Communication is the essence of all healthy and purposive activities in a society. An idea that is not communicated is of no consequence, and it dies a premature death. On the other hand, an idea that is communicated, rather recorded, gets relayed and is immortalised. Role of libraries in the process of communicating recorded ideas is too obvious, and it need not be over emphasised.

According to Professor Kevin McGarry, "As the student progresses in greater depth in "the study of mass communications" he finds that not only are his insights into the social functions of librarianship enriched and given a clearer focus, but also that the librarian shares many of the problems of the professional communicator." Yes, the knowledge of communication helps in understanding the functions of librarianship in a broader social context.

Edward Sapir, in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (New York, McMillan, 1931) had listed three areas of activity which facilitate communication process in society. These are valid even today. Only the content changes, but the three areas remain intact.

---

These are,

- language,

- specialised technical symbols and other non-linguistic system such as Morse Code, Traffic Signals; and,

- Physical conditions for allowing communication. Railways, telegraph, radio, movie, TV and other channels or media are covered under this category. Even the libraries belong to this class of communication facilitators.

In addition, with the authors as sources on one side and readers or users as receivers on the other, library itself acts like a communication medium. Information or messages in the form of documents is received and disseminated by the library. The recorded information is passed or transferred from one generation to another, from one individual to another with no apparent connection in between. The accumulated knowledge is stored and passed to the posterity.

Now the type or the form of information and documents have undergone a sea-change. It is now available in books, periodicals, micro-forms, audio, video cassettes and other magnetic and electronic media. Number of documents produced has reached an alarming magnitude. CD-ROMs and Laser discs are the storage
media with tremendous capacity. The entire Encyclopaedia Britannica can be stored on one disc. Initially only the secondary journals began appearing on CD-ROMs. Now full reference sources and even the full-text of journals appear on CDs. Sound and moving pictures also can now be digitised and the whole range of multimedia products found in the information market.

At the same time, the research and development in telecommunication lead to shrinking of the World into a global village. It became very easy for any one to communicate with any other person with practically no barrier. Computers were also becoming integral parts of both business and personal life at the same time. The high point of computer was speed in processing information.

With the introduction of information technology that is, the combination of computers and communication technology, computer to computer communication is made possible. This lead to people living within a building or a campus sharing the information stored on their computers. These computers sharing information are known as networks of computers.

The range of operation of networks increased from Local Area Network (LAN) to Metropolitan Area network (MAN) to Wide Area Network (WAN). Thus, there were many types of networks—some were infrastructural networks.
and some others are data networks. This made it possible to access information on-line from any distant source. Internet, a network of networks, has lead to the proliferation of information, generally referred as information explosion. Since libraries deal with information, it is bound to have some impact.

1.1 Libraries and the Changing Scenario

These developments have direct influence on libraries. It was no longer possible for any library to possess all the information available. No organisation can afford that much of resources -money, men and space- to acquire and manage it.

The library attached to any organization had to compete with the other departments for the share of its resources. The librarians have tough task of defending their budgets in the midst of escalating costs and shrinking resources or resource crunch, as it is often referred. Libraries were not the only organizations to be victims of this situation. All other organizations and their departments are passing through similar problems.

With the changing time, libraries have witnessed many internal changes along with the environmental ones. Earlier libraries were mere collections of books, journals and other documents. Then the emphasis shifted
to techniques such as classification, cataloguing, abstracting and indexing helping in arranging and retrieving the documents. Then the focus moved to readers or users.

The focus on readers or the users is influencing the library scenario in a number of ways. It has brought in a marketing sense; it has made libraries quality conscious; and above all, it has made librarians plan carefully and meticulously.

Planning is the core activity that helps the libraries to cope with challenge of meeting ever increasing user demands with proliferation of information products in the midst of sinking budgetary allocations and soaring cost of providing service. One can not really have emphasis on users without suitable planning to their resources and services. Therefore, the process of planning is examined in some details to estimate the users' influence in library management.

1.2 Focus on Planning

Most people tend to think that planning is contemplating on a problem and hitting on an idea that may work in solving it. Such flashes of thoughts have some role in planning, but these stray thoughts do not completely convey the range and depth of planning.
Even to say that planning is thinking with a purpose is an incomplete idea and an under-statement. Planning is a process. Process, in a layman's language, is a sequence of dependent events or activities with a common purpose.

It is difficult to have a precise definition of planning. However, Stueart and Eastlick have a near-definition. What they have explained holds for a wide range of situations. "It is the process of getting an organization from where it is to where it wants to be in a given period of time by setting it on a predetermined course of action. It is deciding what to do, how to do, when to do and who is to do it."

In view of the above definition, it is clear that planning involves making a series of decisions about future. In other words, it deals with forecasting. The success of planning depends on how scientifically the forecast is made. How to make this scientific is the essence of planning.

1.2.1 Factors of Planning

To know what makes a plan successful, one must understand why generally plans fail. While there are innumerable causes for failure the most important ones are listed here.

- Lack of Commitment
- Unforeseen Events / Developments
- Rigidity of the Plan
- Lack of link between the proposed plan and the day-to-day operations.
- Poor Communication

These pitfalls indirectly indicate the success factors which are as follows.

a. Time
b. Data Gathering and Sector Analysis
c. Levels of Planning
d. Flexibility

These factors have to be examined closely to understand the care that need to be taken.

1.2.1a Time

The length of time for which the plan is likely to be valid or the time-span for which the plan is made, is a critical factor. If this period is too long the assumptions being made about the future are likely to go wrong. Depending on the this period, there are two types of plans.
Long-Range or Strategic Plan is that which covers five to ten years period. This plan has to be drawn very carefully because a number of assumptions have to be made regarding the future. Possibility of committing errors in decision-making is more in this type of plan. Peter Drucker has defined strategic planning as "... the continuous process of making present entrepreneurial (risk-taking) decisions systematically and with great knowledge of their futurity; organising systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring the results of these decisions against the expectation through organised systematic feedbacks." This covers a wide range of activities.

The similar ideas are expressed in a different manner by George Steiner. According to him, "Strategic Planning is the process of determining the major objectives of an organization and the policies and the strategies that will govern the acquisition, use and disposition of resources to achieve those objectives."

It is nice to know a thin line of demarcation between long-range planning and strategic planning. Generally, long-range planning technique draws one plan which may fail because the future is unpredictable. On the other hand in strategic planning rests on building scenarios based on different set of assumptions covering a range of possibilities. Thus, even if there is any deviation from the predicted future, contingency plans can be kept ready. Uncertainties can not disturb the plan entirely as the mid-course corrections are built in to the planning process.

Thus, strategic plan includes both finding a direction and reaching that destination. It also includes any mid-course corrections applied to the proposals while adapting to future.

On the other hand, short-range plans are less complicated and deal with maximum period of one year. The budget, observation of any conference or any such major events are the live examples of short-term plans.

Thus, it can be seen that strategic plan takes care of longer future. So, it has to be made based on reliable data and accurate forecast.
1.2.1 Data Gathering and Sector Analysis

It is absolutely necessary to gather information about the organization for which the planning is being carried out, the context in which it operates, the future envisaged and the parameters of the change that need to be brought in. In other words, the environmental analysis is necessary.

With respect to understanding the external environment what need to be done is referred as **STEP or PEST analysis**. The letters in the acronym stand for the following four words.

S Society
T Technology
E Economics
P Politics

The next aspect of environmental study is **Sector Analysis**. This include gathering technical information that suits the change to be proposed. This may include reading technical literature, meeting people, visiting other libraries and other exploratory activities. These can serve the following three purposes.

- **Inspiration**: A source of Ideas for adoption or adaptation.

- **Legitimation**: Support for a proposed change, to confirm its feasibility.

- **Benchmarking**: A source of information for setting ideal performance standards.

Similarly, **comparison** with a leading organization of similar type would be an ideal thing to do as third type of environmental analysis. A science library in Bangalore can treat the library at the Indian Institute of Science as ideal and consider that as a standard.

**Internal Analysis** is aimed at knowing the strength and weaknesses of the organization itself. Its past and present, its human, physical and financial resources should be understood.

Therefore, the focus should be on the following aspects.

- People or the Staff
- Facilities
- Funding
- Services
- Customers
Further, one should also assess the various means by which library makes its presence felt among its customers. In other words, its marketing exercises such as, the library guide, catalogue, floor-planning, newsletter and annual report and other documents should be evaluated from time to time.

This exercise of environmental analysis brings together the external forces and internal capabilities. This really amounts to carrying out SWOT analysis. Here the acronym SWOT stands for Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats. The essence of SWOT analysis is the wise adage, 'Look before you leap.'

SWOT Analysis is done to determine the strength and weakness in relation to the marketplace and opportunities and threats give predictable environmental trends. In this sense, internal Strengths and Weaknesses are weighed against external Opportunities and Threats.

This helps in identifying areas requiring attention in future. The current strengths may seem to be less strong in view of a
threat. Some weakness may turn out to be less significant so that resources need not be spent on that.

In addition, against each of the SWOT entities, it is better to indicate its severity by measures like 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low' depending on the resources each may require. This helps in knowing how attractive an opportunity is and how dangerous a threat is.

This exercise also helps in arriving at some planning assumptions regarding social, economic, political and technological future. It also helps in building alternate scenarios. Scenarios are conceptual stories about the probable future. Essentially, these are built on the planning assumptions. These help the organizations in dealing with uncertainties by drawing up suitable contingency plans.

1.2. Levels of Planning

Planning requires everybody's cooperation and commitments to be successful. Therefore, it is necessary that everyone is involved in decision-making process regarding the planning of activities. However, this is not always possible.
Level of planning has got to do with the hierarchy of the people involved. To specify whether top or middle or lower level people should be or should not be involved is very complex issue to think. There should be a balance between willingness to involve and practicality.

Decision-making with respect to planning exercise falls in one of the two categories, viz., 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'. In other words, strategies may be formulated from the top or may emerge or form from grass-roots. Both methods have their merits and demerits.

One can always think of a golden middle. And, in practice, it is always this middle path which works. It can be referred at "Goals Down-Plans Up" approach.

Such a blend helps in involving all who matter. When decisions are made what is more important is making the change acceptable. This requires involvement of people who implement the change and also those for whom the changes are proposed.

---

After making the necessary planning assumptions and building scenarios, the probable future that holds for the organization can be comprehended in general terms. Now it is necessary to develop a strategic focus. The path towards desired future is to be made. In case of strategic planning, the objectives formulated also have a hierarchy or level.

- Value
- Vision
- Mission
- Objectives
- Goals
- Activities

These listed items need some explanations.

It is better to make a value statement which tells what the organization values the most so that no compromise is made on that. These address to universal values which express philosophy and concern more with the ethics of the profession. (The seven institutional values of the Library of Congress are Service, Quality, Effectiveness, Innovation, Fairness, Participation and Staff Development.)
**Vision Statement** is a shorter, more abstract description of the organization's aspirations, which states what the organization wants to be, its ideal long-term destination. It is more qualitative in nature. This is the vision of the future developed in view of the accepted value statement. This does not change however uncertain the future be.

The next is to formulate a **Mission Statement** which will be more concrete and realistic compared to the value and vision statements. In broad terms, it states the distinct purpose of the organization, its role in the Community and what it is trying to accomplish. It is deliberately broad to allow changes without loosing the direction.

Just as mission statements are covering the fundamental purpose and context for the organization’s operation, **Objectives** indicate the main programmes or areas of activities. These reflect the general functional intents derived from the mission.

While objectives define the organization’s broad areas of activities and general approach to achieve them, goals aim at more specific
tasks. Goals are the statements of more precise and specific targets and how to achieve them. Goals give clear direction of action. Goals should be compatible with vision and mission.

**Strategies** are main actions or patterns of actions for achieving the goals embedded in objectives set for the plan period and thus accomplishing the mission. The key point to be noticed here is that there is a possibility that there are more than one way of achieving each goal may exist. This means that a strategy has to identify options and make a rational choice. Involving people who are to finally implement, is a crucial success factor. Finally, what matters is their acceptance and willingness to cooperate.

There is a six-step process used to develop strategies. The steps are denoted by an acronym STRIDE where,

- **S** is Situation,
- **T** is Target,
- **R** is Restraints (hurdles or impediments)
- **I** is Ideas, (those that work)
- **D** is Do (what, who, when, how) and
- **E** is Evaluate (how, standards or results)
Strategies address to the entire plan period, and therefore reference should be made about the required financial, human and other resources.

Now, regarding implementation of strategies, there is an accepted model referred as '7S'. These seven Ss with a brief scope note are given here.

---Strategy

A plan of actions and available resources to meet the identified goals is referred as strategy.

---Structure

Organisation Chart, functional matrix, centralised or decentralised decision making are some of the factors that represent structure.

---Systems

How information moves around within the organization and the direction of the flow of decisions comprise systems.
-Staff

Demographic description and who is specialised in what is an essential component of implementation. Permanent staff Vs contracting or outsourcing is a crucial issue to be resolved for successful implementation.

-Style

Managerial and cultural style and how managers should behave in achieving the goals is implied by the term 'style'.

-Skills

Adequacy of existing staff in terms of competence or any other external expertise required is a pivotal factor with respect to the skills required.

-Shared Value or Superordinate Goal

The professional fabric that binds all the other six Ss is referred as 'Shared Value'.

Please see the figure on the next page.)
Figure 1. The Seven Ss

Source:
The other aspects of implementation are drawing up an Action Plan, an Operational Plan and writing of a document or an operational manual.

**Action plans** set out for each goal,

- the precise results required or the targets,
- the main action steps or the tasks to be carried out,
- people responsible for these tasks and
- the completion dates.

The tasks should be measurable and should be assigned to specific years covering the entire plan-period. Then the tasks are regrouped by the years so that resources can be allocated and financial projections for the respective years can be made.

**Operational Plans** are essential for successful implementation of any strategic and action plans. These plans are prepared to coincide with the budgeting cycle so that the required financial support is ensured. Operational plan is the link between strategic plan and the objectives set for each division and for each individual.
member of the staff. In other words, it links with the realities of day-to-day operations. It gives sufficient details to assess feasibility of all the activities, key tasks, people involved, dates for completion and the resources required on a month-by-month basis.

All these plans require frequent monitoring, evaluation and review so that any mid-course correction can be applied, if necessary.

1.2.1d Flexibility

Since planning is an exercise done for the future which is uncertain, it has to be flexible. If any rigid plan is made, it may remain on paper. When a plan is translated into action, a number of difficulties arise. Not every difficulty can be foreseen. This is the reason why the concept of long-range planning gave way to strategic planning.

By constructing scenarios and operational plans to meet different targets and the deadline, a good planner makes provision for alterations from time to time. The 'value' and 'vision' are more permanent, while activities may change from time to time.
In a nutshell, planning in general and library planning in particular means trying to reach out the distant future keeping one’s feet firmly on the ground.

This tight-rope walk has compelled librarians to learn and adopt management skills. Information technology and concept of resource sharing have taught them that they need not possess all the information. What mattered is having access.

In other words, libraries used to collect document after documents, thinking that the information should be available with them 'Just in Case' it was required. Now, because of resource crunch and proliferation of information, they are compelled merely to access, and possess if and only if required. This policy of preference of 'access' over 'possess' is similar to the 'Just in time' method propagated by Japanese Management. This movement from 'Just in Case' to 'Just in Time' has compelled the libraries manage in a cost-effective manner.

The major problem is that libraries have to struggle for their share in budget. But the difficulty is compounded by the fact that the gains of a library are intangible. All these factors have brought the user
of a library in sharp focus. In the absence of users' support nothing can be achieved.

This has lead to the development of various user-centred studies in librarianship. Here is an attempt to focus attention on some single aspect of user studies, with the concept of planning or improving information services at the background.

There are a number of studies carried out about the users, their behaviour, their needs, their involvement in library management, well the list is endless. Particularly, information seeking behaviour is one subject which takes care of what the user expects, what he gets and what visible effect it has on him. In addition, users' behaviour has some impact on the library management by way of feedback. Unless one knows what is already studied and what area need further emphasis, no precise objectives can be decided.

With this in mind, literature review was carried out about various aspects of users' role in library management. The next chapter reports the findings of the literature review.