

REDESIGNING LIBRARY SERVICES DURING 'RE-TUNED NORMAL': EXPERIENCES OF LIBRARIANS AMID PANDEMIC IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, the investigator had administered an online questionnaire and sent it through the link of Microsoft forms to the librarians . The researcher attempted to connect with the respondents through their e-mail ids, and WhatsApp numbers. A descriptive research method was used to conduct the study. The data were analysed using Microsoft Excel Office 365, Google Spreadsheet, and SPSS software. The study findings are helpful to the young library professionals who can bring change in state university libraries and efficiently serve the regional community by introducing recent technologies. The librarians of state and deemed universities took the pandemic in a comparatively positive manner. However, they found it challenging to genuinely manage the work from home concept due to the excessive workload.

Keywords : COVID-19, COVID-19 Pandemic, Coronavirus, Pandemic, Librarians, Libraries, Rebuilding Library Services, Universities, State Universities, India.

1. Introduction

The Coronavirus disease has put the lives of human beings in complete peril, and it has been closely witnessed by the Indian citizens when the second wave of novel coronavirus hit the country from March 2021 onwards. During the last quarter of 2020, a sigh of relief was attained as the number of coronavirus cases plummeted in the previous five months, i.e., from October 2020 to February 2021 (Wikipedia, 2021). The month of December-2020 had observed the arrival of a new variant of CoViD-19. It unveiled the doors of significant trouble and vexation to individuals due to the explosion of double and triple mutant coronavirus strains (Deccan Herald, 2021). During such anxiety, it becomes difficult to maintain the working

momentum of academicians, scholars, and learners throughout the country. Interestingly, a sparkling blend of internet and technology has once again proved to be of significant support for all types of educational institutes, just as in the first wave of coronavirus. Tracking back to September 2020 onwards, it was seen that few less affected states of India had opened schools and universities with a limited presence of students on campus to bring continuity in the academics. Unfortunately, this decision has rolled back by the respective state ministries and closed again (Agrawal, 2020). The Ministry of Education has emphasised the online learning environment through different platforms to accelerate the academic wheel of learning throughout the universities. Meanwhile, universities tailored their courses and syllabi

to fit them in an online environment (MHRD, 2020).

In the same line, libraries and knowledge/learning resource centres play a vital role in managing their clientele's information needs and sustaining community engagement and trust amongst users. The transition of library services from hybrid to entirely online makes library authorities more inclusive and competent to nurture their existence amid the pandemic era. In India, the librarians of state and deemed to be universities have had to face various challenges due to several constraints. With this observation in mind, the researcher in this study tried to explore the experiences faced by the State and Deemed to be University librarians while rendering library services in partially lockdown-imposed states. There are 422 State universities and 125 Deemed-to-be Universities existing in India as of March 2021 (University Grants Commission, 2021).

2. Review of Literature

This section fetched out previously published scholarly literature on the role of librarians amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on library services. Ameen (2021) highlighted the opportunities provided by the libraries during such an unusual situation in a developing country like Pakistan and the ways the librarians had dealt with the pandemic situation. Jaskowska (2020) illustrated the management strategies employed at Polish academic libraries during the CoViD-19 lockdown under the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) conditions. Another study showcased four health science librarians' continuous efforts and initiatives across the country and shared their personal or library experiences to meet their faculty and students' needs by using various tools and technologies (Mi et al., 2020). Another study investigated the responses from the academic libraries of a pandemic situation in Nigeria. Its findings

highlighted a total closure of the library (59.3%), the use of face masks and nose covers by library users (31.9%), the social distancing measures induced the use of social media (59.3%) (Fasae et al., 2020). The University of Warsaw library experiences a rapid shift from hybrid to online ICT-based library services in an academic library set-up. It will continue in the same form even after re-opening the on-site library (Kamińska et al., 2020). After the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ifijeh & Yusuf (2020) assessed the role of academic libraries and the paradigm shift in the teaching methodologies at Nigerian Universities. The authors discussed the global trends in online education and suggested the possible measures to change librarianship's traditional aspect and make it embedded librarianship. The National University of Lesotho Library in South Africa examined the transformation of library services from on-site library services to digital services. It emphasised the strengthening of the existing library infrastructure and digital content (Mbambo-Thata, 2020). Zimbabwean universities indicated that academic libraries performed a vital role in supporting e-learning at higher education institutions, and the users of libraries were overwhelmed by receiving adequate and innovative digital library services during the closure of on-site libraries and even expect such services post-pandemic (Oyelude, 2020; Tsekea & Chigwada, 2020). In general and at UPES libraries in Uttarakhand adopted remote access in a user-friendly way, and the number of resources made available during the pandemic is exemplary (Asif & Singh, 2020; UPES, 2020). Another study focused on the measures and initiatives taken by central university libraries (CUL) of India. The Indian librarians called themselves 'Information Warriors' and showed an optimistic attitude while struggling with a pandemic (Vaidya and Ali, 2021). The library of IIT Kharagpur also gave detailed safety measures and library services during the pandemic (Nandi, 2021).

Thus, after reviewing the sufficient literature, it is found that almost all the libraries have shifted their traditional services to online mode. It has now become their practice to adapt themselves to new and emerging learning tools and technologies. In the present study, the researcher intends to unveil the experiences of state and deemed university libraries of India. On such grounds, the researcher strongly believes that no study has been published to cover up the status of state and deemed to be university libraries of India. This research void can be filled up after conducting the present study.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the status of library services and functions during the partial lockdown at the state and deemed university libraries of India.
2. To analyse the librarians' experiences while rendering the information needs of library users during the 'new normal'.
3. To evaluate the library programs undertaken by the libraries to maintain the importance of state and deemed university libraries.
4. To slice out the capabilities of library professionals regarding the 'Work from Home' working at the state and deemed university libraries of India.

4. Methodology

The present study has accumulated librarians' experiences from state and deemed to be university libraries by retrieving their contact details. While conducting the present study, it was observed that, unfortunately, all the universities do not reflect the librarian's relevant information and the librarian's post is handled by a senior-grade professor of other disciplines other than library science. As a

result, inadequate information was available on the universities' website regarding the name and e-mail of librarians; that is why the investigator could marshal the contact details of only 150 librarians (90 from state and 60 from deemed universities). The study was conducted just before the second wave of coronavirus outbreak in India, i.e., from the second week of February to the first week of April and adopted a survey method to conduct the present study. An online questionnaire was administered. With the help of Microsoft Forms, a link was distributed to all the respective librarians via their e-mail ids and WhatsApp contact numbers. An estimate of 10.67% (i.e., 16/150) responses were received after sending three-four times gentle reminders and continuous follow-ups. The accumulated data was imported into MS Excel Office 365, and all the descriptive analysis was carried out by SPSS software (Version 20.0). The open-ended questions were critically analysed at the end of the study and presented the key highlights of those responses.

5. Analysis of Data

5.1. Demographics of the Study

The graphical analysis of demographics was done by Google spreadsheet, which was presented in figure 1. It indicated that 62.50% are State universities, and 37.50% are Deemed-to-be universities. The highest participated respondents are designated on the post of librarian-in-charge (38%), followed by 19% of University Librarian and Assistant librarians each, respectively. The remaining 25% are designated on the position of Deputy Librarians. From the work experience of the respondents, 31% of them are having job experience of (23-29) years, followed by (2-8) and (16-22) years of experience. Furthermore, the maximum number of respondents (i.e., 50%) are PhD holders, followed by MLISc degrees. Moreover, the name of the participating universities and their respective libraries have been attached in Annexure 1.

Demographics

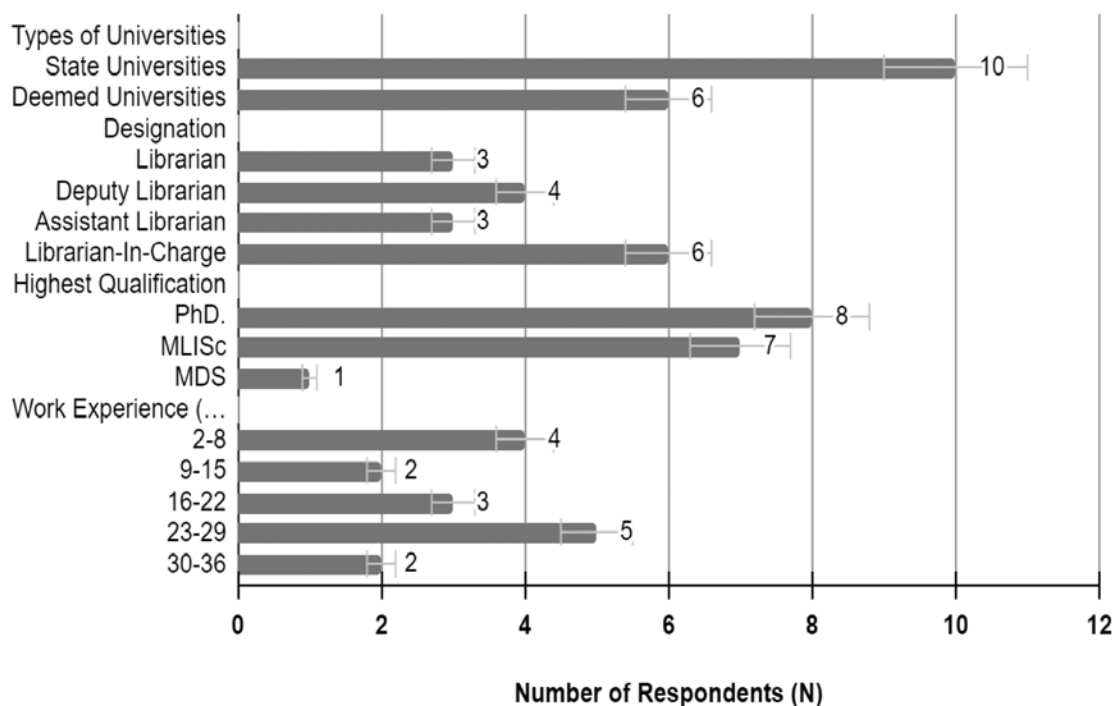


Fig. 1. Demographic Details

5.2. Re-Building Library Operations and Services

In India, citizens experienced a slight shift from complete lockdown to partial lockdown and then surviving in the 'New Normal' phase. There is still partial lockdown in few states, but most organisations have now opened to sustain the organisational wheels into the pace. From this, a lot of uncertainty is visible in all aspects.

In the present study, the investigator touched few areas to understand the basic functionalities of the libraries. From the analysis (table 1), it is revealed that state and deemed-to-be universities have not fully introduced the concept of 'work from home,' i.e., only 50% of the libraries have adopted this approach. Due to the partial lockdown imposed non-uniformly in all the states, it might not be possible, and the entire staff cannot go by this approach. That is why WfH practices have

partially introduced in the libraries. Regarding the updated library policies and procedures in the wake of the 'New Normal' situation, four deemed universities, and three state universities did not update their library websites. However, three state university websites are under the process to update their websites. It is delightful to know that lion's share (93.75%) of the sample can provide plagiarism checking services for university's researchers/faculties, particularly the active participation from state universities. The maximum percentage of librarians, i.e., 43.75%, opted 'as usual' to mark their personal/professional development, and the same is the case with the personal/professional development of their staff, i.e., 56.25%. Thus, it is concluded that state university libraries are performing far better than deemed universities in all the concerned statements presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Adapting Library Operations and Services

Statements	Options	Distribution of Universities	Total Count	Frequency of total count (%)
“Does your library introduce the concept of Work from Home”?	Yes	4 SU	4	25
		0 DU		
	No	1 SU	4	25
		3 DU		
	Partially Introduced	5 SU	8	50
		3 DU		
“Does your library website contain information on changed library policies and procedures to suit the ‘New Normal’ era”?	Yes	4 SU	6	37.5
		2 DU		
	No	3 SU	7	43.75
		4 DU		
	The website is under process	3 SU	3	18.75
		0 DU		
“Is your library capable of providing the plagiarism checking service for your university’s researchers/ faculties during the partial lockdown period”?	Yes	10 SU	15	93.75
		5 DU		
	No	0 SU	1	6.25
		1 DU		
“How much time are you spending on your personal/professional development during the partial pandemic lockdown”?	More than Usual	3 SU	5	31.25
		2 DU		
	As Usual	4 SU	7	43.75
		3 DU		
	Less than Usual	3 SU	4	25
		1 DU		
“How much did you encourage your staff for professional/personal development during the partial lockdown”?	More than Usual	3 SU	6	37.5
		3 DU		
	As Usual	7 SU	9	56.25
		2 DU		
	Less than Usual	0 SU	1	6.25
		1 DU		
Note: SU= ‘State University; DU= ‘Deemed-to-be-University’.				

5.2.1. Analysis of Various Operations

In the present section, the investigator would deal with eight multiple response questions analysed by SPSS (version 20.0). All the succeeding tables (table 2 to table 9) were interpreted in the following manner. "Percent of responses and percent of cases are displayed in last two columns. Percent of response is the percentage of 'each answer selected by the sample population divided by the total number of responses received from the collected sample'. Thus, the total percent of response is 100". Similarly, "the percent of cases is the percent of 'each response saying, 'yes' for the individual statement divided by a total number of respondents." This is the reason why the total of the last column exceeds 100%" (Jann, 2005; LibGuides, n.d.; *Multiple Response Analysis Using SPSS*, 2016).

5.2.1.1. Ways to Satisfy Library Users' Needs and the Functions of the Libraries

Respondents were asked about satisfying

the educational requirements of the user group during the pandemic and the responses are given in table 2. It was revealed that more than two third of respondents (68.8%) were providing three different services at a time to maintain the needs of the library users, i.e., 'Remote access facility to all subscribed collection of the library extended to all users', 'Webinars/Virtual Programmes organised for faculty members and researchers', and 'Online reference service/tele referencing services initiated'. Besides these, librarians put their efforts into forming WhatsApp groups and utilise conferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet to arrange meetings. The facility of circulation of books was given only for on-campus faculty members. This agrees with the findings of Dadhe and Dubey (2020), where the emphasis was on supporting users by providing them remote access to e-resources and online referencing services to the users. It means all the libraries have worked differently but were not closed after the first wave of Covid-19 slowed down.

Table 2
Maintaining Users' Needs during the Pandemic

Statements	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No.	Percent	
"All library services/operations have been closed."	2	3.3	12.5
"All library services/operations are continuing as usual while maintaining social distancing norms."	6	10.0	37.5
"Remote access facility to all subscribed collection of the library extended to all users."	11	18.3	68.8
"Remote access facility to all subscribed collection of the library extended to only selected users."	1	1.7	6.2
"Webinars/Virtual Programmes organised for faculty members and researchers."	11	18.3	68.8
"Online reference service/tele referencing services initiated"	11	18.3	68.8
"Membership/renewal of books extended"	9	15.0	56.2
"Internet and other communication facility strengthened"	9	15.0	56.2
Total	60	100.0	375.0

5.2.1.2. Analysis of the Library Building during Partial Lockdown

Respondents were asked about the status of the library building hours, which means for how much period was the library building allowed to open for rendering services. The result (table 3) reveals that the half of respondents (50%), supported the statement 'The library is closed but providing almost full

service to institutional /registered users remotely by 24*7, followed by the statements 'The library building is closed entirely. Still, the staff is working remotely' and 'The library is open to essential employees and faculty only' with 43.8% of responses each. Apart from these statements included in the table, librarians pointed that few of them carried out library automation and stock verification work at their libraries.

Table 3
Existence of Library Building Hours during Partial Lockdown

Statements	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No.	Percent	
"The library building is closed entirely, but the staff is working remotely."	7	24.1	43.8
"The library is closed fully; no activity is going on."	1	3.4	6.2
"The library is locked but providing almost full service to institutional /registered users remotely by 24*7."	8	27.6	50.0
"The library is open to essential employees and faculty only."	7	24.1	43.8
"Library closed to the public, but only administration and circulation are on-site."	6	20.7	37.5
Total	29	100.0	181.2

5.2.1.3. Application of Lockdown Protocol within Libraries

Respondents were asked about the implementation of social distancing measures in their libraries. The data given in table 4 revealed that the most adopted measure was 'Staff meetings have shifted to online' with a 75% of response rate, followed by 'Rotational

shifts of the employees to enforce social distancing' with a 68.8% response rate. Besides these, one of the librarians quote his statement, i.e., only 'three staff members were kept on duty for assigned jobs'. Thus, it is shown that several self-created measures have been taken to maintain the lockdown protocol within library buildings.

Table 4
Measures to Maintain Social Distancing

Statements	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No.	Percent	
"Staff meetings remain cancelled"	3	5.6	18.8
"Staff meetings have shifted to online"	12	22.2	75.0
"Each alternate PC has been disabled to enforce social distancing."	5	9.3	31.2
"Rotational shifts of the employees to enforce social distancing"	11	20.4	68.8
"Reference Service is shifted to online; checkout of physical materials using elaborate social distancing process."	8	14.8	50.0
"Re-arranged furniture in the reading halls to maintain social distancing."	8	14.8	50.0
"Proper Signs marked to encourage students to sit 3-4 feet apart."	7	13.0	43.8
Total	54	100.0	337.5

5.2.1.4. Kinds of Safety Measures adopted by the Librarians

Regarding the various enhanced cleaning, disinfection, or safety measures, it was revealed from the analysis (table 5) that to keep the working personnel safe from the spreading virus, 87.5% of respondents confirm with the statements 'Hand sanitisation units have been installed at the entry gate for every visitor under strict supervision' and

'Disinfectants/Sanitiser' *directly to employees.* This is the most common practice observed by almost all national and international libraries (Kosciejew, 2020; Mestri, 2020; Vaidya & Ali, 2021; Yuvaraj, 2020). Few librarians stated individually that they had used UV (Ultra-Violet) chambers/boxes to disinfect papers, books, and parcels arriving at the library. Thus, librarians proactively implemented highly commendable safety measures.

Table 5
Kinds of Safety Measures adopted by Librarians

Statements	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No.	Percent	
"Disinfectants/Sanitiser are being provided directly to employees."	14	20.6	87.5
"Daily cleaning of keyboards and other equipment are being done as per guideline."	9	13.8	56.2
"Hand sanitisation units have been installed at the entry gate for every visitor under strict supervision."	14	20.6	87.5
"Paper towels have been made available in the washrooms."	4	6.2	25.0
"Hand gloves have been provided for each employee of the library while handling books."	8	12.3	50.0
"Check-in materials kept isolated for a period before handling by staff."	9	13.8	56.2
"Germicidal wipes are being handed to users to clean their study area before they start reading."	2	3.1	12.5
"Informational signage about the virus and precautions are being displayed for patrons."	8	12.3	50.0
Total	68	100.0	424.9

5.2.1.5. Dealing with the Circulation Section

The data given in table 6 portrayed different measures taken during the issue and return process of print documents by librarians, where it was found that a major share (87.5%) of the respondents favoured the statement ‘*Faculty members can avail the*

service of issue/return from the library’, which was natural due to surge in the number of infection rate of a deadly virus. Otherwise, few librarians marked that the libraries were closed entirely, and if opened, then UV disinfection has been done before check-in any library document.

Table 6
Situation Inside the Circulation Section

Statements	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No.	Percent	
“For students, Issue/Return material can be accessible only for library premises.”	6	12.5	37.5
“Faculty members can avail of the service of issue/return from the library.”	14	29.2	87.5
“Drop Box facilities introduced in many places on the campus.”	4	8.3	25.0
“Issue/Return is open for extending the loan periods virtually and waiving off the fines to final year students.”	10	20.8	62.5
“The library is not circulating print materials currently, but scan-and-deliver is being operational.”	2	4.2	12.4
“Staff is capable of digitising print materials whenever required urgently.”	6	12.5	37.5
“Access to Newspapers/Magazines has been discontinued.”	6	12.5	37.5
Total	48	100.0	300.0

5.2.1.6. Sustaining the Nature of Services during WfH

‘Work from Home’ for library professionals is undoubtedly a new and challenging task but integrating ICT-based services within traditional libraries has lessened the hassle. Data on table 7 shows whether the concept of WfH in the libraries has been introduced or not. If so, what

measures have taken to sustain the service quality of libraries? Three fourth of the respondents (75%), opined that ‘*Shifts have been assigned for the entire workforce to enforce fewer employees at a time in the library*’ followed by the statement ‘*No specific directives for remote work, but staff can do Work from Home*’ with 37.5% participation.

Table 7
Sustaining Library Services while WfH

Statements	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No.	Percent	
"Work from Home would only for Deputy and Assistant Librarians."	2	7.4	12.5
"All employees are required to work remotely."	5	18.5	31.2
"No specific directives for remote work, but staff can do Work from Home."	6	22.2	37.5
"All employees are encouraged to work remotely; if required, they can come."	2	7.4	12.5
"Shifts have been assigned for the entire workforce to enforce fewer employees at a time in the library."	12	44.4	75
Total	27	100.0	168.7

5.2.1.7. Sustaining Academic needs while WfH

The existence and importance of libraries are only possible because of their active users who can belong from any stream or discipline and any academic grade. In table 8, the researcher has given an analysis of how librarians have dealt with the library users' educational needs to satisfy them. It is revealed from the analysis that 56.3% of

respondents have the consensus with the statement '*Library notifications are provided to their users through SMS, mail, telephone, and social networks*' followed by '*The library has issued a helpline number for the users to seek an e-copy of the document*' with 50% of response rate. Thus, the services that can provide e-resources through different mediums are now in vogue during the pandemic phase.

Table 8
Sustaining Academic Needs while WfH

Statements	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No.	Percent	
"Professional teams have created an online platform for each users group(s)."	4	14.8	25.0
"The library has issued a helpline number for the users to seek an e-copy of the document."	8	29.7	50.0
"'Ask a Librarian' is fully functional now and available by 24*7."	6	22.2	37.5
"Library Notifications are provided to their users through SMS, mail, telephone, and social networks."	9	33.3	56.3
Total	27	100.0	168.8

5.2.1.8. Measures followed for Re-Opening of the Libraries

In Table 9, a slight try is exercised about the public access within libraries and associated opinions of the librarians working in state and deemed-to-be universities of India.

It is found that lion's share (93.8%) of the respondents agreed that '*Library users need to sanitise themselves before entering the library premises*' followed by the statement '*post the notice on the entry gate about restricting those users having a cold, cough and fever*' with 68.8%.

Table 9
Steps Taken After the Re-opening of the Libraries

Statements	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No.	Percent	
"All library facilities would be confined to only research scholars."	2	3.8	12.5
"Library users need to sanitise themselves before entering the library premises."	15	28.3	93.8
"The number of patron entries would be restricted."	10	18.9	62.5
"Only reading rooms and circulation service will resume."	6	11.3	37.5
"Post the notice on the entry gate about restricting those users having a cold, cough, and fever."	11	20.8	68.8
"Anyone can visit after having their body temperature checked."	9	17.0	56.2
Total	53	100.0	331.2

5.2.2. Representation of Open-Ended Questions

In this third section, the researcher has investigated the remaining five open-ended questions that were asked to capture librarians' tacit opinions and ground-level insights. After eliminating vague and meaningless comments, the researcher critically analysed the received responses and presented them in tabular form, followed by their analysis.

Question 1. How effectively your library is coordinating with overall library services, especially remote access to e-books and e-journals? Please give your invaluable opinion in the wake of the 'New Normal' days.

"After the lockdown, the library promptly initiated the request to all the e-journal and e-books providers for remote access, and they provided it too by creating individual assigned user Ids and passwords to all the registered students and teachers."

"All our patrons have been provided with remote access credentials. Their queries for online access have been solved on a priority base."

"More than 95% of resources are made accessible through Shibboleth remote access tool."

"The library professionals worked as a team and organised various online meetings to fulfil users' needs. Now, the users are visiting the library for borrowing books, but limited users are allowed at a time."

“Using INFED service, remote access given to all e-resources.”

“Rendering 24x7 support is the key to new normal.”

“We had positively accepted the pandemic and has improved the library services to a great extent. We provided valuable links to open-source documents through our library webpage to support library users at their respective places. Good experience of providing extraordinary services.”

From the above comments, it is clearly shown that almost all the libraries have shifted their mode of document delivery from traditional to online via the Shibboleth system under INDIAN Access Federation Management (INFED). Further, they encouraged online meetings for library staff and the library websites designed so that any user may find valuable links to open-source documents and other related services. All professionals worked as a team to strengthen the entire library system, and user queries were handled on a priority basis.

Question 2. Please share your exciting experience while executing library services/operations by “Work from Home”? Also, mention what has offered by the authorities to you to meet this pandemic challenge?

“Universities have provided the opportunity to learn new technology by organising webinars/online workshops to get equipped with latest teaching-learning resources, i.e., Zoom, GoogleMeet, CiscoWebEx etc.”

“Coordination of overall activities have been done by Assistant librarian(I/c). Since all staff members are not fully equipped with computers at home. The main functions of the library remain closed during the lockdown. As a result, duty work got doubled than as usual, needs to answer every query of the users on time by single-handed.”

“The experience was excellent. Due to the pandemic, we all are directly connected with the users 24*7 through social media, e-mails, telephone. Our team has built a strong bridge between the users and the library staff during this period.”

“Nothing like this; we were more concerned towards the health of students and staff and maintenance of gardens etc., in premises and trying to provide the online resources on request.”

“Online facilities got strengthened.”

“Work from Home extended the office hours, because of the excessive and untimely office meetings which need to be attended anytime in addition with the regular office hours.”

“Online and remote academic research services are found as a key to overcome the pandemic situation.”

“With the support of university administration, we are able to provide remote access to library resources and those available in the public domain.”

“Low Internet bandwidth had disappointed us, which we found as a major constraint.”

“Official work can be done at home, but library activities are not possible at home.”

“It is better to work offline rather than online.”

A mixed nature of narrations has been received from a different grade of library professionals, which means positive and negative responses have been reflected from the above comments. Few professionals are highly enthusiastic to positively take this pandemic and create a smooth bridge between the users and the staff. At the same time, some of them feel over-burdened by the ‘work from home’ culture. Overall, only a few professionals are against the ‘work from home’ culture;

otherwise, all are in favour and excited to adapt to the new work culture. A sense of digital divide was observed amongst the respondents, which needs to be taken care of by the respective competent authority.

Question 3. Do you think there will be a long-term implication of library services in the post corona pandemic world? If yes, what do you observe?

“Most of the Agricultural Libraries are already fully automated with latest technologies like RFID with the digitisation of university publications and share documents with the users in full-text form.”

“Yes, the physical transaction was almost shut-in pandemic. Most of the Indian libraries believe in a transaction of physical reading material. After covid, this will take time to build confidence among users. We will face the problem to maintain SOP, and we need some extra-budgetary allocation for implementing new tools and techniques.”

“Yes, university authorities will cut down the budget for collection development.”

“Yes, it may extend until the end of 2021. More likely, users start using more and more e-resources.”

“Yes, patrons will prefer more digital content on online platforms.”

“The library professionals realised the need for and importance of digital contents during corona pandemic. Most of the college libraries affiliated to Chaudhary Charan Singh University Meerut have been switched over to digital mode during Covid 19 Pandemic.”

It is evident from the above comments that most of the respondents feel that there would be a significant implication of library services in the post-pandemic era, and patrons would opt for more digital content than ever before. The major implications can figure out from three angles, i.e., monetary budget,

electronic resource management and post-pandemic protocol implementations.

Question 4. Do you believe that there will be an urgent need that your library has to play during and after the Corona Pandemic? If Yes, what role your library must play to suit the ‘New Normal’?

“There is a dire need to strengthen the delivery of digitised content.”

“We should make our library users aware of adopting the practice of safety measures in their day-to-day life seriously.”

“There is need to follow the SOPs properly and try to acquire more e-resources to provide its access to the users.”

“There is a need to create a Repository of the Institute.”

“Adapt to the changing scenario by adopting flexible approaches to various services and collection development.”

“There must be a proper sync and coordination between researchers and their research materials, which is very important.”

“We will continue to provide the same services in ‘new normal’ too, considering few Government protocols.”

“Providing services in both ways, i.e., Online and Digital Mode as maximum as possible.”

Here, the respondents have realised to cater the remote access to electronic resources and adopt the practice of good health hygiene with full implementation of required govt. safety protocols amongst the library users. Moreover, there is a need to generate an institutional repository and full access of e-documents to researchers so that their research would not be hampered. Thus, emphasis is to provide remote access to e-documents and proper implementation of

SOPs, which is considered as the need to act by the librarians.

Question 5. How are you encouraging your staff to work effectively in the 'New Normal' while managing personal and professional workloads?

"By providing training and also encourage them to learn new tools and techniques if they want to be an active professional."

"Authority is trying to re-orient the library staff as well as users."

"By motivating every professional to work patiently, keep calm and follow the pandemic guidelines as suggested by the MoHFW."

"We are constantly motivating them to work by taking all the necessary precautions so the service will not get suffered."

"I should not hesitate in conveying the fact that we really learnt a lot from the corona pandemic, and the supporting staff have also changed their thinking in accepting the ICT application in libraries."

"Trained themselves to be equipped with the online tools."

From the above comments received from the respondents, it is concluded here that librarians support the library staff personally and professionally. They motivate them to adapt to the many technologies required to deal with the 'new normal' era. By learning and implementing newer technologies at their workplace, they can become 'active and smart' library professionals. Further more, librarians are encouraging them to follow the govt suggested guidelines and take utmost precautions so that neither they nor the services would suffer in any manner.

6. Significant Findings of the Study

1. The state and deemed-to-be-university libraries have not fully

introduced the concept of 'work from home,' i.e., only half of the libraries have adopted this approach. Three fourth of respondents have been assigned into 'phase-wise shifts' amongst the entire workforce to maintain social distancing.

2. Regarding the plagiarism checking service, a very good sample of the population, i.e., 93.75% libraries, has provided it for university's researchers/faculties. Active participation was reflected from the state universities.
3. Approximately 69% of the librarians satisfied the library users' needs by providing a remote access facility to all subscribed collections and have arranged virtual programmes like webinars for research scholars and faculty members.
4. Almost all the library buildings were closed but offered a wide range of library services remotely to the registered users. Further advancements/communication were being handled by forming WhatsApp and Telegram groups and initiated tele-referencing services.
5. During the partial lockdown, the library opened only for essential employees and faculty members for library-office related work. The library automation and stock verification work were carried out during the complete closure of libraries.
6. Social distancing was employed in the libraries by shifting staff meetings to online mode with 75% consensus and took self-convenient measures to enforce it.

7. A moderate number of respondents, i.e., 56.3%, sent library notifications to their users through various modes viz, SMS, e-mail, telephone, and social networks, generating a helpline number for the users to seek an e-copy of the document.

7. Conclusion

In India, the first wave of the pandemic had hit the nation poorly in the year 2020, but its recovery rate gave us the hope of a 'New Normal' situation. In 2021, the second wave of coronavirus disease has troubled the nation with newer variants that have worst hit the countrymen. However, citizens could muster the courage to fight with the second wave and find alternatives to work efficiently. 'Digital assistance', 'Virtual Private Networks' (VPNs), and 'Remote Access through Shibboleth' acted as the lifeline to sustain every institution's library services and functions. Like central university libraries, state and deemed university libraries practised similar practices, but due to certain constraints, librarians felt it challenging, although they managed to prove their existence. In the present study, an investigator found few constraints like 'improper allocation of budget', 'poor Internet bandwidth', 'excessive workload because of round the clock assistance to their users', 'scarcity of technological mediums', 'lack of technological skills among the library professionals, and managing the 'WfH' atmosphere as never applied before. Despite several challenges, librarians observed that the pandemic era had compelled them to redesign their work lifestyle from traditional to almost digital interfaces. Moreover, they also maintained the balance between personal and professional life and reassured every library professional to perform innovatively and become an active library professional. Few recommendations have been suggested, like posting of instructional signage boards, thorough sanitisation, and proactively

implementing safety measures are few preventive measures after re-opening of the libraries.

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Annexure 1

List of Universities Surveyed and the Name of their Associated Libraries

Sl. No.	Name of the Parent University	Type of University	Name of the Library
01.	Dr Y S Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry, Nauni- Solan, Himachal Pradesh.	SU	Satyanand Stokes Library
02.	Nava Nalanda Mahavihara Deemed University, Nalanda, Bihar.	DU	Deshratna Dr Rajendra Prasad Central Library
03.	Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur. Madhya Pradesh.	SU	DNLU. Library Information Centre
04.	Gujarat National Law University, Gujarat.	SU	GNLU Library
05.	National Brain Research Centre, Haryana.	DU	NBRC Digital Library
06.	Dr B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi.	SU	Ambedkar University Library
07.	Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.	DU	Shantarakshita Library
08.	M. J. P. Rohilkh and University, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh	SU	Central Library
09.	King George Medical University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.	SU	Central Library
10.	Jamia Hamdard University, Delhi.	DU	Hakim Mohammad Said (HMS) Central Library
11.	Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, Maharashtra.	DU	IGIDR Library
12.	Dr Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.	SU	Madhu Limaye Library
13.	Ch. Charan Singh University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.	SU	Raja Mahendra Pratap Library
14.	Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala. Punjab.	DU	Nava Nalanda Central Library
15.	Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST)	SU	Faculty of fisheries Library
16.	Banda University of Agriculture and Technology, Banda, Uttar Pradesh	SU	BUAT Central Library
Note: SU= State University; DU= Deemed-to-be-University.			