Linking, Improving, Status, Career: Making in Library and Information Science MOOC

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Abstract

Obsolesce and depreciation of knowledge and skill is a major issue in any Professional Occupation and more particularly in our Profession as "Information" is the central theme in our field. The paper have highlighted some loopholes in this Profession with special reference to North-East India why it's a different situation leading to the trend of Missing Out Librarianship. Is LISC MOOC the solution to save ourselves from Missing Out Librarianship and Knowledge and Skill obsolesce and depreciation and if so then what should be the model for developing the same.

Keywords : Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs), Library and Information ScienceMissing Out Librarianship (MOL) , ICT , North-East India

1. Introduction

The most notable distinction between living and inanimate things is that the former maintain them by renewal2. In this respect, we human being is blessed, as because education is that notable weapon through which we keep ourselves renewal in knowledge and wisdom, preparing ourselves for a better tomorrow personally and professionally.

"Knowledge and skill becomes obsolete and depreciation" within a smaller span of time with new concepts is incorporated within the knowledge or refined theory being added to existing knowledge. Depreciation arises because of the ability of the individual to apply skill and knowledge systematically changes with age. The different generations of graduates acquire knowledge from various schools having different course methodology at various points of time. Henceforth, the individuals have to renew themselves to face the increasingly competitive and globalised environment. Education sector and information infrastructure has undergone a tremendous reform due to the explicit use of ICT and an individual can use this technology to keep himself/herself up-to-date.

Since knowledge is central to the dynamic of the role that it plays in any profession, the obsolescence and depreciation of knowledge is seen as a major issue especially in our profession, where "Information" is the central theme of our profession. The occupational preparation that we receive becomes inadequate in the face of rapid incorporation of new concepts. Can developing Library Science Massive Open Online Course will help to deal with this major issue and if so how?

2. Scope of the Paper

The obsolescence and depreciation of knowledge and skill has become a major issue in our Profession and more so due to "One Click for Knowledge" and "Limited Refresher Course", resulting in the trend of "Missing out Librarianship" (MOL). This MOL has become a vital threat to the Professional Occupation of the Librarians and Information Workers relegating our position.

Besides these two factors there are other factors which have also contributed to MOL. The wave of MOL is present in every state of India but the situation is quite pathetic when it comes to North-Eastern States of India.

Since MOOC is the latest venture in the education sector, how Library Science Massive Open Online Courseware (LISc MOOC) can help our Professional to deal with MOL.

3. Objectives

The paper is designed to fulfil the following objectives:

1. To identity the difficulties being faced by this Profession

2. To have an overview how North-Eastern India situation is different from rest of India

3. To find out to what extend LISc MOOC shall be the solution to overcome the difficulties

4. Why Missing Out Librarianship (MOL) ?

The authors' personal experience in this Profession has often stumbled around this particular question "The respect and smile that greets other Profession why not ours? This observation is itself a big question and the reasons being put forward may feel like disrespecting Our Profession. But with due respect to Our Profession the following reasons can generally be seen as loopholes:

▸ Textbook Methodology: The system of education in India is still the mug up method and grading system. The education system in India has failed to generate the importance of the Library as an added learner.

▸ Lack of Documentation: Unlike other Profession, where one finds the history and traces of its de-

velopment, is a complete scarcity in our Profession. Though there are few still it not sufficient.

▸ Discipline Belonging: Whether our discipline falls under the genre of Arts or Science is still a debate. The course content of Library and Information Science is a mixture of Theory and Practical. Now in which genre this Profession belongs should be identified.

▸ Government Policy: In the budget and development policies framed by Government for the Education Sector, the Library development is always overlooked.

▸ NAAC Grading System: The grading system by NAAC is based mostly on the achievement of the Departments but what about the Library and Information Centres. Do not the Librarians/Information officers and Library/ Information Centres contribute to the achievement brought by the Department?

▸ Lack of Proper Infrastructure: In most Educational Institutes, there is lack of proper ambience and infrastructure for the Library/Information Centres. As a result, the Library/ Information centres often become a stock room or a trophy room.

▸ Non-showcase of Library/Information Centres and Librarian/Information Officer: Except few Academic Institutions, it is generally observed that the projection of the Library/Information Centres and Librarian/Information officer are not up to the mark, the projection other departments and faculty members get in the academic institution's website or annual report is often found to be lacking in case of our Profession.

5. North-Eastern India and Librarianship: An Overview

The situation of Librarianship in the North-Eastern India is different with that of the rest of India. To understand how is it different from rest of India a look into the status of the Education of this Region is must.

Right from the pre-independence era to independence era, this region has been facing with the inequality of educational opportunities. The reasons for this inequality of education opportunities are:

‣ Geographical Isolation of this region with rest of India

‣ Lack of proper environment for growth in this region ;

‣ Lack of requisite infrastructure for education reform;

‣ Political leaders and bureaucrat's disinterest in the field of education ;

‣ Under utilization of ICT Technology

A look at the state-wise number of universities and number of Colleges in the North-East included under Section 2(f) and 12 B of the UGC Act, 1956, as on 31. No. of Colleges under03.2011, is as under

Table 1: State-wise number of Universities and Colleges

State	No. Of Universities					No. Of Colleges		
	Central Uni.	State Govt	State Pvt.	Deemed	Total	2(f) & 12 B	2(f) only	Total
Arunachal Pradesh	1	-	-	1	2	7	2	9
Assam	2	4	1	-	7	215	26	241
Manipur	2	-	-	-	2	49	6	55
Meghalaya	1	-	6	-	7	28	7	35
Mizoram	1	-	1	-	2	20	4	24
Nagaland	1	-	2	-	3	19	2	21
Sikkim	1	-	4	-	5	6	5	11
Tripura	1	-	1	-	2	18	-	18

Source: UGC Annual Report 2010-11

6. No. of Educationally Backward District in North Eastern Region

Table 2: EBDs District

Sl.No.	State	Total no. Of EBDs
1	Arunachal Pradesh	11
2	Assam	12
3	Manipur	-
4	Meghalaya	5
5	Mizoram	7
6	Nagaland	1
7	Sikkim	4
8	Tripura	4

Source: UGC website

The analysis of the above two tables tell a pathetic story about the development of Education-Sector in this part of the Region. Therefore, the Library/ Information Centres and Librarians/ Information Officers are also bearing the brunt colloquially of this Inequality of Educational Opportunities. This is really a very pathetic and sorry state of affairs.

Due to this poor development of Education Sector, the Missing Out Librarianship trend is generally seen more frequently in the North-Eastern Region. It would be unrealistic to quote that the Government of India since Independence has not done anything for the Development of this Region. Even though there is the Ministry of DONEAR and Arunachal Pradesh is the first state in India to receive the first sun ray, yet the reform in the infrastructure and education sector that should have been is not there.

On the parallel front, the impact of this slow development is seen in the Librarianship Profession in this Region. Be it the incorporation of the latest knowledge and skill in the curriculum provided by respective Universities or the use of the Technology for automation of Library work or provision of basic infrastructure facilities to the Library/Information Centre, we the Librarian/ Information Officer are always behind in comparison to our counterparts in rest of India.

As a result the obsolescence and depreciation of knowledge and skill is found to be more prominent amongst the Librarian/ Information Officer in this region. How to bridge this gap with the rest of Librarian/Information Officer of other parts of India?. The answer to this major problem is to embrace the use of ICT in the form of MOOC.

7. Why MOOC for Our Profession?

The ICT Technology has brought a plethora of improvement in human dimension, so definitely, we, the Librarians/Information Officers can also LINK and IMPROVE our STATUS and CAREER by having a MOOC for our profession.

The uniqueness of Our Occupational Course is that every subject gets imbibed in our course, so why not Library and Information Science MOOC. The development and strengthening of Librarianship and Library /Information Centres be at Rural, District or State Level can be made to interconnect using Library and Information Science MOOC. The below table shows what are the areas where LISc MOOC can help.
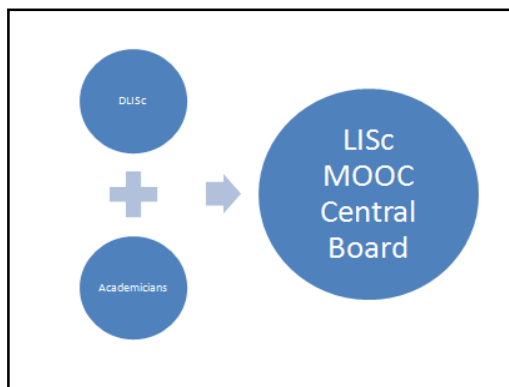
Table 3 : LISc MOOC Utility

Reasons	Utility of MOOC
Lack of Unified Syllabus	No syllabus is same be it respect to Librarianship or any other discipline so if MOOC Courses are developed for the Librarianship the lapse can be followed up
Limited Refresher Course :	In a year only few limited refresher course are being sponsored by University for Librarianship and on limited Seat , MOOC can be the convenient refresher course for any Librarianship who wants to join refresher course as per his /her convenience
Single Cadre	The Institute where there is single cadre they are denied the chance to go for any refresher course or attend any courses for their development on account of being single staff , MOOC do come as a blessing
Inhabitant to use IT :	There is generally a trend among the elders of this Profession to use IT as they feel very complicated and generally do feel shy to join any short term courses on computer. In this regard MOOC can be helpful in removing this sluggishness to use the IT.
New Development	MOOC can help our Profession in knowing the latest concepts and how these concepts can be used for developing improved Library Services.

Library and Information Science Massive Online Open Courseware: an archetype

As already discussed in the beginning about "Knowledge and skill becomes obsolete and depreciation" so LISc MOOC can be a solution to one of this major issue in our Professional Occupation . The authors have attempted to showcase an archetype of Library and Information Science Massive Open Online Course based on the first four abbreviations of the term LISc. Here is an elaboration of the same:

▸ "L" : Linking : The key linking players for developing the LISc MOOC are :

▸ Linking 1. DLISc : The Department of Library and Information Science of the Universities, can develop the Course Content of the Profession.

Short term Course content can be developed which becomes impossible to teach during the limited course duration.

▸ Linking 2. Academicians: As most subject today are interdisciplinary subject and any subject do

have a place in our course according to their utility in our field. Concepts like Big Data, Cloud Computing, Long tail, Mash up, Triangulation Method of Research etc are being incorporated into our Profession. As these concepts are borrowed concepts, it would be suffice if the Discipline of Origin helps us developing the Course Content on the newer facts and in our turn we can provide rich of references for developing their content.

» Linking 3. LISc MOOC Central Board : There should be a Central Monitoring Body on the lines of National Mission on Libraries and National Mission on Manuscripts so that the experts can review the Course material and this Central Board can be one –point stoppage for dissemination of this LISc MOOC Course to the Professionals.

» "I" : Improve : To make MOOC a success the support of these two key players is a must :

♦ "I": Improve. Library Legislation : To make MOOC a Success , the States where the Library Legislations bills are enacted should be modified to "Show the Importance of MOOC" and those States who are yet to enact Library Legislation "Should Include the Clause of MOOC" .

♦ "I": Improve. Library Associations : The Library Association of the respective States should highlight the benefits of MOOC so that the Professional can have a basic knowledge about what is MOOC and how it is useful.

♦ "I": Improve. National Informatics Centre : To have the proper set up of infrastructure facility for developing the LISc Mooc , National

Informatics Centre can play a good role in providing the requisite infrastructure

♦ "I". Improve : Professional : How far we have benefitted by the use of this LISc MOOC , feedback and suggestion on what should be the coverage area can be given by our Professionals with the use of social networking tools.

» " S". Status : The status of our professional shall definitely improve in terms of knowledge and skill. We need not reprimand the fact why during our course duration new subjects were not there or lament that the new generation graduates knows better than us. Equality and Access to new knowledge and skill shall be the reaped benefit of LISc MOOC.

» "C". Career : Once the status of the our Professional improves , more awareness will be generated regarding "What is Our Profession and What role we play ? " in the information sector.

The model depicted above is not a comprehensive or full –proof model. The authors have tried to do the minimum justice to this model in their own level of understanding and experience henceforth any suggestion or remarks from expertise is highly appreciable and needed.

8. Conclusion

The Indian Human Resource Development has launched the Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), a Web portal where Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs) will be available on all kinds of subjects. We all know that Library / Information Centres are a valued source of Repository and Generation of New Ideas and the Librarians are the Torch Bearer and Face Value of these valued sources. To make Library and

Information Science MOOC requires onus support from Ministry of Culture, States' Minister of Culture, Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, National Mission on Libraries, INFLIBNET, Department of Library Science and Library Association of respective states is must.

Information technology has helped the common man to reach to the Government, and then can't LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE MOOC be used in the same parallel manner to reach the Masses as well redefining the Projection and Role being played by Library/Information Centres and Librarians/ Information Officers as well as to save ourselves from Knowledge and Skill Obsolesce and Depreciation.

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