CHAPTER 5
MULTIMEDIA CENTER ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK: SOME THOUGHTS
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Multimedia Centre Organizational Framework: Some Thoughts

In this chapter some thoughts on Organisational Framework of a Multimedia Centre in an Academic Library setup are given. Before concluding on the study of the kind of the organisational framework envisaged for a Multimedia Centre it is found apt-to briefly summarise the findings of the theoretical and empirical studies made in this research work.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

This summary provides the findings of the theoretical basis made in chapters 2 and chapter 3 and the Survey analysis made in Chapter 4.

The concept of Multimedia has changed from its traditional surrogate contents to modern technologically conceived product – the CD ROM based Multimedia products. But still the traditional material form the integral part of any Academic Library not less than a University Library. Hence the traditional surrogate materials cannot be omitted from this study hence a descriptive account of them is provided in the Chapter 2 culminating with the Optical Media and the Communication media like Teleconferencing, Internet and so on. The findings from this exercise provided the necessary theoretical background on traditional multimedia concept and also the necessary descriptive account of the surrogates.

Since the University Libraries particularly in India are endowed with the primary task of building a large collection mainly consisting of Print Media. On the other hand it is envisaged that most of these libraries have not got a reasonable strength of the traditional multimedia products like Audio, Visual or Audio-Visual aids and of course Microforms, except the collection of Maps and Atlases. The University Library system in India is ever in transition due to many reasons including the budgetary constraints and non-voluntary demands of its non-committal users and the Centralised organization set up. All these factors see a
lack of systematic Organisational frame for a Multimedia Centre in a University Library in Indian context. In order to draw knowledge on theoretical basis of an Organisational set-up for a University Library Multimedia centre, an attempt is made to know the theoretical base for such a centre. The study has deliberated this in Chapter 3 and the findings of such an exercise would be useful for a pragmatics on the study of the Organisational frame work of an Academic Library as Multimedia Centre.

Thirdly despite the submissions made as above, the study ventured to know the realities in the University Libraries in Karnataka through a survey about the contentious feeling expressed as above. Hence it attempted a Survey of 8 University Libraries and 15 College Libraries in the state of Karnataka.

In summary the findings of the Survey presented in Chapter 4 reveal that though the University Libraries in Karnataka have none of the attributes of a Multimedia Centre, to deal with both traditional and emerging ones, but they have an inherent potentiality to grow in that direction, as many of them are going to gain Internet access and acquire the CD ROM Products in large number as the technology is pervading them in all these measures. In addition they have also a collection of traditional media of moderate strength. In this context it is desirable also to invest some thinking on study of the Organisational Framework of a Multimedia Centre in a University Library set up as a problem of this research study.

5.2 ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

Modern academic libraries do not run by themselves; they require a lot of organization and administration strategies to run with multifarious activities and resources. The libraries have to deal with different types of knowledge resources and in the present context the multimedia information sources and Communication media to meet the contemporary changing demands of the users and the changing
formats of materials. An array of responsibilities is vested upon the librarian as an entrepreneur in the industry of knowledge. This demands of him to have an adequate knowledge of the management techniques for adjusting the working force to the working environment and, the working force to maximize the library service to the academicians at the lowest cost and with reasonable effort. It requires specialized organizational skills to bring semblance between the user demands and the varieties of information sources. As revealed in the Chapter Two the physical format of information sources have been changing since the times of clay tablets. The libraries have possessed written documents, printed documents, and non-print media consisting of audio-visuals, microforms, maps, atlases and innumerable varieties of traditional multimedia resources. This factor has been well described in Chapter Two. The profession of Librarianship is encountering this contemporary transformation in the media change as well as meeting the equally changing demands of the users.

In addition to above the technological impact on libraries in the last two decades have thrown out new challenges with the advent of magnetic, optical and other electronic sources of information. Most of the traditional multimedia sources are still in existence in large number in many academic libraries and they would ever vanish from the scene of the academic library environment like the maps, atlases, photographs, other audio-visuals and the microforms. Most of these sources are also held on the modern media that is the optical devices, hence the academic libraries have challenging tasks to handle the varieties of these media and put them into use.

As implied in Chapter Three the above conclusion supports that special skills and knowledge is required in organization and administration of a multimedia centre in traditional and modern systems of materials.

Considering these factors the study has made a very critical observation of the two factors;
The strength of the multimedia collection held by the academic libraries in Karnataka.

The existing organizational framework to handle the collection and also to put them into use.

As regards to the collection, though the libraries under survey are not very strong in possession of traditional as well as current multimedia collection, but the fact is very conspicuous as most of the university libraries are not fully conversant with their multimedia wares. However considering the emerging trends in the new media it is obvious that libraries will have to possess the new media particularly CD-ROM based information sources. Besides they have to depend largely on Internet based resources, digital libraries and access to library websites through the growing number of library networks. It becomes incumbent upon all library fraternity that they acquire the organizational skills and the knowledge of handling them and also to meet the user demands in the context.

Hence thinking on the organizational framework demands the skills that are blend of handling traditional as well as emerging multimedia information sources and the communication media like the Internet and library networks.

The organizational framework in this context has worked out considering basically two components namely:

(I) The organizational structure
(II) The organizational function.

(I) The organizational structure

a) Demands to handle the system of materials and the system of users and not forgetting the manpower to manage the whole system. In this context this study emphasis that the university libraries should earmark for a separate personnel to handle these resources as the present Library
Personnel has no separate staff with required skills and knowledge to handle a multimedia centre.

(b) The library staff should be in possession if not also acquire knowledge of selection, acquisition and organization of these materials.

(c) It is found that the libraries are spending a large sum of money towards the acquisition of the Print media. The opinion of the librarians revealed that there is adequate demand from the users for the multimedia materials in the library. Despite of this no library is made allocation for exclusively for acquiring multimedia materials. The study is of the opinion that there should be separate and substantial provision for funding the acquisition of multimedia resources.

(d) It is found from the study that no efforts are being made to systematically organize the available multimedia resources in their respective libraries.

The library profession is endowed with skills and techniques, methods and tools to deal with a variety of materials, for example for cataloguing, the AACR-2 has special rules for the documents description of the non-print materials. Similarly the Bibliographic standards like CCF and MARC-21 provide for identification of physical media exclusively. Hence this factor has to be looked into in organizing multimedia collection. This should become the part and parcel of essential skills possessed by the library personnel as no library has made attempt to classify or catalogue multimedia resources held by them.

(e) In the case of systematic organization of varieties of information sources classification systems developed over the last 125 years have always made it a point to incorporate the factors of media change. The best example is the Book number of the Colon Classification, in which the Facet Formula
implies the identification of the physical forms [f]. Similarly Universal Decimal Classification scheme has provision for a detailed number for the multimedia materials in table D. These are the important factors which are seriously missing in the present university library organization and administration, in dealing with multimedia resources.

(f) The variety of materials held by the libraries also demands their handling and maintenance skills, for example in the traditional as well as in emerging trends the library personnel’s needs the knowledge and skill to demonstrate the use of the microforms as well as surfing and navigating Internet. If one is of the opinion that the traditional media like the microform is disappearing from the library scene but the Internet has become the most prolific media for information access. The old map has now been held on to a Compact disk and the library personnel need the skill of not only interacting with the CD media but also the intricacies of referring to a map as he would do in case of a traditional map.

The organizational framework as regards to the structure of a Multimedia center in an academic library environment should consist of:

(i) A separate section that dealing with selection, acquisition and organization of Multimedia and communication media resources and equipment’s.

(ii) Adequately qualified and trained staff to handle the media.

(iii) Adequately and exclusive funding for meeting the expenses in the acquisition of multimedia resources.

(iv) Library finance should represent effective portion towards the multimedia sources and the libraries might levy tariff on the use of these materials to enhance their accountability both by staff and users.
II The Organisational Functions

The second component of the organizational framework that is implied for a Multimedia Centre is the functional aspect of utilization of multimedia information sources and communication media. To fulfill these functional aspects it was deliberated in Chapter Three which consisting of:

(I) Information function;
(II) Educational function;
(III) Cultural function, and
(IV) Recreational function.

In the context of an academic library environment and considering the emerging trends of information sources the first two functions are more demanding and highly beneficial to the academic user community. The main objective of an academic institution like a university, is education, research and dissemination of knowledge. The university library has to actively participate in fulfilling these three educational objectives, in this context the functions of the university library demands for the adequate provision of all kinds of reading materials and knowledge resources. This study has revealed that the university libraries have largely engaged in the collection development functions focusing mainly as pointed out in Chapter Four, observing the lack of multimedia information sources in comparison with printed resources, the libraries have made least efforts to build a multimedia collections and couldn’t be reckoned as Multimedia Centre in least scale. However it has not come to a conclusion that it may be due to lack of user demand or lack of funding. If the libraries fail to build a proportionate collection of all types of reading materials and knowledge resources they will be failing their functional aspect of providing education and information to the users.

The study thus implies, the functional aspects of multimedia collection have to be made mandatory for every university library in order to fulfill the
informational and educational function of academic library and this should become a functional objective of every library and to meet the specialized needs of users as regards to the varieties of sources this should become an essential function of a multimedia center.

The functional process of information provision for education, research and dissemination of knowledge would be adequately carried out if the libraries provide for varieties of both reading materials in traditional form and the multimedia knowledge resources in the emerging trends.
References:


