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Information Needs and Usage Pattern in Maritime Industry - Considerations & Need for Setting up a National Documentation Centre for Maritime Information

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Abstract:

In any field of study, R & D requires information and information resources and services, through which National development is directly affected. Keeping in view the maritime information needs of our country by government establishments, the industry and the corporate sector an attempt has been made in this paper to show the need for setting up of a “National Documentation Centre for Maritime Information”. The model design of NDCMI and its possible services have been sketched out for further review and suggestions from its stakeholders.

Keywords: *Information system, documentation centre, maritime information*

1. Introduction

NDC is to be regarded as an institution whose tasks and services cover the whole country. The documentation and information activities of an NDC should normally comprise all branches of science and the economy, or at least a selected number of important areas according to the national priorities. A developing country should aim at establishing a central NDC in the first place, in order to capitalize on the possibilities of rationalization, thus ensuring a high degree of efficiency from the very start. This entails central guidance, co-ordination and supervision of the development and operation of the entire national documentation system. Central activities of documentation and information are to control the flow of information and to meet the information requirements of certain users or groups of users at various levels of government, science and the economy. (FID/ DC, UNESCO 1975)

Documentation/Information centres provide access to the specialist users the current literature and nascent information to support their research activity. In India, we have documentation/Information centres in the subject areas of science, defence, small industries, rural development, etc. Documentation/Information centres have been established in such organisations to support R&D activities. These national centres are mission-oriented and are responsible for organising and providing information activities and services at the national level.

NDCMI should be setup in cooperation with other Information/ Documentation Centres in India like NICMAS (National Information Centre for Marine Sciences), NISCAIR (INSDOC), DESIDOC OR SENDOC, for providing a full range of documentation services to the existing and projected National Maritime Institutes, R & D Organisation, Universities, Maritime Industries etc.

A National Information centre is established on a subject/ sector or a mission. They provide bibliographic as well as factual and numeric information to meet the various information needs of Academicians, Scientist, Technologists, Entrepreneurs, Management Executives and Decision Makers. These centres are usually built around the exiting information resources and facilities. They maintain extensive collections of published and unpublished documents in the form of books, periodicals, R & D reports, Technical reports, standards, patents and trade literature in their subject areas and on different electronic media. Besides providing documents and preparing bibliographies on request, with the help of well-equipped modern information technologies. They offer special services like Selective Dissemination of Information, Current Awareness Service, Reprographic & Micrographic services, industrial and technical enquiry service, technical translation and similar services. The centres bring out serial publications of digests, indexing and abstracting materials and news highlighters, apart from publishing these in print form, the information is more often computerized.

2. Information Need

The continuing increase in scientific knowledge, the growing differentiation and specialization, the consequent rise in scientific output, and increasingly obvious interrelationship between the various fields of maritime, call for a constant search for and application of new methods of documentation and information.

The information needs are varied from a data on cargo movement in a particular port to energy consumption in shipyards. Productivity in Indian shipbuilding industry like information on different types of vessels built by various shipyards and their details. Information on Equipment Manufacturers. Data on Dredgers and dredging, Design details of ships. Design codes, Rules and Regulations of Classification societies etc.

At present an information seeker has to search and locate for information from various sources and websites and the data authenticity is of utmost concern. Hence to provide all information from one window or one gateway from a National Information centre such as this NDCMI would help researchers and information seekers in getting authenticated data.

3. What We Have

1. NICMAS- National Information centre for Marine Sciences (NIO, Goa)
2. Maritime Universities, Maritime Teaching & Training Institutes, Ship Yards, Ports, Maritime Boards, Mercantile Marine Department, Classification Societies, Ship design offices, Shipbuilding co.,

4. What We Don't Have

A National level Documentation/ Information centre at National level and Regional centres at regional / State level.

Maritime databanks with cumulative information on Indian based Shipowners, Shipbroker, Marine equipment, shipbuilders & repairers, ship chandlers, port agents, maritime lawyer, consultants & surveyors, Port operators, towage & salvage, Charterers, Maritime schools, Bunkers, ship breakers, classification societies, maritime organisations, marine insurance, engine builder, stevedore, port towage, pilotage authority, civilian authority etc.,

5. Set-Up And Structure of NDC

A working group of experts with a scientific background (librarians, documentation specialists, and scientists from other fields of knowledge of documentation and information) should first of all be set up to establish an NDC. Once the working group is formed for the above purpose, as well as to solve problems of gathering and processing information, either the working group can be set up inside an existing facility or establishment of an NDC be started directly with the formation of the working group (which would then be the basis and a future part of the NDC).

The second and third possibilities would require certain necessary funds, premises, and office and information equipment. (see Figure 1 : Organisation Flow Chart)

6. Mission of NDCMI

Its mission is to become the prime custodian of all information resources on current and traditional knowledge systems in Maritime related fields in the country, and to promote communication in these subjects to diverse constituents at all levels, using the most appropriate technologies.

7. Mandate

1. To provide formal linkages of communication among the Maritime Fraternity in the form of research journals in different Maritime related areas.
2. To collect, collate and disseminate information on Maritime Education, Industry, Infrastructure in India
3. To harness information technology applications in information management with particular reference to Maritime communication and modernizing libraries
4. To act as a facilitator in furthering the economic, social, industrial, scientific and commercial development by providing timely access to relevant and accurate information
5. To develop human resources in Maritime, library, documentation and information science and Maritime information management systems and services
6. To collaborate with international institutions and organizations having objectives and goals similar to those of NDCMI
7. Any other activity in consonance with the mission statement of NDCMI

8. Functions

The functions of NDC should comprise the following:

1. Information supply
2. Research & Development in documentation and information
3. Guidance, Planning, co-ordination and supervision of the national documentation and information system
4. Training
5. International co-operation
6. A specialised library

7. Cater to the latest Information Technology needs of the marine industry provide Software solutions and support to ship design firms, shipping and other industries

9. International Collaboration

NDCMI should give great importance to mutual co-operation amongst various Marine & Maritime related institutions in different countries and continuously work for its development.

10. Information Resources

10.1. A Specialised Library

National Maritime Library:

NDCMI will serve as a single window in the country for providing all kinds of Marine & Maritime related information. Its role as the national information resource is fulfilled through the National Maritime Library (NML) that should have a comprehensive collection of M&M publications in the country and offering services on a national scale.

The membership of the NML should be open to public and all are welcome to explore and utilize the collection in library premises. Reader's service, Technical query service, copying service, Inter Library loan and e-journal access are some of its major services.

10.2. Electronic Resources

Automated libraries are slowly shifting to Electronic Libraries that will eventually lead to the establishment of Digital Libraries. With decreasing shelf space and ever growing collections in the Libraries, NDC/ NML will be an automated information centre/ library.

In view of this, NDCMI should procure and provide access to:

- International Online Database,
- CD-ROM databases
- International Online Journals

10.3. In-House Databases

Computerized databases help in organization of data and its efficient retrieval. To take the advantage of this, NDCMI can develop expertise in the design and development of databases on Indian based Shipowners, Shipbroker, Marine equipment, shipbuilders & repairers, ship chandlers, port agents, maritime lawyer, consultants & surveyors, Port operators, towage & salvage, Charterers, Maritime schools, Bunkers, ship breakers, classification societies, maritime organisations, marine insurance, engine builder, stevedore, port towage, pilotage authority, civilian authority etc.,

11. Services

Some of the significant services could be:

- E-Publishing
- Print & Production
- Contents, Abstracts & Photocopy service (CAPS)
- Document Supply Service
- Literature Search service
- Translation Services
- Training Programmes
- Bibliometric service
- Consultancy service
- Book Exhibitions etc.

12. Products

Important products could be:

- Information Newsletters
- House Bulletins
- Directories
- Special lists
- State-of-the Art Reports
- Trend Reports
- Technical Digests

13. Database of Intra-Mural R & D Projects

- A database of intramural R&D projects can be developed by NDCMI. The database, provides information on R&D projects in Marine institutions/ Industry of central and state government, private and public sector undertakings and academic institutions covering disciplines ranging from Marine, Offshore, and shipping industry.
- The updated database will be extremely useful to organisations and individuals for identifying areas of research and subject specialists and will help in optimal utilisation of government funds.
- The data about the new/ongoing/completed research projects can be collected through questionnaires which can be downloaded and filled in questionnaires can be sent either through e-mail or by post to NDCMI

14. Budget for the System

- Initial Infrastructure and set up to be fully funded by Central Government
- Membership fee must
- Fee for various services
- Through sale of various publications and products

15. Conclusion

“Developing a National Documentation Centre” is a complex and time-consuming effort and assistance from International Organisations and experts from the field should be sought in setting up of such a system.

16. References

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Annexure

Meaning and Definitions of the terms ‘Documentation’ and ‘Information’

- The term ‘documentation’ was originally derived from the word ‘document’. Meaning – a material object containing fixed information for dissemination in space and time and for use in social practice. Several documents related to each other by their contents are often referred to as ‘documentation’, scientific documentation, technical documentation etc.
- The term ‘information’ can be regarded as the objective contents of the connexion between interrelated material objects. Meaning- intelligence or knowledge communicated, and the communication of intelligence or knowledge.

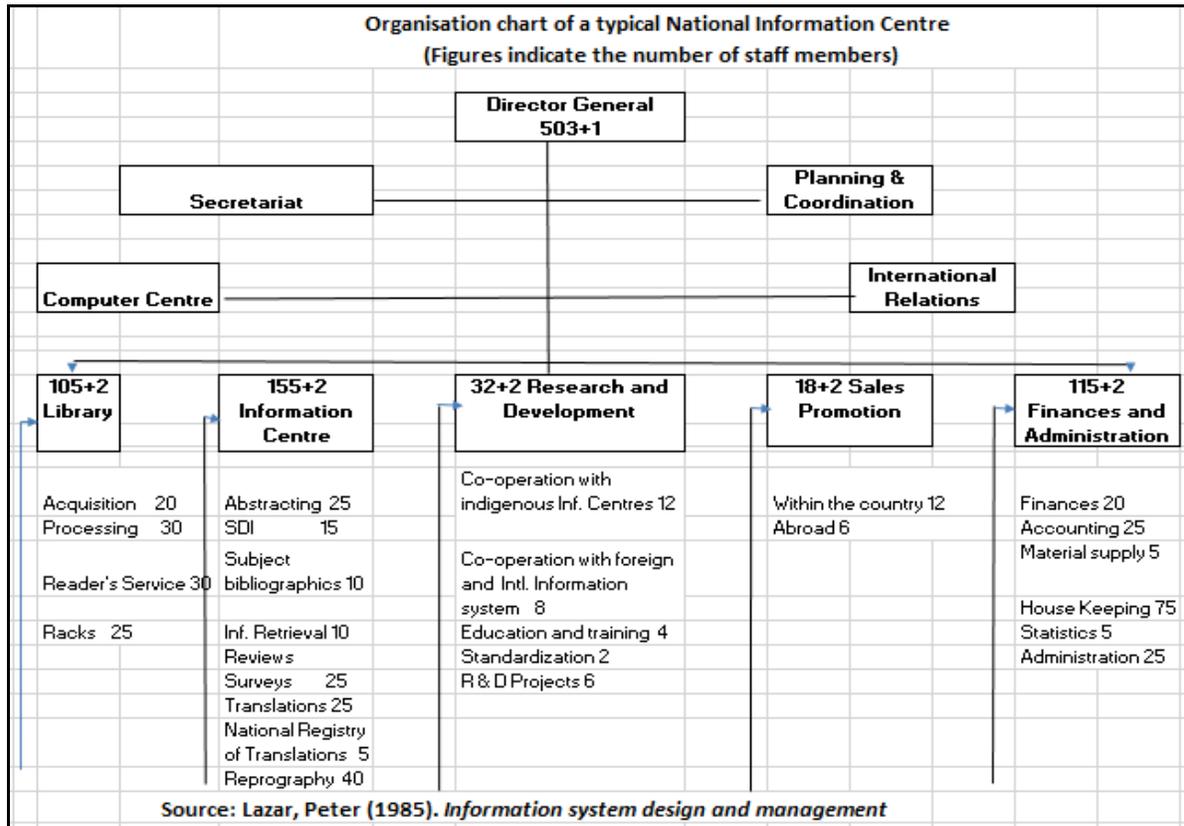


Figure 1: Organisation Flow Chart