SAARC Documentation Center: An overview.

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1. Abstract

Documentation Center play proactive role in providing instant information to its user. The purpose of this paper is explore SAARC documentation Centre (SDC) role, services, users, resource sharing, and other activities among the member country. This platform provides opportunity about SDC to highlights the advantages to LIS researcher, Scholar and Professional one of the source to acquire information.

Key Words: 1. Documentation Center 2. SSARC Paper

2. Methodology

To support this paper work methodology use Literature Searching, Web surfing etc., e-books, views and discussion with professional experts in Pakistan, social network face book & twitter etc.

3. Introduction

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established when its Charter was formally adopted on 8 December 1985 by the Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan joined SAARC as a Member at the Fourteenth SAARC Summit, Delhi, April 3-4 2007. The Association provides a platform for the peoples of South Asia to work together in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. It aims to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life through accelerated economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region. Cooperation in the SAARC is based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, noninterference in internal affairs of the Member States and mutual benefit. Regional cooperation is seen as a complement to the bilateral and multilateral relations of SAARC Member States. Decisions are taken on the basis of unanimity. Bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from the deliberations of SAARC.

SSARC region occupies an area of 5,136,740 square km, has population of 1,467,255,669, GDP, is US$ 4,074,031 and per capita GDP is 2,777. Fast track growth and Scio-economic development in region we need more advance in the field of science, technology, Health,
Agriculture, Education and Other sector. Education is the main source to meet the challenges of member state. Education is one of the most interesting phenomena in this region. Education status illustrated shown as under.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Country Name</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>33,995,331</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>158,570,535</td>
<td>55.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>742,737</td>
<td>47.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,270,272,105</td>
<td>76.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>328,536</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>26,494,504</td>
<td>60.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>187,343,000</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>20,263,723</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population and literary rate of SAARC Region (source: http://www.wikipedia.org)

4. **LIS Background in SAARC Region**

The literature survey reveals that there are very few bibliometric studies on LIS research in SAARC. Gupta et al.,\(^4\) investigated science and technology as a whole collaboration among the South Asian Index (SCI 1992-1999). Viswanatan et al.,\(^5\) review the development status of library and information network in South Asia regions with particular reference to India. Mangla\(^6\) studies LIS programmes at the postgraduate level offered by the universities and research institution in SAARC region.

4.1 **Afghanistan**

In 1992, the library held 200,000 books, 5,000 manuscripts, 3,000 rare books, periodicals, photographs and calligraphic specimens\(^7\). Following a civil war, most materials were sold in book markets, burnt, destroyed or lost. This library served as the National Library of Afghanistan.

4.2 **Bangladesh**

After the independence in 1971, library education has modified and changed\(^8\). There is shortage of trained man power in LIS education\(^9\). In Bangladesh, Special libraries are relatively developed, because many of them have support from international funding. Bangladesh has an active library association established in 1956 with membership of 1350\(^10\).

4.3 **Bhutan**
Library development in Bhutan began effectively in 1969 with establishment of the National Library of Bhutan to collect, preserve the ancient Bhutanese & Tibetan works. Bhutan first public lending library, established in 1978, we merged with Thimphu Public Library in 1980. Shortage of qualified professional staff and lack of funding and the established book trade within the country are the hampering the library development in Bhutan\textsuperscript{11,12}.

4.4 India

In post independence India, LIS education developed by the Dr. S.R. Rangantah’s untiring scholarly efforts\textsuperscript{13}. Major LIS infrastructure was developed during the six last decades. Indian National Bibliography, started in 1958, provide a bibliographic control over the Indian publications. National Documentation centers, such as establishment erstwhile Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC) which has merged with another national institute of and presently known as NISCAr(National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resource). Information System Network such as INFLIBNET (Information & Library Networks)\textsuperscript{14}, ENVIS (Environmental Information System) and different metropolitan area library network such DELNET, CALBNET AND MALIBNET provide library services at different levels.

4.5 Maldives

The first “Maldives National Bibliography” covered all the title published in Maldives during 1990-1995 and acquired by the National Library of Maldives. This is the first step towards development of national bibliography as there is no legal deposit system\textsuperscript{15}. The request of Maldivian Library association, Sri Lanka Library Association has launched a special education programme to promote the library profession in Maldives\textsuperscript{16}.

4.6 Nepal

The Nepal National library (NNL), established in mid 1950s, act as national repository\textsuperscript{17}. Also, to efforts, four public libraries in four regions of the country are designated as branch libraries to provide library services all over the country. The NNL also published ancient text, a national union catalogue and a regular list. However country lack of good collection, trained staff and organized libraries and library infrastructure. Tribhuvan University Central Library (TUCL) is the largest library and professionally organized library which functions as national and academic library.

4.7 Pakistan

Pakistan has a large number of academic, R & D, public and community libraries. Pakistan library Association plays an important role in selecting and developing library software for local needs\textsuperscript{18}. 
Netherlands Library Development Project (NLDP), in association with PLA, has contributed to manpower training, hardware supply, software development, information network, and curriculum development\(^9\). The country has yet to formulate either a national information policy or a national plan with respect to library and information services\(^{20, 21}\).

### 4.8 Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has gained momentum in the field of LIS after independence. Early efforts of Sri Lanka made the Sri Lanaka Library Association, Kelaniya University and the National Library Services Board\(^{22}\). Information Technology (IT) applications are used in libraries for information management. A concept called E-Sri Lanka has been initiated to create an IT environment to bridge the intra-national digital divide\(^{23}\).

### 5. SSARC Documentation Centre (An Overview)

SSARC Documentation Centre, established in the year 1994, is one of the Regional Centre of SAARC\(^{24}\). It acts as an effective information system for the SAARC member states that enables exchange of information in the areas of biological, physical, chemical, engineering and life sciences as well as in developmental matters. SAARC documentation center is under the host of INSDOC.

#### 5.1 Objectives

- To meet the information needs of the scholars in the SAARC region
- To harness the applications of information technology in information management in Member States
- To create Traditional Knowledge Digital Libraries, e-journal Access facility, networking the focal points for SAARC Member States
- To develop the web enabled databases of SDC information and to provide the other information related to its activities, programmes, meetings, events, etc.
- To facilitate in furthering the economic, social, and industrial development of the Member States by providing timely access to relevant and accurate information

SSDC acts as a repository of documents/reports produced in the region and on the region in scientific, technical, economical, industry-related and developmental matters. Publications of the SDC include the Directory of Research and Industrial Institutions in the SAARC Region and Select Bibliography on Alternative Systems of Medicine in the SAARC Region.

One of the objectives of the SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) is to meet the information needs of the scholars in the SAARC region. This objective of the SDC is fulfilled through an array of
information services. The resources for the information services are drawn from the Centre's own resources and also from the well-endowed resources of the SDC’s host institution, NISCAIR. Scholars and students of the SAARC region are invited to avail the following services of the SDC:

a. Literature Search Service  
b. Contents, Abstract & Photocopy Service (CAPS)  
c. Document Copy Supply Service  
d. Consultancy Services in setting up Digital Libraries in member States  
e. Library Services  
f. E-journals Access  
g. Technical Query service

5.2 WEB 2.0

SDC provide following web technology service to communicate it users like (SDC-ON-facebook, SDC Blog, SDC Slide share, RSS Feeds, SDC Tweet, SDC Wikipedia, +Google)

5.3 Publication

Key factor and focus of resource sharing of SDC is its publication which very vital to all the member state. Specially it Directory and Directory of Research, Bibliography publication is the key resource of information member state.

5.3.1 The directory of Training Facilities in the SAARC Region

The SAARC directory of Training Facilities covers list of institutions providing training / education in the field of Library and Information Science in SAARC Region.

The directory of periodicals in the SAARC Region


5.3.2 SAARC Abstracts on Developmental Matters
The main objective of publication is to have effective bibliographic control of literature. Development matters originating from SAARC countries and consolidate this information in database from which will serve as a reference tool for managers, planners and decision makers on one hand and the research workers in institutions and R&D labs on the other hand. The developmental matters covered are:

- Information Technology
- Environmental Science
- Biotechnology
- Energy

5.3.3 Bibliography on Alternative System of Medicine in the SAARC Region

SAARC region has been a treasure house of knowledge on the Alternative Systems of Medicine. Enormous amount of literature is published every year on this topic. In this bibliography an attempt has been made to collate this wealth of information and create a machine-readable database of the available literature on the Alternative Systems of Medicines practiced in the SAARC countries. The information has been collected mostly from articles published in journals but monographs as well as papers presented in conferences, etc. have also been covered.

5.4 Activities

The three major activities of the SAARC Documentation Centre are:

- Organizing and conducting training courses and workshops
- Collection development
- Rendering information services

The Centre on an average organizes two Short Term Training courses, two Attachment Training Programmes and one Workshop every year. While the short term and attachment training courses are conducted at New Delhi, the Workshop is organized by the National Focal Point of a Member State. The focus of the training courses and the workshop is mostly on the application of information technology to library and information activities.

To provide information services to the scholars in the region, the SDC has been steadily building its collection. It also draws on the information resources of its host institution NISCAIR, whenever needed.

5.5 SAARC National Focal Point
In order to effectively implement the programmes of SDC, the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the SDC have been established in each SAARC Member State. The functioning of the SDC-NFP is administered by a Coordinator in each NFP. The NFPs also play an important role in popularizing the activities and functions of SDC in the respective Member States. The SDC-NFP Coordinators meet to ensure effective coordination in implementing the programmes and activities of SDC. SDC-NFP meeting takes place once in a year. This meeting is always organized before the Governing Board Meeting. The main purpose of this meeting is to take review of the activities of NFP Coordinators in the other countries and identify the program of next year.

5.6 Training

Human resource development is an important activity of SDC. It conducts short term and attachment training programmes in information technology applications for library/documentation/information professionals in the Member States. The Centre also offers information services for research scholars in the Member States.

6. Finding

Finding of this paper

   a. Library consortia should be building up among the SAARC member state through SDC.
   b. SDCL branch or regional offices should open all member state
   c. SDCL should be held at least 1 conference by the Headquarter /regional office and at least 2 representatives attend from the member state Library association.
   d. All state Library association will contact to head of the state regarding the Set up of the SDCL regional office rather than National Focal Person (NFP).

7. CONCLUSION

SDC is one of the good information sources of information to the member state as well as all over the world. All the documents of SSARC Committees, subcommittee, all SARRC Summit papers, SAARC Secretariat papers etc are available for researcher, scholars and General Users. which is very not helpful for the LIS researchers also other filed of researchers and scholars. This is time to need acquire/store more data (articles, research paper, online journals etc) regarding SAARC member state to expand this source regionally as well as globally.

REFERENCES


