

# **Executive Summary of Workshop Results**

**emerging from  
The International Seminar “Libraries on the Agenda!”  
March 13 &14, 2008**

Organised by Max Mueller Bhavan New Delhi in collaboration with British Council, French Embassy, Instituto Cervantes and supported by The National Knowledge Commission

**Summarisation of results of the respective workshops:**

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# Role and Authority of the National Mission as an Advocate for Library Development in India<sup>1</sup>:

*“The time has come to create a second wave of institution building, and of excellence, in the fields of education, research and capacity building so that we are better prepared for the 21st Century”  
Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India*

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) Working Group on Libraries gave ten recommendations. Out of those, three that need to be taken up on priority basis:

1. Establish the National Mission on Libraries
2. Undertake a Census of the Libraries in India
3. Establish the Indian Institute for Library and Information Science.

Key steps to ensure progress include:

1. Form a group to manage the process of setting up the National Mission. The group to include NKC Members, Library Leaders, Ministry Officials
2. Establish a governance Board within the first three months of action for the National Mission. Prioritise activities for the Board
3. Appoint CEO
4. Appoint Executive team
5. Agree on Values and Priorities
6. Devise and Implement Action Plan for the period 2008-11
7. Disseminate and allocate the funding
8. Monitor and Evaluate outcomes

## The Board

The Chair and the Board to be approved by the NKC and Ministry. Board to respond to Government Policy but be operationally independent. The Chair should be eminent and an experienced leader and the Board should include independent members from government, corporate, education, ICT, the library sectors and the voluntary sector e.g. NGOs.

## Key values that the board should subscribe to:

- Action – Focusing on results and outcomes
- Visibility – Being proactive
- Improvement – A commitment towards progress in development of LIS
- Charter – A public commitment to achievement
- Quality – Ensuring best practice
- Equality – Ensuring equal opportunity across all strata of society
- Inclusive – Engaging all partners, stakeholders
- International – International cooperation, exchange and learning

## The Executive Team

The CEO and Executive Team will be accountable to the Board. The Executive team will require a particular skill set in the fields of:

1. Finance
2. LIS Policy Development
3. Planning & Programme Management
4. Library Technology
5. Communication and PR

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<sup>1</sup> Workshop participants

Mr. John Dolan, MLA, England [Chair], Dr. Ashok, Desidoc, Delhi, Dr. S. Bahari – Exec. Director, NKC, Dr. Devika Madalli, ISI, Bangalore, Mrs. Kalpana Dasgupta, Chair, NKC WG on Libraries, Dr. S. Majumdar, Delhi University, Ms. Marilen Daum, Max Mueller Bhavan Delhi, Dr. R. K. Chadha, Joint Secretary, Lok Sabha, Ms. Renu Seth, Max Mueller Bhavan, Delhi, Dr. Venkadesan, IISc Bangalore

## **An Action Plan for the National Mission on Libraries (2008-2011)**

### **1. A National Census of Libraries in India**

This has been initiated by the Raja RamMohun Roy foundation for Libraries. The census will set quality indicators to help prioritise projects and programmes. The census will be over in 2 years (2008-10), followed by an annual update starting in 2011 with a focus on sharing best practice and service improvement.

### **2. Indian Institute of Library and Information Science (ILIS)**

Transformation through advanced research education and training. Working under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture and working with the National Mission on Libraries, the ILIS will be responsible for building the leadership and workforce capacity to deliver the recommendations of the NKC.

Capacity Building: Learning & Development

- Leadership - develop and implement strategy
- Management - effective services, resource efficiency
- Education and Training - workforce sustainability
- Research - advocacy, best practice, development
- Performance improvement - sustainability
- Customer orientation - meet individual, community needs
- Accreditation - ensure quality in LIS education

### **3. Modernise Libraries**

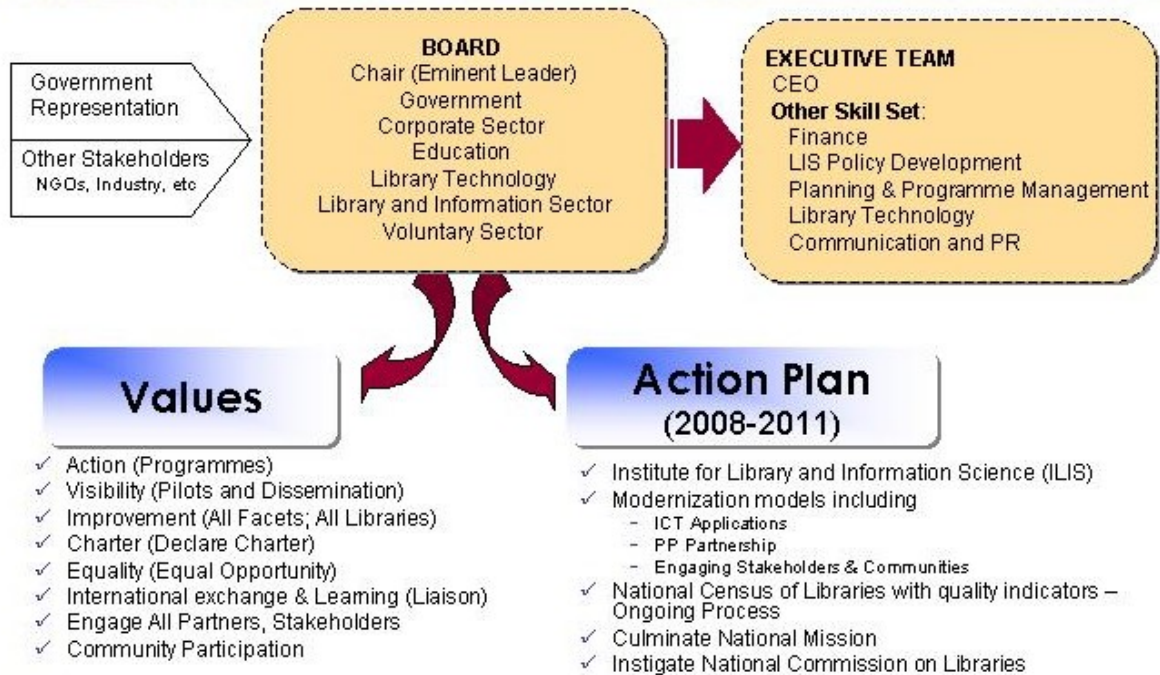
- Through pilot projects create transferable improvement models. Pilots by:
  - Geographical region / State
  - Library sector / type
- Models to demonstrate ICT deployment, successful collaboration between government, corporate and voluntary sectors in developing libraries. The pilots will reflect the quality benchmarks identified by the census and the ILIS.

Timeline: Pilots; Year 1. Scale up and deploy in the remaining plan period.

# NATIONAL MISSION FOR LIBRARIES

Chair and Board approved by NKC & Ministry of Culture

Fully Independent ■ CEO and Executive team accountable to Board ■ NML not only a funding body but policy and fostering body



# Developing an Advocacy Strategy for Indian Libraries<sup>2</sup>

## I. The Campaign:

The overall motto of advocacy "Libraries: the Key to prosperity" needs to be publicized proactively, for shaping public opinion, changing policy makers attitude and for confirming and promoting the image and significance of libraries.

### Slogans for the advocacy campaign:

#### a) "Roots to Research"

For facilitating access to knowledge and learning from **roots to research** level, the development of libraries offering information services ranging from the most basic to the most advanced levels needs to be advocated.

b) "**READ India**" (**R**each, **E**mpower, **A**dminister, **D**evelop) to promote the concept "**Roots To research**" and generate mass appeal that sets the stage for an aggressive advocacy plan. The slogan should be promoted with a conviction and cause:

- information to reach every nook and corner, thereby empowering the people of the country
- administering of routes that lead to empowerment and aspiration for all round development, where knowledge is fundamental to developing the individual's competence.

## II. The Goal of an Action oriented Library Advocacy Campaign:

### For Each Village a Library

#### - No School without a Library

Every Village & Every School - a Library by 2020, where one should strive for covering 10% of the villages in each state & UT each year. Libraries should be viewed as an important part of the community infrastructure: as important a part as other civic services like water and electricity. Access to library and information services will lead to the empowerment of the masses.

### The values this goal includes are:

Equity – fair and impartial  
Outreach (marginalized sections)  
Social Justice  
Inclusion  
Open Access  
Literature in local languages

The non-users of information, the India of rural communities, who have been denied access to knowledge for generations, look forward to accessing knowledge through local libraries and information networks at local, state, national and international levels. For them information is the key to their political, economic and social upliftment. The diversity of their needs should be recognised and addressed through robust and relevant advocacy programmes.

## III. National Coordination:

To promote the spread of knowledge, education and culture, all the libraries in the country need to be unified. An information infrastructure that includes all types of libraries and standardized technical platforms offering access to multivariate materials as per the needs of different sets of users is required. Library programmes should not be seen as isolated occurrences but as parts of a whole in an all-embracing research, information and knowledge supply programmes covering the entire gamut of archives, museums and libraries sector. Therefore coordination, cooperation, integration and a

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<sup>2</sup> Workshop participants

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strong focus on users should be centric to all optimising activities. This unified system must look upon itself as a service entrance to a common national library system as opposed to separate single units.

A mutual sense of responsibility and respect are pre-requisites for successful growth. The most successful development projects are bound to be those in which:

- the problems that need to be addressed are mutually formulated and defined
- a shared vision and a realistic expectation of results is achieved by all parties
- all stakeholders pull in the same direction during the evolution of a project
- follow-up and evaluation are constituted as crucial parts of the work process

An Umbrella organisation of all the library associations at the national level ( and perhaps state level) to mobilise the public & to build public opinion is centric to this activity.

**“Setting up a National Mission for Libraries is a pre-requisite”**

(see recommendations on Role and Authority of National Mission)

**IV. Levels of Advocacy and the Players:**

Libraries with international service levels can be instrumental in facilitating many government plans. A key component of overall strategy for country-wide development of libraries is advocacy for policy changes at the local, national, and international levels that support the use of best practices and offer feasible solutions to advance library work. A country-wide network of players at various levels and strategic partnership between all stakeholders will lead to successful advocacy campaigns.

**National Level**

Strategic partnership between all stakeholders (Library Associations, Academicians, Policy makers, community leaders, NGOs, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and others )

National Mission as an umbrella organisation of all the library associations to have one face, one voice (consensus on the message).

**State Level**

State Library Association

Other stakeholders

**Local Level**

Partnership with NGOs

Partnership with the village families

**Institutional Level**

Library educators & practitioners

Local champions (users)

**Grassroots Level**

Community leaders

Friends of libraries

The Father of Library Science in India Dr. SR Ranganathan had talked grandiloquently of “Books for all” as the primordial law of library science. In the changed environment, today books for all shall be enshrined as information/knowledge for all. This is only possible by giving top priority to the development of libraries at all levels. For this library advocacy is of utmost importance and should be taken up by all players.

## **Branding and Marketing for Changing the Image of Libraries in India<sup>3</sup>**

The changing information environment, changing reading habits and technology revolution are all factors influencing the way information is accessed and used. A planned approach to identifying, attracting, serving and gaining support of specific user groups can go a long way in branding and marketing of libraries. It is no longer enough for libraries to be available, librarians also need to go to the people and should put the libraries into the real context of people's lives, work and play.

### **Recommendations**

1. A more active approach towards increasing the visibility of the library and its services to the society through various social marketing strategies should be adopted. A better 'impression/image management' is the need of the hour. National campaign under the slogan "Libraries on the Agenda" to be started.
2. A strategy to consistently deliver quality customer service to enhance the expectations of the readers/users of libraries to be developed and implemented.
3. In India, civil society activists propagating the benefits of Right to Information Act, NGOs running information kiosks, agriculture extension workers and members of the local bodies or Gram Panchayats (Village Assembly) need to be associated with libraries and should make a unified effort to serve their respective communities
4. An attitudinal change seeking a mindset that strives for best performance while serving the readers, be adopted. In an environment of increased customer options, marketing of library services to gain better public perception should be implemented as a new concept for the library staff. New ways of outreach, to create awareness of the services available and ensuring effective use of resources to be developed.
5. Communication and interpersonal skills, service culture, customer orientation, and technological expertise need to be the core competencies for the library staff. The staff's relationship and interaction with its customers/users play a pivotal role in influencing the usage of libraries' resources and its services.
6. Staff performance measures to be put in place and performance based incentives and awards to be implemented.
7. Public libraries offer a public space where, people from all strata of society come to read, to learn, to research and to entertain themselves. To be attractive, libraries need to be modern, computerized, well maintained, and conveniently located. Facilities available on the premises should include comfortable sitting areas, web-browsing cafeterias and multimedia centres etc. A building with good physical facilities and pleasant ambience will attract more people.
8. Library services are to be integrated into people's daily lives and made a part of the civil society movement. It needs to be explored how libraries can support the communities they serve with the resources available.

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## Action Plan

1. In order to promote libraries as social institutions, a collegium of eminent librarians and lovers of books (including avid users of libraries) to be created in the states.
2. The following activities can be taken up by the collegia:
  - Establishing linkage with the people's representatives (MPs; MLAs) and the state governments to promote libraries/library services in the state.
  - Distributing leaflets and brochures with details of libraries and organizing discussions/public lectures.
  - Engaging corporate houses and public sector undertakings in library development as a part of "social responsibility of business" programmes.
  - Acting as "pressure groups" and meeting the decision makers regularly.
3. Librarians to create a peer group that can meet the public intellectuals and the media to support library advocacy. Public lectures, workshops and seminars need to be organized to promote library use and library services. Regular coverage of library related news and programmes in daily newspapers (particularly regional language dailies) would enhance the visibility of libraries.
4. Public libraries to spend at least 10% of their budget on promotional activities such as advertising, customer relations oriented programmes (like quiz, story telling etc.), interviews with readers and surveys of information needs and reading habits etc.
5. One of the foremost requirements is the training of staff in library service marketing strategies. Development of soft skills (better communication and behavioral pattern etc.) to be paid due attention and short term training programmes for the LIS staff should be organized. Training influences perception, attitude and opinion about the information conveyed. Course curriculum for LIS should be revised with emphasis on development of the soft skills as core competencies.
6. Due to intangible nature of library services, standardization is one of the major issues. Therefore a clear mission statement and 'benchmarking' techniques to improve those library services, which are delivered by employees via technological resources to be developed and implemented.
7. The concepts and practices related to total quality management, customer orientation, 'Friends of the Library' and 'Focus group' meets to be used to bring libraries within the fold of people's leisure activities.
8. A good promotional strategy to integrate library advocacy related activities with literacy, education and information awareness campaign of the government to be implemented. Read Nepal (i.e. Rural Education and Development, Nepal) is an ideal example of a brand name that can integrate library advocacy with other programmes.

## Developing Standardised ICT Infrastructure for Libraries in India<sup>4</sup>

The ICT infrastructure in libraries vary from library to library and is dependent upon various factors such as number and types of users; size of collection; nature of services offered etc. Large number of libraries in rural areas are not even equipped to accommodate ICT infrastructure. The recommendations made below are broadly for medium sized public libraries but are also applicable to libraries in other sectors. It is recommended that an elaborate proposal for ICT infrastructure requirements may be worked out for different types of libraries.

### It is recommended that:

1. A good server with built-in redundancy, remote backup facility and necessary number of clients and other peripherals be provided to all the libraries.
2. Each library should have local area network [LAN] to facilitate internal communication for managing effective in-house operations and information services.
3. The international standards and best practices to be followed in all types of libraries. The proposed Institute of Library and Information Science (ILIS) should build awareness about the standards and arrange training for librarians. These standards include:
  - Z39.50 [Resource sharing protocol]; ODMA [Applications to interface seamlessly with a document management client]
  - MARC 21 [Format for bibliographic data]
  - ISO-ILL [Inter Library Loan]
  - Dublin Core [Metadata schema]
  - OAI-PMH [The Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting]
  - OWL [Standard for ontologies.], etc.
4. The ILIS be given the task of accreditation of LIS Schools in India to ensure quality education. It should also develop criteria for self-accreditation of libraries, with suitable checks to ensure quality control.
5. Periodic quality assurance reviews be introduced in libraries. Security and system auditing tools should also form a part of the ICT infrastructure.
6. Keeping in view the global ISO standards, a mechanism to be initiated with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to bring out various library related standards. This will ensure uniformity, interoperability and effectiveness of the information services.
7. Libraries be encouraged to adopt open source software which are open standard compliant, thereby facilitating open access to information.
8. Universities and institutions take initiatives to open up their scholarly content through institutional repositories and open access journals. Public libraries may launch open access bulletins.
9. Libraries to join/form networks and consortia and in turn benefit from their services and resources.
10. The proposed National Knowledge Network be extended to all the libraries including public libraries and each library to be equipped with a static IP based connectivity in order to offer information services to its clientele.
11. A repository of bibliographic data for shared cataloguing be created on an International scale having multi-lingual records both in Indian and other international languages.

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<sup>4</sup> Workshop participants

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12. The necessary scanner/s and OCR software for Indian languages be made available to libraries for creating digital resources of in-house and non-copyrighted documents.

13. Public libraries to provide web-based community information services (CIS).