

The Study of Development in Library and Information Policy in India

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ABSTRACT: *In the context of India, A National Information Policy must necessarily be governed by and form an integral and harmonious part of the social, economic, educational, research and development and other related policies, which get formulated at various stages of our national development. Further, the Information Policy needs to be properly made compatible with Five Years National Plans of the Country. The concept of Library and Information Policy is new. Here, we are going to discuss, how the concept of "Policy" originated in the field of Library and Information Science. Today's society is known as an Information Society which require information at every step. In modern society, information is treated as a very important source in all areas of development whether it is social, political, economic, cultural etc. The progress of any nation depends on the information generation, disseminating it to the users, and putting it to work. Lack of information is going to adversely affect the development. It is because of the ever increasing demand for information from all walks of life that the need of a policy is felt. And since, this information is being imparted or disseminated via the Libraries, Documentation centres, Information Analysis and Consolidation Centres etc. they are the means for collecting, storing and organizing information. Thus the policy had to be formulated on libraries and information Systems. This paper focus on library and information policy that seeks to indicate the relation between library and information policy in India.*

Key Words: *Library, Information policy of India, Information technology, Library Policy.*

Introduction:

Information policy became a prominent field of study during the latter half of the study 20th Century as the shift from an industrial to an information society transpired it has since then evolved from being seen as relatively unimportant to having a much more overarching strategic significance since it established the conditions "under which all other decision making, public discourse, and political activity occur." The growing awareness in the importance of information policy has sparked an interest in various groups to further study and analyzes its magnitude. The most common audience for information policy analysis includes undergraduate and graduate students, scholars, policymakers, policy analysis, as well as those members of the public who have taken an interest in understanding the effects of the laws and regulations involving information. Although information policy generally has a broader definition and encapsulates a multitude of components, its scope and impact can vary depending on the context. For example, in the context of an information lifecycle, information policy refers to the laws and policies that deal with the stages information goes through beginning with its creation through its collection, organization, dissemination, and finally to its destruction. On the other hand, in the context of public administration, information policy is the means by which government employees, institutions and information systems adapt themselves to an environment in rapid fluctuation and use information for decision-making.

Libraries in our country function under a variety of ownerships and jurisdiction. There is generally no coordination in their development. The progress of libraries has been very slow because neglect of library service during the British period, resource constraint in the post-independence era, sole dependence on Government Funds for library development. Due to above said reasons and many more, the need for an integrated library system or policy for India was felt and in this direction, first step was taken by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan. Father of Library science, in 1944. He suggested that "library edifice of postwar India should be so planned that primary libraries are attached to regional centres. Regional centres to provisional central libraries, these again to the national centre libraries of other countries and international centres." The Government of India made various attempts to improve library services, Under the National library of India Act, 1948. The Imperial Library was renamed to National Library. In 1951, Delhi Public Library was set up. Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC) was established in 1951. Five Year Plans included funds for their improvement. In 1957, the advisory committee suggested library services "free to every citizen of India." To the library and information professionals, information policy deals with issues relating to contents of documents that carry all form of information, organizational mechanisms to

collect, store, process, disseminate and serve them to a variety of users according to their information needs. These issues should get focused in a policy statement on information.

Definition of National Information Policy:

“A National Information Policy is a set of decisions taken by a government, through appropriate laws and regulations, to orient the harmonious development of information transfer activities in order to satisfy the information needs of the country. A National Information Policy needs provision of necessary means or instruments such as financial, personnel, institutional, for concrete implementation.”

Information Policy is the set of all public laws, regulations and policies that encourage, discourage, or regulate the creation, use, storage, access, and communication and dissemination of information. It thus encompasses any other decision-making practice with society-wide constitutive efforts that involve the flow of information and how it is processed. There are several fundamental issues that comprise information policy. Most prominent are public policy issues concerned with the use of information for democratization and commercialization of social life. These issues include inter alia, digital environment, such as intellectual property, economic regulations, freedom of expression, confidentiality or privacy of information, information security, access management, and regulating how the dissemination of public information occurs.

To comprehend information in the sense the western writers do, and to formulate a policy therefrom would, perhaps, cut across the policies of the government relating to industry, trade, education, research, and many others. Further, groups involved in activities which are loosely connected with information, may have conflicting or overlapping objectives, each one having its own world view, specific interest and political purpose. Hence, the definition here is restricted to the sense in which library and information professionals would like to view information Policy to meet the challenges of the changing context of information. This changing context is restricted to information systems and services with reference to education, basic and applied research, planning and operating experience in different contexts, use of information and data relating to commercial and trade activities, social and economic services and programs and similar others. Having understood the meanings and interpretations of ‘Information and policy’ a formal definition of National Information Policy, and the levels of hierarchy as useful steps of the formulation of such a policy.

Objectives of Research:

- To find out challenges of Libraries and Information Policy.
- To find out new trends of Libraries and Information policy.
- To find out need of Libraries and Information Policy.
- To find out main drawbacks in Libraries and Information policy.
- To find out development in Libraries and Information policy.
- Get a clear understanding of the concept of Information policy;
- Recognize the need for and value of a National Information Policy.

Development in Library and Information Policy in India:

National Information Policy for the country have been going on in India since 1980s, the recognition of the importance of new knowledge was emphasized even as far back as back in 1957, when Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru spelled it out in his Scientific Policy Resolution by the Government of India in 1958. Efforts in India towards evolving a National Information Policy. It was largely due to the emphasis on and recognition of a new scientific knowledge and information that the infrastructure for the creation or /Generation of this wealth in the nature of a complex of research establishments in the National and Social Sciences were set up in the Country. A number of related events, such as the establishment of the National Informatics Center (NIC) and the National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT), in the seventies were significant. The Planning commission also set up a Working Group for the Modernization of Library Services and Informatics in the Seventh Five Year Plan. The setting up of the Information and Library Network by the University Grants Commission to link up the resources of universities and R & D institutions in the country to facilitate new library and information services in India. A series of library of Library and Information networks like the Delhi Library Network (DELNET) and Calcutta Library Network (CALINET).

The Indian Library Association (ILA), the Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centers (IASLIC), the Society for Information Science (SIS), were urging the government to initiate efforts towards formulating a National information policy, through a number of seminars and conferences.

Separate draft policy statements were prepared by ILA and the Rammohan Roy Library Foundation and submitted. These were submitted to the Government of India in 1984. As a consequence, the Department of Culture set up a Committee in October 1984 under the chairmanship of Prof Chattopadhyay for formulation of a National Policy for a Library and information System. After considerable efforts, the Committee submitted a Draft Policy on Library Information System in May 1986. The ten Chapters of the document deal with elements such as Preamble objectives, public library system and the bibliographical services. Manpower Development and Professional status, Modernization of Library and information System, Central Professional issues and implementing agencies and financial support. Each chapter makes specific recommendations with reference to upgrading and coordinating the existing library and information systems and initiating new programs, relevant to our national needs, using information technology. Two important and significant events of far reaching implication have happened in the last ten years. Although these have not been specifically related to the information policy efforts of our professional interest, they have a great bearing on our professional services and systems. The first is the enactment of the Freedom of information Act 2002 and the second was setting up of a high level Task Force for a Information Technology Action plan in 1998.

Information policies become a prominent field of study during the latter half of the 20th century as the shift from an industrial to an information society transpired. It has since then evolved from being seen as relatively unimportant to having a much more overarching strategic significance since it establishes the conditions “under which all other decision making, public discourse, and political activity occur.” The growing awareness in the importance of information policy has sparked an interest in various groups to further study and analyses its magnitude. The most common audience for information policy analysis includes undergraduate and graduate students, scholars, policymakers, policy analysts, as well as those members of the public who have taken an interest in understanding the effects of the laws and regulations involving information. Freedom of Information stems from the recognition of the fundamental principle of human rights. This right to information is guaranteed in international law, as part of the guarantee of freedom of expression of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Many countries around the world are now giving legal effect the right, both by enshrining access to information in their constitutions and by adopting laws which give practical effect to the right, providing concrete processes for its exercise. The Indian Freedom of information Bill, 2002 was passed into a law in December 2002, after many years of public debate and after freedom of information laws had been passed in a number of States. With the recommendations of Information Technology Action Plan When fully implemented, there is a greater possibility of achieving the expected goals of E-Governance. The government has already initiated appropriate steps by executive orders to start the process of E-Government. Quite a few state governments have also initiated action in E-Governance. Let us hope that in the near future, the results of E-governance would become fully effective.

Recognizing the potential of ICT for rapid and all –round national development the Government of India has constituted a National Task Force on Information Technology and Software development in May 1988. The Report of the Task Force, the Information Technology Action Plan, contains 108 recommendations covering both bottleneck areas and broad promotional measures that are crucial for boosting ICT in India. The Recommendations cover a wide spectrum of issues relating to telecommunications, Finance, Banking, revenue, commerce, electronics, human resource development, defence, and rural development. They address critical national needs in the areas of information infrastructure, internet access, software development and exports ,hardware manufacture, electronic commerce, R & D in ICT, Manpower training and education. Recognizing Information Technology to be a frontier area of knowledge, and also a critical enabling tool for assimilating, processing and productivising all other spheres of knowledge, the Government shall launch “OPERATION KNOWLEDGE’. The aim of this national campaign will be to universalize computer literacy and also to spread the use of computers and ICT in education. OPERATION KNOWLEDGE shall be developed into a comprehensive policy. An Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) shall be set up and will have the status of a deemed university.

A National Information Policy would eventually get formulated to deal with all the recommendations of the Task Force. Even in India or other nations there are various Associations formulated at state and district levels for contributing on formulating and implementing the Library and Information Policies for the betterment of the Nation as a whole. The policies which have been adopted by Government in a few other sectors have direct impact on Library field such as National Policy on Education 1986. Information (Communication) Policy. National Knowledge Commission 2005. The National Information Policy recommends the setting of a National Commission for Libraries and Information System by the Government. This would take charge of the National network of libraries within which would be

accommodated libraries of different levels from the rural society to the modern society from the school to the research organisations. The policy states that the necessary financial support 6 to 10% of the education budgets for systems will be made available by the Government of India and state of governments. The primary objective of a national policy is to achieve a progressive upliftment of the socioeconomic development of the country through the provision of access to and availability of information and knowledge with speed and efficiency to all those who are involved in activities for national development. Planning and programming endeavours are essential to aim at a systematic and assured development. The formulation of a National Policy on Library and information System are epoch-making measures in the library movement in the country. If the policy recommendations are faithfully implemented a new phase in library development in India towards a for better performance and achievement is sure to come about. A National Library Policy is also necessary to have a commitment to provide library service to all the people as it is suggested by the Advisory Committee.

In regards to the future of information policy, it should be flexible and changing to different circumstances as the ability to access, store, and share information grows. Galvin suggests that information policy might include setting a boundary to the uncertainty in this field. As information policy becomes a larger and more important topic, it will also become a greater subject to governmental regulation regards to the future of technology as well. It will also include the studies of these subject information science, communication, library science and technology studies. The information policies will earn more advantages for national and organizational, such as getting the best from development of Web 2.0 nationally and in organization, influence people for paying attention to the socio aspect and socio-technical system, for securing preservation of digital content, bringing out information product, also respecting all users and making thinking time respectable. In order to achieve this national organisation, it will be important to focus not only on a domestic level but also nationally. Making domestic agencies cooperate internationally (and vice versa) thought will not be overly successful.

Conclusion:

National for libraries are part of a larger mosaic of both information-related and other national policies, e.g. education. They contribute and relate to these other policies but are not dependent on them. They are best developed separately and independently in the first instance. They will need to be updated as a country's conditions and policies develop and change. National policies for libraries arise out of the political, economic and social needs and conditions of a country. They grow out of the existing library infrastructure and practices. The Indian Government had taken initiation time to time for the development of library systems while constituting different committees like. Working Group on Libraries. Committee of the National policy on Library and Information System. Empowered Committee on National Policy on Library and Information System, and National Knowledge Commission on Library and Information System.

The recommendations of all above said committees or /commissions are still not implemented in India. But, now Librarians hope for the holistic development of the libraries in India, as High Level Committee on Libraries has been recently constituted by the Government of India. It will play a major role in repaid action with keeping in view of the all recommendations provided by the earlier committees and commissions. National library strategies and policies give libraries credibility and political visibility, something that is often lacking for the library sector. The important role that libraries play in development and general well-being of society is recognized and incorporated in all government policies and projects. The Government of India and the State Government. The National as well as State governments should provide for an expenditure of 6-10% of their education budgets for the libraries. All educational institutions should similarly provide for their own libraries 6-10% of their total budget. Institutional and department libraries should be adequately provided for by their parent organisations. Public libraries, especially at the rural level, should draw resources from all office agencies working at the level including those concerned with distance education. Industrial organisations should be obliged to provide finances for adequate library services to their own employees. Such organisations should also extend this service to the community concerned. Finance from private organisations and philanthropic concerns should be encouraged in the library field especially in developing libraries for the use of children handicapped persons and backward communities.

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