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Sustainable Development Goals: Initiatives, Execution and Challenges

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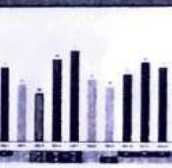

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31	Effectiveness Of Sustainability In Private Sector Banks In Madurai City **Dr. P. Rajmohan, Dr. P. Murugan**	104-107
32	A Study On Role Of E-Commerce In Sustainable Development Of Business **Dr. P. Murugan, Dr. P. Rajmohan**	108-113
33	Bio-Medical Waste Generation and Disposal Practices in Malshiras Tahsil **Dr. N. T. Deshmukh, Dr. C. V. Tate**	114-116
34	Tribal Empowerment and Role of the Forest labour Co-operative Society **Dr. Vitthal Patil**	117-120
35	Sustainable Agriculture Development in India and Issues of Zero Hunger **Dr. Naresh V. Pinamkar**	121-124
36	The Role of ICT in Climate Change **Dr.Bhasker Gangadhar Koshidgewar**	125-127
37	Geographical study of demographic factors in Gadchiroli district - 2001 to 2011 **Dr. Vijay P. Gorde, Prof. Parag S. Meshram**	128-132
38	Sawi Transform and Convolution Theorem for Initial Boundary Value Problem (Wave equation) **D. P. Patil**	133-136
39	Quality Education **Mr. Manoj Kisan Jadhav**	137-139
40	Seven Basics of Human Resource Management **Dr. Maruti Baburao Katkade**	140-141
41	Human Resources Development in Latur Districts: A Geographical Study **Dr. N.K. Waghmare, B. A. Motherao**	142-145
42	Quality Education in Indian Higher Education in Present Senario with special reference to Latur District: A Study **Prof. Bansode Shrawan Baban**	146-150
43	Sustainable Development Goals: Progress and Implementation **Dr. C. S. Kale**	151-152
44	Role of Bar Council of India in Imparting Quality of Legal Education Versus the Management Seats in Private Law Colleges in Andhra Pradesh - Creating a Black Hole in the Quality of Advocates Impacting on Sustainable Development in Legal Profession **Kedara Gouri Avula**	153-155
45	A Geographical Analysis of Sex Disparity of Literacy in Jalgaon District **Dr.Vishal Kadu Wagh, Dr. Mahamad Dastagir Shaikh**	156-158
46	The Use of Environmental Issues in English Literature: A Study in Ecocritical Perspectives **Prof. Bansode Namdeo Changdeo**	159-161
47	Fair Value Accounting **Dr. S. R. Pagare**	162-164
48	Ground Water Quality in Osmanabad City (MS) **Dr. Nandkumar S. Magar**	165-166
49	COVID -19 Pandemic: It's Effect on Academic Library Services **Anant Marotrao Thorat, Dr. Vilas P. Ubhad**	167-169
50	Bank Branch Expansion in India **Mr. B. C. Rathod**	170-172
51	Sustainable Development Goals: An Overview ***Dr. S. R. Dhembre***	173-175
52	A Study Of Increasing Obesity Among High School Age Children In Nagpur City During A Pandemic **Dr Seema Atul Pande**	176-177
53	Our Immune System A Great Protector: Role Of Nutrients In The Immune System In Battle Against Covid-19 **Sanjeev M. Reddy**	178-180
54	Comparative study of Rainfall Distribution of Monsoon 2019 and 2020 in Maharashtra ***Dr. R. B. Gavkare***	181-183
55	Poverty Ratio and Poverty Alleviation Programme in India **Dr. B.V. Halmandge**	184-187
56	Challenges for Small scale Industries Sustainability in India for the period of Covid-19 **Dr. Arti C. Lokhande**	188-190
57	The Role of Chemistry in Energy and Sustainable Development of India **Wadje Bapusaheb Shivajirao**	191-193
58	Higher Education in India: Issues and Opportunities **Prof. Mr. Koturwar P. P.**	194-196

COVID -19 Pandemic: It's Effect on Academic Library Services

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Abstract

In this paper the researcher focus on 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.

Keyword: *COVID -19, Online services, e resources, pandemic,Ask the Librarian,*

Introduction

In India, the first case of corona virus was reported on January 27, 2020 in Kerala.. Subsequently, cases of COVID-19 appeared all over the country. Consequently, all academic institutions and libraries were closed from March 17, 2020 and after 22nd March 2020 Indian Prime minister declare National Lockdown (Janta Curfew) The students were banned from entry in the educational institutions and they were vacated from hostels. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed virtually every aspect of our lives almost overnight. There is an uncertainty, and no one knows how long the COVID-19 crisis will last. Therefore, the educational institutions have started online engagements such as classes and assignments for students. The UGC asked the universities and institutions of higher education to outline a plan of online teaching and online interaction as soon as possible to avoid risk of losing an academic year. UGC has assisted the universities in arranging software for online classes, the internet connection packages, curation of online materials, training of faculty members, building a data repository, providing guidance on quality enhancement, and setting up and adapting monitoring and evaluation systems. In terms of online classes, UGC and universities has issued guidelines for online readiness and identified eight factors such as university's management system, the course itself, the faculty members, the library or resource bank, the technological infrastructure, the readiness of the students, the evaluation system and the laboratory system. one of the worst hit countries and the educational institutions are still closed. In response to the nation wide lockdown during March and April 2020,the school education sector was quick enough to shift its whole affair to online platform than the higher education sector in India(Wadia,2020).Perhaps the timing and duration of the initial decision to close educational institutions in India is one of the reasons behind this. As per the academic calendar in most of the higher education institutions class room teaching was almost over and examinations were about to start. However considering the rapidly evolving situation of the pandemic, the apex body of the higher education system of India, the University Grants Commission(UGC),decided to cancel all the examinations except the terminal semester/final years and directed to complete it by end of September 2020(University Grants Commission, 2020).But the sudden developments of lockdown and shutdown for almost six months have forced dislocation of many students leaving them with lack of course materials to prepare for the examinations. This situation challenged the ways academic libraries used to function. The suspension of in-person services and loss of access to physical collections at the institutions' libraries has left the students, faculty and library professionals with consideration of adopting the technology which is the only way out to resilience the challenging time. In fact library professionals have demonstrated their skills, empathy and flexibility during lockdown to respond to the rapidly evolving situation. And in such circumstances the website is an essential and dynamic platform to connect and serve the targeted users. But technology cannot do this alone.In this unique and urgent situation the role of library professionals especially of premier technological institutions is very crucial to make their users aware about the facilities and services provided by them. The LIS professional responded to the COVID-19 crisis and started planning to support online education and to get connected with faculty members and students. However, public libraries in India lack resources, facilities and information and communication technologies to operate in the prevailing situation.

Key findings for libraries during/After Covid 19 Pandemic

- The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced and accelerated trends in library investments toward digital resources and services.