a global platform over which people and organizations can devise strategies, interact, communicate, collaborate and search for information and this platform includes a vast array of digitalized information and data bases, books, magazines, journals, judgments, old manuscripts, new developments in and around the society, present legal system, etc. and easy access at any place and any time in this world. It mentioned here that the word e-library or digital library has

been interchangeably used.

It can be said that a digital library is a mechanism necessary to enable access data globally with ease and which guarantees the authenticity and protection of such data. Ranganathan in 1999 propounded the classic "Five law of Library Science" as a spirit behind architecting and managing libraries.

The same five laws may be rephrased as given below to guide the librarians in architecting and managing the digital information system of the 21st century:

1. Digital resources are for use;
2. Every user seeks digital resource;
3. Every digital resource needs its user;
4. Saving the time of the user;
5. Digital Library is a growing organism worldwide.

These five rules have initiated the process of digitalization of information and data into a secured archive to form a library accessible through the internet by the users and to save time and energy of the user in searching the same physically and thus, it has become the need of the hour in this era of globalization.

4. E- Libraries & Role of Librarians:

This Research is intended to find out a solution to the proposed problem and investigated the solution to this problem by following the doctrinal descriptive method which is qualitative in nature. This is argued by me that the solution to this problem can only be made by establishing central e- libraries which ought to be guided by librarians for promoting proper functioning of virtual libraries by aiding and assisting the readers, students, lawyers and the judges in making ready references at the time of hearing of any urgent matter in this COVID-19 pandemic era. Thus, it would be an initiative for providing one-point solution to all researches, searches, references and also securing the authenticity of data stored in the e- archives and also

promoting e-learning of the users including students, journalists, judges, lawyers and law officers for self-development and competitive exams, projects, assignments, etc.

Now, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic where the courts, paper less affairs of the state, government offices and private sectors have started functioning through V.C. at the very point of initiation, assistance of digital/e-libraries is the need of the hour which would be a centrally controlled digital library. Thus, in order to establish such digital libraries throughout India the central government and the e-committee with the assistance of librarians has to take up the uphill tasks of digitalizing all such documents as far as practicable to assist the functioning of digital libraries in this era of COVID-19 pandemic.

After the establishment of such e-libraries the librarians have to vested with the important duty which is akin to their role in this legal system and they are as follows:
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(i)Digitalizing and upgrading both current and age-old documents furnishing legal information;
(ii) Providing customized services on law related topics on reference being made;
(iii) To verify the authenticity and accuracy of legal data and their sources;
(iv). To prevent tampering of data collected from their archives either by putting watermark or by any other mode;
(v). To monitor the present changes in the legal arena and to update the website;
(vi). To conduct annual budgeting, planning and control of e-library setting and the up-gradation of such library in accordance with the present need of the hour;
(vii). To assist the non-professional students in accessing the e-library;
(viii). To provide adequate training of scanning the citations;

(ix). To maintain a separate column for referring the over ruled judgments and the landmarked judgments so that it would be easy for the aspirants to find out which judgments have been overruled and what is the present rule as per the landmarked judgments;

(x). To keep a keen watch and track of legal updates on regular basis and to collect the same in their archives so that such updates are available in the electronic form;

(xi). To make a user-friendly interface to assist legal search on any topic by the subscriber or aspirants;

(xii). To analyze suitable methods so that all data on a particular topic is readily available in a single 'go' at the time of searching through ON-NET and also to make arrangements so that most of the important information and data are available OFF NET so that the users including journalists, researchers, professors, lawyers and judges do not become a prey to the harassment of poor internet connection.

Thus, the initiative and efforts of librarians in maintaining and protecting data and making them available to the users would save a lot of time of the seekers of the information in general and thereby it would result in saving time, money and energy of the aspirants and would curtail the harassment of the people.

5. Conclusion:

In this era of SOCIAL DISTANCING, it is the need of the hour that e- libraries be made available with ease to the users so that it could afford an opportunity to the journalists, lawyers, researchers, students, law officers, judges and also general public to learn and know about the history of the land and their subjects. It would also be required that such e-libraries ought to have option for downloading data from the e-archives so that they could be accessed OFF-LINE because it may be possible that during V.C. due to bad weather or poor connectivity the reference could not be made before the office while in conference, therefore if such downloaded data could be accessed OFF-LINE then would aid in making ready references during the conference through V.C. and the Board, authors, journalists, researchers do not have face any hindrances in referring and explaining of any urgent matter before it due to poor connectivity. It would also be the duty of the e-librarians to protect such data stored in the e-archives so that no person can tamper with such data even after downloading the same and it can be done very easily by putting water mark in each of such pages of the data and also to foster any strategic downloading mechanism to keep record of the persons of the system accessing such e-archives.
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