

## Covid-19 Pandemic and Role of Agriculture Libraries in Maharashtra

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### Abstract

Due to wide spread of frantic CoronaCOVID-19 virus in the World, resulted into enormous human deaths, GDP at the lowest rate and disturbance in human life cycle. Basically Indian economy is based on Agriculture, hence the role of Agriculture University in education, Extension and Research is very important for development of entire agriculture sector. The present paper showcases the briefing about Corona- Covid-19 virus, lockdown period and the compilation of online/live academic/learning programs/activities rendered by different Agriculture universities, colleges and associations/institutions during the lockdown period which served as information resources, to engage students and teachers/faculties in their teaching, learning and extension processes in India with more emphasis on Library & Information Science online events. The situation directs for 'digital citizenship' amongst the academicians. In this pandemic situation, libraries have been the gateways of relevant information and knowledge for conducting research and development on the related subject areas. The Library and Information services started to gain importance by providing researchers the opportunity to explore agriculture Education, Extension and Research, while prevention of the disease. This Article brought out recent technological advancements and preventive measures taken in order to enhance the knowledge of library professionals to promote library resources and services towards agriculture students and faculties.

**Keywords** - Library resources, Information technology, COVID-19 Pandemic, Preventive measures, Library services.

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### Introduction

Libraries around the world have been facing lockdown challenges in providing access to its collections and services. All types of libraries have promoted their digital services during the corona virus pandemic situation. However, the physical resources are often put on demand by the users most preferably in the Agriculture University and colleges, where research agriculture science and allied subjects is being carried out. Libraries having significant number of e-resources may have enough opportunities to serve their users even in the lockdown period throughout the world. Several Libraries have brought out their digital services organizing virtual exhibitions, highlighting content on the websites and Lets Read Together online campaign. There have also been major efforts to boost access to the library resources online as well as offline, for example by increasing the number of e- Books/ e-Journals/CD-DVD, etc. in order to lower the risk of virus spread.

### **Objectives of the Study-**

There are following objective of the study:

1. To find out innovative ways to reach out library users
2. To explore opportunities to navigate through this challenge
3. To enhance learning and professional skills
4. To be prepared for New Normal Life

### **Scope of the libraries -**

The technological advancements and innovations have transformed the traditional libraries to the present smart Libraries. Today's Libraries offer wide range of innovative services to the users for their information need in the pandemic situation. There has been a paradigm shift of libraries in twenty first century. The major role of libraries in selective dissemination of Information and knowledge among its users predefine the scope of libraries. Libraries are the store houses of knowledge recorded in physical/digital medium. Libraries are growing organism and therefore continue to increase the library collection and services. Unlike the traditional libraries present trends of libraries includes digital/virtual mode of library collection and also offer remote access facility for their users. The application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the Internet and particularly the World Wide Web have revolutionized library activities, hence there has been changes in the normal functioning of Libraries in the digital world. The present trend of library resources includes e- books, e-resources, digital library, e- services etc. The future prospects of smart libraries would involve utilization of skill and knowledge whereas the information is also recorded, stored, retrieved and disseminated in the e-format at a large scale.

### **Present trends of library services-**

COVID-19 Pandemic does not seem to be eradicated completely. Librarians are looking forward, exciting to discover new services and opportunities to build a stronger library-user interface in the future. In order to achieve these goal libraries need to be equipped with latest infrastructure, information communication technologies and skilled manpower.

### **Virtual library services-**

1. Virtual Reference service like chat/e-mail
2. CeRA (Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture) using through remote access
3. E-books (Related to Agriculture & allied Science)
4. Krishikosh (Institutional Repository)
5. E-Krishishiksha (e-Courses)
6. India Agri. Stat
7. Update library website dynamic content

### **About COVID-19 Virus and its spread-**

World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the COVID- 19 pandemic. COVID-19 or Coronavirus Disease is being caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Old age

people underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely prone to serious illness. The Common symptoms of COVID-19 include high fever, tiredness and a dry cough. Other symptoms include shortness of breath, aches and pains, sore throat, and very few people will report diarrhoea, nausea or a runny nose. The Spread of Coronavirus people to people occurs through spread of droplets like respiratory droplets when infected person sneeze in the public domain.

In the case of Libraries where books come in contact of many persons at a time, therefore, the chances of virus transmission can occur by direct contact with infected user and indirect contact with surfaces in the library or with objects used by the infected user/staff. To understand and know more about the disease World Health Organization is releasing daily updates on the situation at the global level. To find out more about the virus, go through the WHO's research pages or the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on the virus prepared by the WHO.

#### **Handling of study materials in the libraries -**

Although, there is a huge risk of infection through objects carrying coronavirus yet the use of library resources is equally important to carry out research on the on-going projects. Librarian now a day has to extend library services on a safer mode by following the standard operation procedure or the Government Guidelines. In the view of the above, some libraries have imposed a waiting period (quarantine) for Issue/return of books. Different countries have set their own operating procedure to handle the Library resources, for example Australian Library and Information Association has suggested cleaning with alcohol wipes with plastic covers, such as DVDs, etc. The Italian Library Association, in addition to the above, has suggested that users could be asked to indicate if materials being returned have been in contact with someone with the virus.

#### **Preventive Measures and Guidelines / SOP for Libraries during COVID-19 Pandemic -**

Libraries are facing challenges and restrictions in the lockdown. Governments regularly are taking different approaches, sometimes ordering the full closure of all institutions, in these situations library professionals may take following preventive measures to curb the spread of COVID- 19 through the libraries:

1. Stay at home if you feel sickness
2. Use appropriate sanitizer frequently
3. Roster of staff duty
4. Keep books at separate place at least for 48 hours when check in/check out
5. Maintain social distance
6. Follow good health and hygiene habits
7. Limiting concentration of users in reading room allowing just one table per user
8. Use mask and cover while sneezing or coughing
9. Avoid sneezing or coughing while handling books
10. Keeping surfaces clean, including toys and library computers surface like door knobs, switches and railing etc.
11. Use online platforms or social media to share Knowledge/Information.
12. Provide remote access of library resources to the users

13. Promote paperless work culture in the libraries
14. Frequently used items such as magazines and newspapers may only be accessible to people with gloves and masks, etc.

#### **Important/Useful links for Digital Library and E- Resources -**

For all those library users who have developed or developing online reading habits, there are several agriculture digital libraries offering reading material free of cost, the links are given below:

**Table 1:**

S. No.	Title / Name	Description	Web Address / URL
1	Jgateplus.com CeRA	Its online consortium database developed by ICAR for Journal Article, e-books Chapter, E-proceedings etc...	1. <a href="https://jgateplus.com/search/">https://jgateplus.com/search/</a>
2	Krishikosh	It's an Institutional Repository of NAHP Project of having having Thesis, books, Annual Reports, etc..	1. <a href="https://krishikosh.egranth.ac.in/">https://krishikosh.egranth.ac.in/</a>
3	Agriculture Science e-books	It's a paid Database of MPKV Rahuri of 4 Different Publishers with 658 e-books	1. <a href="http://www.astralebooks.com/university.aspx">http://www.astralebooks.com/university.aspx</a> 2. <a href="https://mahatma-cabi-patron.eb20.com/Collections/Books/mahatma+bespoke">https://mahatma-cabi-patron.eb20.com/Collections/Books/mahatma+bespoke</a> 3. <a href="https://asapglobe.com/Search.aspx?q=PurchasedBooks&amp;type=keyword">https://asapglobe.com/Search.aspx?q=PurchasedBooks&amp;type=keyword</a> 4. <a href="https://www.taylorfrancis.com/search?subject=SCAG0505&amp;key=">https://www.taylorfrancis.com/search?subject=SCAG0505&amp;key=</a>
4	e-Courses	Its e - content of various course developed by ICAR in 5 <sup>th</sup> Dean committee syllabus hosted by TNAU.	1. <a href="https://ecourses.icar.gov.in/">https://ecourses.icar.gov.in/</a>
5	Indiajournal.com	Online Indian e-journals Database for Agriculture Science	1. <a href="https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=journals_list&amp;type=alpha">https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=journals_list&amp;type=alpha</a>
6	Indiaagristat.com	All agriculture related statistical information is available in this database.	1. <a href="http://www.indiastatagri.com/Home/index">http://www.indiastatagri.com/Home/index</a>
7	Open Source Resources	It's a open source	1. <a href="https://opensource.com/resources">https://opensource.com/resources</a>

#### **University Library Organized Online Training for Faculty and Students: -**






For better utilization of the above mentioned e-resources University Library, MPKV Rahuri organized three training program with the help of CASST- CWSA, MPKV,

Rahuri of different subjects. On the effect of these training programme faculty members, students & research scholars are used e-resources efficiently. The usage statistics is improved due the training programme and utility also increased. Hence the pandemic situation gives new direction to use the e-resources.

#### **Opportunities of Learning with the Virtual Platform/Webinar in the Libraries-**

This is time for library professionals to avail opportunities and improve their skills/ability for outreach in virtual environment. They can organize virtual seminar or webinar, when a seminar is conducted online with the help of software it is called as the webinar. Now a day, there has been a trend of webinar and there are some specialized applications / software to conduct virtual meeting, webinar, video conferencing, live chat, etc. Web-based (virtual) seminar platform can be used to conduct online meetings, lectures and conferences. Webinar software provides online platform, where mutual interaction between the speakers and attendees takes place to carry out audio-visual communication. Webinar software provides real- time interactive features like multiple-hosts/clients, polls/voting, live chat, questions & answers, screen sharing, etc. This technology is also useful in online teaching, lectures, training and learning purposes. Downloading/connecting Links are given hereunder for few applications/software, most of them offer free trial/module and require simple process to run as indicated in the connecting links. Libraries can use these facilities for knowledge sharing purpose among the staff/researchers/users. Following are widely used webinar hosting software worldwide:

**Table 2:**

S. No.	Application/Software	Symb ol	Downloading / Connecting Links
1	Google Meet		<a href="https://meet.google.com/">https://meet.google.com/</a>
2	GoToMeeting		<a href="https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-in">https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-in</a>
3	Business Hangouts		<a href="https://business-hangouts.com/">https://business-hangouts.com/</a>
4	Join Me		<a href="https://www.join.me/">https://www.join.me/</a>
5	Microsoft team		<a href="https://www.microsoft.com/en-in/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software">https://www.microsoft.com/en-in/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group- chat-software</a>

6	My Own Conference		<a href="https://myownconference.com/">https://myownconference.com/</a>
7	Skype for Business		<a href="https://www.skype.com/en/get-skype/">https://www.skype.com/en/get-skype/</a>
8	CISCO Webex		<a href="https://www.webex.com/content/webex/c/e%20n_US/index/downloads.html/">https://www.webex.com/content/webex/c/e%20n_US/index/downloads.html/</a>
9	Zoho Meeting		<a href="https://www.zoho.com/meeting/">https://www.zoho.com/meeting/</a>
10	Zoom		<a href="https://zoom.us/signin">https://zoom.us/signin</a>

### Conclusion-

Technological advancements have revolutionized the library services in digital era. Libraries on the web have become more competent and confident in terms of resource management and digitalization. Information societies are seeking information in digital format, therefore, library services depends upon skilled professionals. Library plays vital role in data acquisition, storage, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information among the library users. This Article has brought out opportunity to learn recent technological advancements in order to maximize the usage of library resources and services in worldwide lockdown and pandemic situations prevailing in the country. This article will provide an overview on preventive measures and current trends in libraries to play proactive role in the present and post pandemic situation.

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