EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The breath taking innovations in electronics and communication technologies have, in recent times, had a tremendous impact on the society. They have brought about information revolution that has led to the evolution of information society. The path-breaking breakthroughs in computers, mass storage and networking technologies coupled with Internet, the electronic information gold mine, are leading the informed society towards the digital or electronic global village. The electronic media, as applicable to library and information centres that are used for information storage, processing, access and dissemination have resulted in a paradigm shift in the functioning and management of libraries. The developments like electronic publishing, Web/Internet publishing, electronic and online journals, and digital and virtual libraries, have brought fore benefits as well as issues and concerns to the library professionals.

The present study was undertaken with a view to find out the extent of use of electronic media in Indian libraries, the level of automation, the infrastructure available in libraries in India to meet the multifarious and ever-increasing information requirements. To know the training and continuing education requirements of library staff and users in using these technologies, and to know if librarians are aware of the various concerns associated with the electronic media including copyright and licensing issues. Evaluation and assessment of these are required to take appropriate action, where warranted, by policy makers; for proper planning, improvement and optional utilisation or resources; to take necessary steps to meet the challenges of new technologies; to provide training and re-orientation to the information providers and users; and to find out the emerging areas which need to be considered to be included in library and information science curriculum.

The study was carried out through analysing and evaluating published literature, by employing historical analysis as well as collection of data through a questionnaire-based survey. Various mass storage technologies, their use and impact on libraries, possible future trends have been studied. Electronic publishing, digital and virtual libraries, impact of Internet on them including a few important projects in these areas and their merits have been discussed. Developments in computer and communication
technologies and the various communication tools like e-mail, bulletin board services, telefacsimile, teletext and videotex for dissemination of information have been discussed. The impact of Internet and its various important tools and techniques on libraries has been dealt in detail as well as the utility of electronic commerce, various electronic payment systems have been briefly studied. The study also covered implications of electronic media for libraries; particularly in library resource sharing, document delivery, and qualitative improvements in library services. Copyright-related issues with specific reference to Indian scenario vis-à-vis electronic information, databases, multimedia products as well as security of information over networks and various techniques employed for this purpose have been studied. Various issues and concerns and problems encountered by librarians in acquiring and using of electronic media have been critically reviewed.

An evaluate study of Indian scenario with respect to the growth, status, and future trends of the various aspects of electronic media has been made. The use of CD-ROM and multimedia products; growth of computer technologies in the country including library automation, software development, and the current status of library automation and database development have been critically examined. The communication infrastructure in the country has been evaluated. The Telecommunication Technology Vision and the National Information Initiative have been outlined. Development of infrastructure and library networks has been traced. An evaluative study of various library networks as also the status of services of the networks has been attempted and major issues faced in the networking area have been listed. Also, the current status of Internet in India and of e-commerce have been critically analysed. Various initiatives by the government, including IT Action Plan in the various areas covered in the study, have been evaluated.

The data collected by the questionnaire survey have been analysed and the various inferences have been drawn. The problem areas have been identified and remedial steps have been suggested. The study reveals that use of e-media is growing steadily despite various problems associated with it. It has been observed from the study that due to the active involvement of library networks, library automation as well as database creation activities are at a satisfactory level and the situation is changing for the better. It is revealed that due to the recent IT-friendly policies of the government, the information infrastructure in libraries is also improving. It is observed from the study that many professional institutes have started training programmes in the new and emerging areas such as Internet, Web page designing, e-commerce and
database development etc. The various issues and concerns of using electronic media have been studied and listed. The study reveals that the library community in India is aware of the positive impact of digital libraries and is willing to use electronic and online journals as and when available. The study also found that the library professionals in India are not fully aware of the ramifications of copyright and related problems. There is a need and necessity to include some topics covered by the study in the library and information science curriculum in order to make the library professionals face the challenges these technologies pose. The areas, which are needed to sharpen the professional skills of librarians and areas of further research, have also been listed. The study reveals that there is a positive impact of electronic media on library and information centres in India.