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Abstract
Education is of two types – Formal and Informal. Formal education is imparted in a school, college, technical/professional institute or a university whereas informal education begins at birth and continues till death via family, society, social and complementary organisations like libraries, etc. National Knowledge Commission has classified the types of libraries wherein the academic libraries include school, college and university libraries. Since the fate of academic libraries has not improved to the desired level even after sixty two years of Independence, the author moves forward an idea based on the KRESCENT pattern in the form of Mission KRESCENT as a part of the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) proposed to be established in 100 days by the Ministry of Human Resource as a flagship programme of the UPA Government, as per recommendations of the Yashpal Committee. Pending the installation of NCHER, the author suggests to set up a KRESCENT Bureau in the existing University Grants Commission forthwith which can finally become a part of the NCHER as and when repositioned and rejuvenated.

Introduction
Education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills and also something less tangible but more profound: the imparting of knowledge, good judgement and wisdom. Education has as one of its fundamental goals the imparting of culture from generation to generation. The education of an individual human begins at birth and continues till death, be it formal in a school, college, technical/professional institute, university or informal throughout one’s life starting from birth in a family followed by outside environment in a society one lives in. For some, the struggles and triumphs of daily life provide far more instructions than does the formal schooling.

There has been an increasing awareness in India that the people on the whole should be looked upon as its valuable resource and our growth process should be based on the integrated development of the citizens beginning with childhood and going right through life. In this context education has been divided into two major segments – Formal Education and Informal Education. The Formal Education takes care of School Education and General Literacy covering Elementary Education, Secondary education, Adult Education and General Literacy. On the other hand Higher Education is concerned about the Colleges, Universities, Technical and professional institutes, Book Promotion, Copyright, Scholarships, Languages and Minority Education.

The scope of informal education is infinite when it comes to get guided by the sectors like, family, village, city, district, state, country, region, world, etc. However, the organised parts like the library systems and the information and communication technologies support as a supplement to its core sector, e.g. school libraries function as part of schools and the academic libraries as part of the colleges, universities, professional institutes and sometime as special libraries attached to specialized institutions, be it a government department or the corporate sector.

The Working Group on Libraries set up by the National Knowledge Commission with the prime objective to redefine the country’s Library and Information Services (LIS) by taking necessary steps to mobilise and upgrade the existing library and information systems and services while incorporating the latest advances in information and communication technology (ICT), submitted a comprehensive report after careful deliberations. The Report in its Appendix – 10 classified the libraries in the following manner:

- National Library and Other National Level subject libraries;
- Public Libraries (Public Libraries may follow a four/five tier system);
The three tier Academic Library System comprises of the following types of libraries:

I – School Libraries
- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- Higher Secondary Schools

II- College Libraries
- Junior Colleges
- Degree Colleges
- Post Graduate (P.S.) Colleges

III- University Libraries

Keeping in view the changing scenario and the new responsibilities as an on-going supplementary project on education via e-learning in the university arena and the introduction of e-governance in the real life, the existing pattern of library services needs immediate change both in its nomenclature as also the staffing pattern, duties and qualifications as per need of the hour. It is high time to review the system afresh and alter the pattern wherever required to meet the new challenges. Pending the review by the National Mission on Library and Information Services (NMIS), proposed to be converted into a permanent National Commission, it is urged that the University Grants Commission takes a lead on its own steadfastly and acts as a Roadmap to reposition and rejuvenate the existing academic library system falling within its purview while limiting its scope to informal education and Informatics in order to set up as an independent network catering to students and faculty of the academic community.

Repositioning of Existing Systems
Now that the President of India, Mrs. Pratibha Patil has reiterated the setting up of National Council of Higher Education (NCHE) in the next 100 days of functioning of UPA Government as recommended by the National Knowledge Commission and UGC’s Yash Pal panel during her speech to the joint session of the Parliament on June 4, 2009 and the new Human Resource and Development (HRD) Minister, Mr. Kapil Sibal having taken over the charge of the ministry, the new HRD Minister is seriously considering an independent regulator for higher education in the country and intends to reform the education sector, both at the higher and school levels. It is high time to review the existing academic library set up afresh especially at the college and university levels at this very stage itself.

According to reports, the government is considering to abolish the two bodies that regulate higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) to establish a single, independent regulator in line with the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission and the Yashpal panel. This is a welcome move and it should also take care of the informal part of the education in addition to the formal education at higher levels. The newly proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), supposed to take over the academic, accreditation and financial functions of the regulators, should take note of THE
KRESCENT CALL (KRESCENT stands for Knowledge Resource Centre) too.

Acknowledging that the Yashpal committee report recommendations are “Serious”, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said on Wednesday, the 25th June, 2009 that they would be “pivotal to the reforms in higher education”. Now that the Yashpal Committee report has found a prominent place in the Ministry’s 100-day roadmap, UGC must set up a KRESCENT Bureau in its existing structure to start with. The big change in higher education would be an over-arching authority for higher education and research based on the Yashpal Committee and the National Knowledge Commission reports. In these circumstances, there hardly seems to be any scope to sidetrack the academic library services – an integral part of higher education and research. Hence the MISSION KRESCENT.

If Indian universities are to become centres of excellence, the government must stop over-regulating the academic libraries, a necessary tool for an informal education as a supplement to the formal education being imparted by the concerned institutions, colleges and universities. This requires a drastic change by repositioning the existing system of academic libraries as a part of overall library structure in India by separating the information needs of universities, institutions and colleges and creating an independent network of knowledge / learning resource centres exclusively for their students and faculty under the overall umbrella of the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) as an independent KRESCENT BUREAU (Knowledge Resource Centre Bureau) and as an exclusive informal educational aid to supplement the formal education being imparted in the classrooms.

In an ambitious blueprint for reform of higher education, the committee headed by scientist Yashpal, the former Chairman of UGC has suggested the scrapping of several powerful bodies – including UGC, All India Council for Technical Education and Distance Education Council – and the setting up of a super regulator instead.

What the committee has suggested is a seven member Commission for Higher Education and Research to be set up under an Act of Parliament. It has also recommended, obviously with a view to buffer Commission for Higher Education and Research against political and other pressures, that the position of its chairperson be analogous to that of an Election Commissioner. It has also called for a complete ban on granting “deemed” status to universities. The high-powered panel set up under Yashpal, an ex-chairman of UGC, with the mandate to suggest measures for “renovation and rejuvenation” of higher education in the country, has even recommended that IITs and IIMs be turned into universities. It has, in that direction, sought to curtail the jurisdiction of other regulators – Medical Council of India, Bar Council of India – to administrative matters with varsities taking up their academic responsibilities.

Pending the setting up of the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) in 100 days the existing library system in universities and colleges should immediately be switched over to KRESCENT pattern under the existing umbrella of University Grants Commission, to start with as an independent KRESCENT Bureau. The scope of academic libraries should be restricted to school libraries in this case by segregating the knowledge resource component to higher education in universities, technical and professional institutes and the colleges at large by incorporating ICT as an important segment.
Here, it will be worthwhile to know a bit about the terms - ICT, Knowledge, Information and Informatics in detail, before an Action Plan for Mission KRESCE...
analysed and facts sorted out it comes out in the form of Information which is put to further research and preserved in the form of knowledge. When this knowledge is actually utilised, the results don’t match and the experts finally come to certain conclusions by taking into consideration the majority of conclusions based on experience which goes down to posterity as wisdom.

In simple words, information means any material in any form and includes records, documents, memos, e-mail, opinion, advice, orders, log book, contract, reports, papers, samples, etc.

One of the most common ways to define information is to describe it as one or more statements or facts that are received by a human and that have some form of worth to the recipient.

According to Cookie Monster’s definition information must be:

- something, although the exact nature (substance, energy, or abstract concept) is not clear;
- provide ‘new’ information: a repetition of previously received messages is not informative;
- ‘true’ – a lie or false or counterfactual information is misinformation, not information itself;
- ‘about’ something.

This approach to information, like most human-centred approaches to information, leads one to emphasize the meaning and use of message, “what the message is about?” and “what is known already?” over the information carrying messenger and the message itself. When the message is essentially random, or the message is of no value to the recipient, such as a repeated message previously received and understood, it is colloquially said that no information was received and no information was transmitted.

**Informatics**

With the passage of time Information is no longer the sole propriety of libraries available in the form of Newspapers, Journals, Reports, Pamphlets, Books, etc., since the day Computers became the buzzword in the society. Today with the advent of ICT, we are talking more about the paperless libraries than the hardcopies in the form of print media. Today, Internet has totally revolutionised the access to information and one can lay his hands on any information from anywhere, be it one’s home, office, air, sea or any part of the globe. This paperless virtual library is the outcome of software, hardware and the information in itself, developed by human mind. Hence, Informatics is nothing but the information coupled with software, hardware and the human mind.

**Quantity and Quality**

Just as the problem in higher education is both of quality and quantity, the existing library system in universities, colleges and technical/professional institutions also lacks quality of services as also the quantity in terms of independent set up. Quality and quantity must go together. Quality of service, most of the time depends on the quantity of resources as also the trained and qualified human resource.

Hence, there is an urgent need to set up a KRESCENT Bureau in the existing University Grants Commission for a uniform change in quantity and quality of services to the students and faculty engaged in higher education. One KESCENT in each university and one LRC in each college and technical/professional institute with latest gadgets is the need of the hour to raise the percentage of enrolment for higher education from 11 per cent to at least 40 per cent plus in order to bring it at par with the developed countries.

The gap being wide, India must go in for radical reforms in the higher education sector to ensure both quantity
and quality in formal education being imparted in a classroom in a college, university, technical, professional institute and in informal education by establishing afresh KRESCENTs and LRCs on an urgent basis in order to reposition and re-engineer the existing library system by empowering the newly trained human resource to meet the challenges ahead. KRESCENT pattern is the only emerging management model for the existing outdated academic library system, which proposes to restructure the manpower in the ICT environment, evolving ways and means for a better relationship with students and faculty in order to provide user-centric services round the clock.

Change : The Need of the Hour
Till now, the library automation business and technology trends have evolved at a leisurely pace. Today, the traditional library system faces incredible challenges as non-library entities have encroached into traditional library territory. Today’s users are more Web savvy than ever before and have high expectations from information providers, having used the computers at school level itself. We are in time of urgent need to make some rapid advances like switching over to KRESCENT pattern forthwith.

Action Plan
In order to switch over from the present academic library system in higher education to KRESCENT pattern, it is important to take a firm decision at the highest level in the first instance to recognise the informal education as an essential and an independent part of formal education to supplement the classroom education as an ongoing process. Once it is decided to adopt the suggested process, proceeding step-by-step shall go a long way in order to prove its utility in due course of time. The steps may be:

- Keeping in view its utility the Ministry of Human Resource can adopt the Mission KRESCENT even before the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) gets installed;
- KRESCENT Bureau can be established as an independent Bureau in the University Grants Commission and switching over to KRESCENT pattern can take shape without any loss of time;
- Change is the law of nature. This change from Academic Library system to KRESCENT pattern should reposition and rejuvenate the services with a new enthusiasm both among the professional staff as also the students and faculty;
- The KRESCENT Bureau established at UGC shall automatically take its new shape as and when the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) gets installed;
- UGC in the meantime can start planning and implementation of switching over process by preparing a roadmap with a time frame which should cover the following important points:
  - Take stock of the existing libraries in each University as also the colleges/institutions affiliated to a particular university;
  - Prepare a blueprint of the KRESCENT pattern and conduct the refresher courses for the existing university librarians and the junior staff at different levels for an efficient switch over to the newly formed pattern;
  - Up-gradation of Library system to KRESCENT pattern, quality of service to the users and the use of ICT is the main purpose of this change;
  - ISO Standards should be adhered to and the uniformity of building designs, infrastructure and
trained human resource in all universities, colleges and institutions should be maintained;

– KRESCECENT building in a university and LRC in a college, technical or professional institute should be an independent landmark of the campus with all the facilities to work round the clock;

– All the latest tools and technologies like hardware, software, unique products available for storing, searching and retrieval of material available in the form of books, journals, newspapers, CDs, etc., Barcode equipment, Digitisation tools, Smart Cards, CCTVs, Antitheft control system, Internet connections, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Web 2.0, OPAC, GWT (Google Web Toolkit), CD-ROM, DSpace, e-journals, e-books, Consortiums, Networks, etc., should be incorporated in the plan while preparing the blueprint of a KRESCECENT and the LRCs. The finance should not be a constraint in procuring and installing such gadgets;

– A journey of 1000 miles starts with a single step. Let this action plan be the first step of a new beginning.

Conclusion
The information age has brought-in a sea change in the information services of the modern era. The changing roles of academic librarians from traditional book keepers to that of Knowledge Management has necessitated the professionals to think about introducing this change which could not take place during the past sixty two years. Now that the new Finance Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherjee’s budget is all about higher education –with an increase of Rs. 2,000 crore in plan expenditure to Rs. 9,596 crore, Shri Kapil Sibal, Human Resource Minister should not have any hesitation to adopt Mission KRESCECENT by setting a KRESCECENT Bureau in the University Grants Commission forthwith.

References
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