



SEKITAR PERPUSTAKAAN

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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MALAYSIA: THE WAY FORWARD**

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DIGITAL UNION CATALOGUE OF MALAY MANUSCRIPTS AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MALAYSIA: THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

As an inherited legacy from the past generations, Malay manuscript represents an important storehouse of the Malay people in terms of their culture, thought, values and history. Thus, it is nationally recognized as the documentary heritage of the nation worthy to be officially collected, documented, disseminated and protected from extinction. Yet, challenges abound in tracing and building a comprehensive database of the Malay manuscript due to its scattered existence in private hands apart from the documented public collections. On the other hand, there is also an urgent need to study and transliterate the old Jawi script used in the Malay manuscript to make it more accessible to the contemporary audience. At present, the National Library of Malaysia (NLM), as an officially entrusted custodian of the Malay manuscript at the national level, holds almost 5,000 copies of the original Malay manuscripts. In this regard, it is amongst the major institutions that hold Malay manuscript worldwide and is actively acquiring and developing its collections. Preservation measures undertaken at NLM include restoration of damaged manuscripts, microfilm, and digitization including disaster preparedness and recovery programme through physical and electronic means. In this paper, the main focus is on the latest digital union catalogue of Malay manuscript initiative undertaken by NLM. Specifically, it discusses the salient characteristics and features of the new digital gateway in terms of its content, structure, accessibility and functionality amidst similar existing initiatives at the regional and international levels. Finally, it is envisaged that NLM, through this digital initiative, can effectively boost its role as an important source of information and research on Malay manuscript in the dawn of the big data era.

Keywords: Malay manuscript, documentary heritage, preservation, digitization

Introduction

Malay manuscripts are a priceless heritage of knowledge that has come to us from the distant past. What were meant by “Malay manuscripts” is written works, especially those written in Jawi script and produced as early as the late 15th century or around the 16th century and as late as the early 20th century.

In the beginning, the surface of rocks and chisels were used as tools for writing. Bricks and dry mud, as well as minerals such as iron and copper, were also used. Soon the Malays, by their own effort and insight, used tree bark to make their own paper, which they called daluang (*Broussonetia papyrifera*). Although the daluang lasted longer, the process of making it was a bit complicated. Hence its use was limited. Apart from the daluang, the Malays also used lontar leaf (*Borassus flabellifera*), pieces of bamboo, planks, parchment and cloth. Each required different way of writing. In terms of content, not much was written on the lontar leaf and bamboo, and only contents that were important and needed to be kept for a long time, such as genealogies, customs and prohibitions, were written on parchment and cloth. However, manuscripts written on these materials were not popular since they were not part of the Malay art of writing. The Malays found out about a paper from Chinese traders and sailors in the 7th century, but supply of the paper for the use of writing was difficult to find at that time. The arrival of Chinese and Arabic oriental paper was like a gift from God for Malay philosophers. When the westerns came to the Malay Archipelago in the 17th century, they enabled manuscripts writers from the archipelago to use paper from Europe. Most of the paper used was imported from England, Holland, Italy, France China and Arab countries.¹

Background

The National Centre for Malay Manuscripts (hereinafter shall refer to the Centre) is the sole custodian of the national heritage for Malay manuscripts. Most Malay handwritten manuscripts are scattered not only in Malaysia but almost all over the world. Albeit the difficulty in acquiring our earliest written heritage, the Centre is pursuing the long-winded trails through hardship and constraints. To compete against commercial suppliers is not easy as the Centre, like any other governmental branch, has its limits thus many a time, our handwritten heritage lost to rich buyers at auction houses. Handwritten manuscripts are not like printed books that are printed in larger amount but they are written by a selected number of scribe's that needed time to write. Thus books can be printed in thousands within minutes but scribing one manuscript took years. For religious writings and edicts, the manuscript could only be written when a teacher had completed his lecture, probably a few years. Most early writings were on parchment scrolls, as can be found during Han Dynasty (207 BC – 220 AD) and the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Valley of Qumran.²

1 Siti Mariani S.M. Omar, *Malay Manuscripts: An Introduction* (Kuala Lumpur: The Legacy of Malay Manuscripts, 2012).

2 The scrolls were claimed to be written around 8 BC but later when tested against carbon dating, it was found to be around 33 AD but only on selected scrolls. See: Georges Bonani, et al. “Radiocarbon Dating of Fourteen Dead Sea Scrolls.” *Radiocarbon* 34.3 (1992): 843-849. Cf. Andrew Lawler, “Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?” *Smithsonian* (2010).

When the Malays could write, remains a theoretical assumption as historians, philologists, etymologists and anthropologists are still on the drawing board though the earliest could be the hand-chiselled stone inscription of the famous Terengganu Stone which was purportedly etched in 1303.³ Both lithograph and petrograph were common in the old days and even today, some information are written on stone tablets such as the *History of the Camel Spring* in Xunhua Salar Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province of China.

There are two types of conservation to be dealt upon, the preventive (or preservative) conservation and curative (remedial) conservation for restoration. The first is for the method to avoid the deterioration of library materials while the latter the direct treatment for the materials that have suffered damage or deterioration of papers. The Conservation and Preservation Division of the National Library of Malaysia deals in both methods of conservation, particularly the curative approach through its remedial restoration.

Handwritten manuscripts are no longer leaf-casted as the process may damage the fibres of the fragile laid papers. As most restaurateurs and conservators may understand, in leaf-casting papers would be immersed in the water and this would definitely make the paper physically be swollen and later forced to dry. How tedious and delicate the process may be, the Division would try its best to restore to its original image through minimal repair or other traditional approaches to retain its rarity. To a restaurateur, it is a heart-breaking to see a paper that can be repaired and restored to undergo a tissue lamination where the end product would definitely become alien. This is what happened to our invaluable *Hikayat Hang Tuah* where all pages were silk laminated thus lost its original image and paper texture. Though the process is reversible however it would take years to restore.

Deacidification

Due to both internal and external factors, the paper often becomes acidic. Acid causes deterioration and damage to the paper and may end its life. Most of the handwritten manuscripts acquired by the National Centre for the Malay Manuscripts, National Library of Malaysia are acidic and some of them are even worse, brittle and fragile. As these manuscripts are priceless and rare, the initial purpose is to restore and preserve both its textual contents as well as its physical beings. Thus in the process of curating the manuscripts, they have to undergo the process of deacidification.

The deacidification is a process to de-acidify papers from its acidity, to increase its pH from its acidity form to 8.5 or 9.0, in other words, it is a process to remove acid from the manuscripts. With the presence of acid, papers can be brittle, fragile and easily be broken into small pieces. The deacidification is to neutralise the acid so that the papers can be stronger and last longer. Though most of the deacidification does not strengthen the paper at least it removes the acid from the paper thus the future damage of the paper can be minimised.

3 Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Correct Date of the Terengganu Inscription: Friday 4th Rejab, 702 AH* (Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Negara, 1984).

There are three main techniques of deacidification, i) wet technique or aqueous deacidification, ii) dry technique or non-aqueous deacidification, and iii) vapour or gas technique. Not many conservators are using the gas technique except those doing the mass deacidification, such as the Library of Congress but then it includes new books as well. Like the British Library and the National Library of Republic of Indonesia, the National Library of Malaysia uses the non-aqueous technique. Mass deacidification not only confined to vapour method of the deacidification as being carried out by the Public Archives of Canada in its test-pilot project, but also to the other two, both aqueous and non-aqueous as long as there is enough space or area to place the materials for the deacidification.⁴

In non-aqueous deacidification, there are various types of chemicals involved such as barium acetate $\text{Ba}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2$, barium hydroxide $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2$, calcium acetate $\text{Ca}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2$, magnesium acetate $\text{Mg}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2$, magnesium methoxide $\text{C}_2\text{H}_6\text{MgO}_2$, and methyl magnesium carbonate MeMgCO_3 . The Conservation and Preservation Division of the National Library of Malaysia uses barium hydroxide $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2$ and methanol CH_3OH for its dry deacidification as barium hydroxide is known as the least chemical that causes damage to the structure and fibre of the paper. Unfortunately it may cause skin, eyes and nasal irritations while its toxicity may cause bleeding, vomiting and damage to the kidneys as mentioned by Green and Leese in their paper, "Nonaqueous Deacidification of Paper with Methyl Magnesium Carbonate."⁵

First a conservator needs to identify the acidity of the paper by using pH test through litmus paper or any other test for acidity. A simple test would be by using any pH pen or pencil that is available in market such as Abbey pH pen and pH colour table. A conservator needs to draw a simple line onto the page of the paper using the pen and let it dry. This simple test will show if yellow colour means it is acidic while purple colour means is neutral or alkaline.

Identifying acidity not only for papers but also on its writing as in many instances, the using of pigmented ink may damage the paper. Ink with high acidity may hinder the curating of the manuscript as it may diminish the ink thus no longer can be read or utilised. The acidity in the ink, especially if the ink is made from plant or fruit(s), would damage the paper sometimes leaves an impression like a burnt paper. Many a time, a conservator would advise to conserve the paper by tissue lamination as the ink has already damaged the paper. Again as in the case of Hikayat Hang Tuah, the Division at that time decided to laminate those pages with silk lamination to deter them from further deterioration and damage although it should done for selected number of pages. Determining the type of deacidification method is also important, whether aqueous or non-aqueous by prioritizing.

The dry deacidification process is by using 20gm of barium hydroxide $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2$ mixed with one litre of methanol will be mixed thoroughly and applied to the paper evenly and later to be dried in room temperature.

4 Peter G. Sparks, *Technical considerations in choosing mass deacidification processes* (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Preservation and Access, 1990).

5 Comparatively, 18-20gm of barium hydroxide is added to a litre of methanol while only 2gm of magnesium carbonate is needed to a litre of methanol. Thus methyl magnesium carbonate is an alternative to barium hydroxide where the former is being practised by the Library of Congress. See: Frazer G. Poole, "Current Lamination Policies of the Library of Congress" *The American Archivist*, 39.2 (Apr 1976): 157-159. Although barium hydroxide causes concern on health safety but care for the texture and fibre of the paper is also taken into consideration by many conservators and chemists. Barium hydroxide becomes carbonate after its exposure to the air, i.e. $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 + \text{CH}_3\text{OH} \rightarrow \text{BaCO}_3$.

The Post Treatment of Manuscripts

After the manuscripts are treated and restored to its nearest original version or whatever that could be conserved, then they will be sent to the National Centre. There are of course other requirements and guidelines to be followed for its preservation such as temperature between 18°C-20°C with relative humidity between 45-55% and should not be above 65% as it expedite chemical reactions. High relative humidity and combined with high temperature would provide moisture that encourages growth of mold and insect activity. Tropical climate like Malaysia does not have extreme low temperature that may desiccate and embrittle the manuscripts, but proper air-conditioner is needed to regulate the temperature.

Although experts differ in determining the correct temperature and relative humidity but they provide the perfect range for both libraries and archives to adhere. The climate-control system should never be turned off or lowered setting at night or on weekends because once the invaluable materials damaged, the cost of treatment is higher including the loss of intellectual national heritage. Instead of acquiring thermo hygrograph as the present practice by the Division, it would be advisable to use portable low-cost data logger that measures temperature, relative humidity and even dew point, simultaneously. While thermohygrograph uses paper and plotter to record temperature and relative humidity, data logger uses electronic sensors and a computer chip to record temperature and RH at intervals determined by the user. Battery operated thermohygrograph uses data from paper charts and must be plotted in a graph and strung together manually for weekly, monthly or annual analyses, the digital data logger also battery operated that can be moved easily from one place to another, with a single monitor. In many instances, the plotter in the thermohygrograph always the culprit as it sometimes fails to print.



Before treatment



After treatment

Digital Preservation

The digital world transforms the concept of traditional preservation than protecting the physical integrity of the object to determine the creation and maintenance of objects whose intellectual integrity is its main feature.⁶ At present, Malay manuscripts are not only preserved through traditional methods, new trends show that digitization projects for invaluable heritage are among the best initiatives to preserve the physical structure of the average manuscripts that are fragile and decayed.

NLM started the Malay manuscript digitization project from 2000. However, the pilot project only managed to digitize 500 copies of selected Malay manuscripts. Financial constraints to be the main factor of the project can't be implemented comprehensively. However, NLM continues to process the manuscript digitally internally for preservation and reference although it can only be done in small quantities because of the burden of the officer's tasks. NLM has, therefore, worked in various ways and endeavors to digitize all Malay manuscripts of almost five thousand copies in the collection. This endeavor is worthwhile when the government begins to pay attention and finally agrees to allocate budget for digitization of all remaining copies through the 11th Malaysia Plan.

Digital Union Catalogue of Malay Manuscripts

The Digital Union Catalogue of Malay Manuscript is a resource sharing service hosted and coordinated by the NLM for libraries, researchers and the public. It provides access to comprehensive information on Malay manuscripts not only in Malaysia but involves Malay manuscript repositories worldwide. This Union Catalogue contains bibliographic descriptions, locations and holdings information and covers Malay manuscripts in various fields. Among the areas in the Malay manuscripts are history, culture, language, legal, medical, hikayat, beliefs and charms, technology, architecture, cosmology and many more.

⁶ This quote is based on the presentation paper "Preservation of the National Treasures: Malay Manuscripts," the Hidden Treasure", (Seminar Kepustakawanan, 2011).

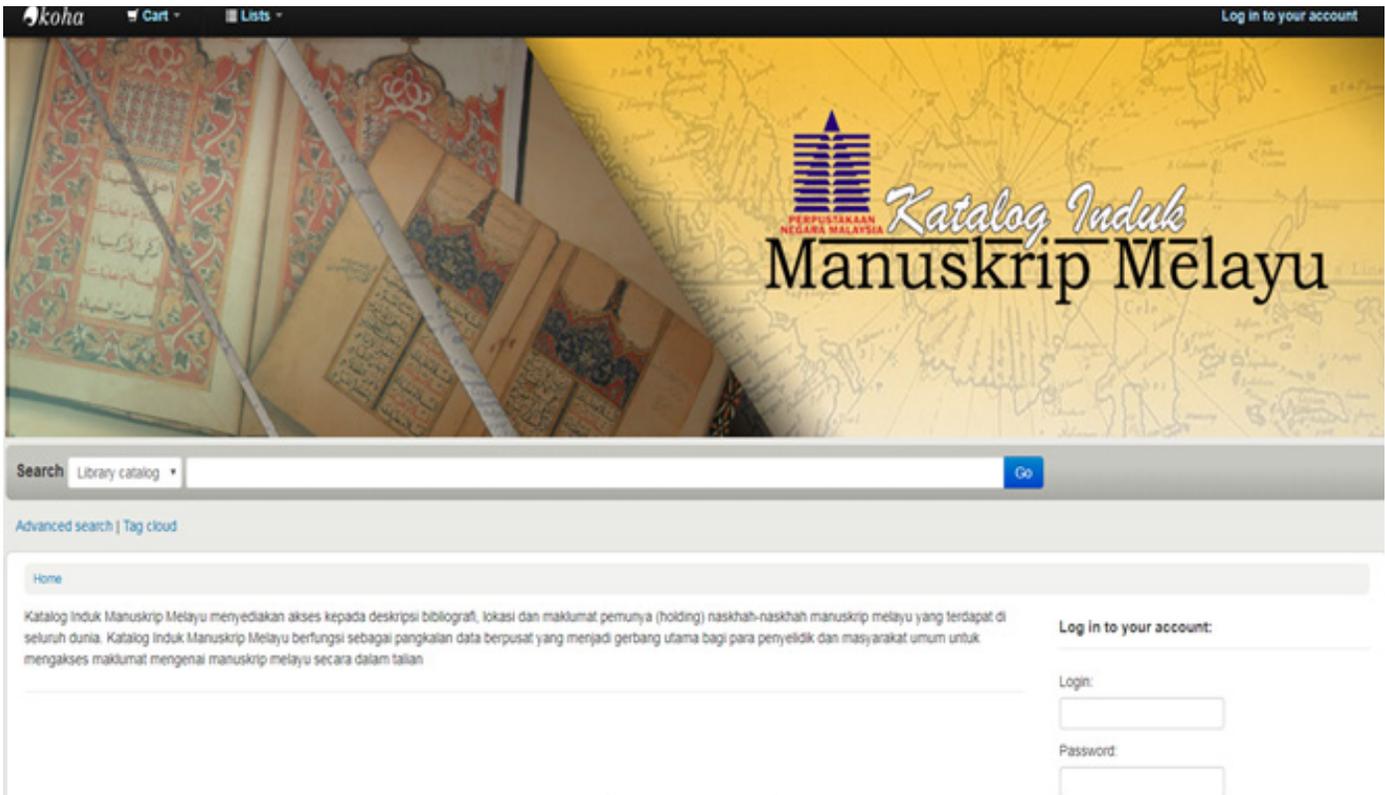


Figure 1. Digital Union Catalogue of Malay Manuscripts

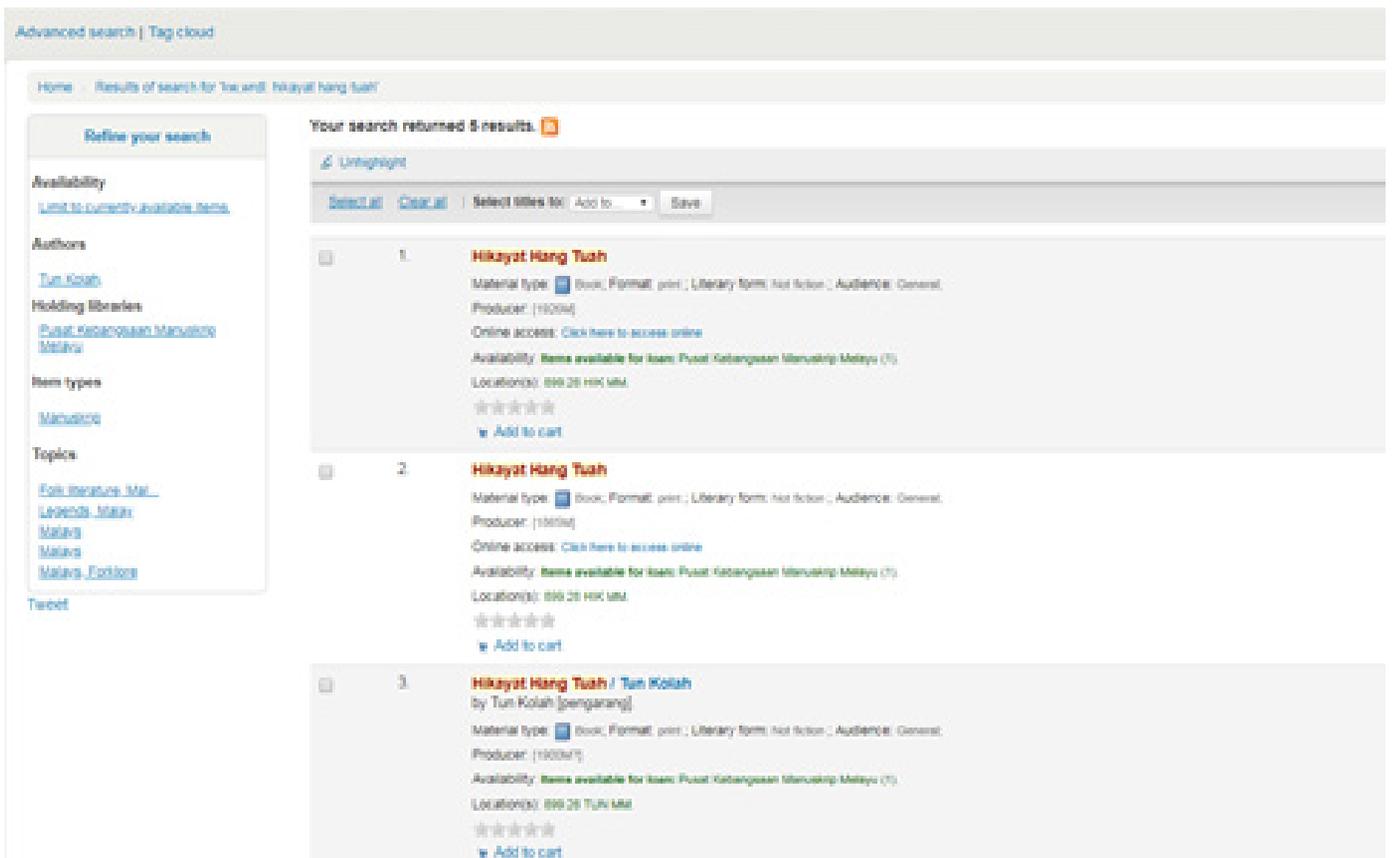


Figure 2: Bibliographic description

Search Library catalog

Advanced search | Tag cloud

Home Details for Hikayat Hang Tuah

No cover image available

Hikayat Hang Tuah

Material type:

Producer: [blank]

Description: 162 muka surat-buku beromboh - Iluminasi, 30 cm.

Content type: text Media type: unmediated Carrier type: volume

Subject(s): Folk literature, Malay | Legends, Malay | Malaya -- Folklore

DDC classification:

Online resources: [Click here to access online](#)

Summary: *Hikayat* ini mengisahkan mengenai pahlawan Melayu, *Hang Tuah* dan peristiwa-peristiwa yang berlaku dari pertengahan abad ke-14 sehingga Belanda menawan Melaka pada tahun 1614.

Tags from the library: No tags from the library for this title. [% Log in to add tags](#)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ average rating: 5.0 (0 votes)

Holdings (1)

Item type	Current location	Call number	Copy number	Status
 Manuskrip	Pusat Kebangsaan Manuskrip Melayu	899.28 HK 16M	1	Available

Figure 3 : Holding information

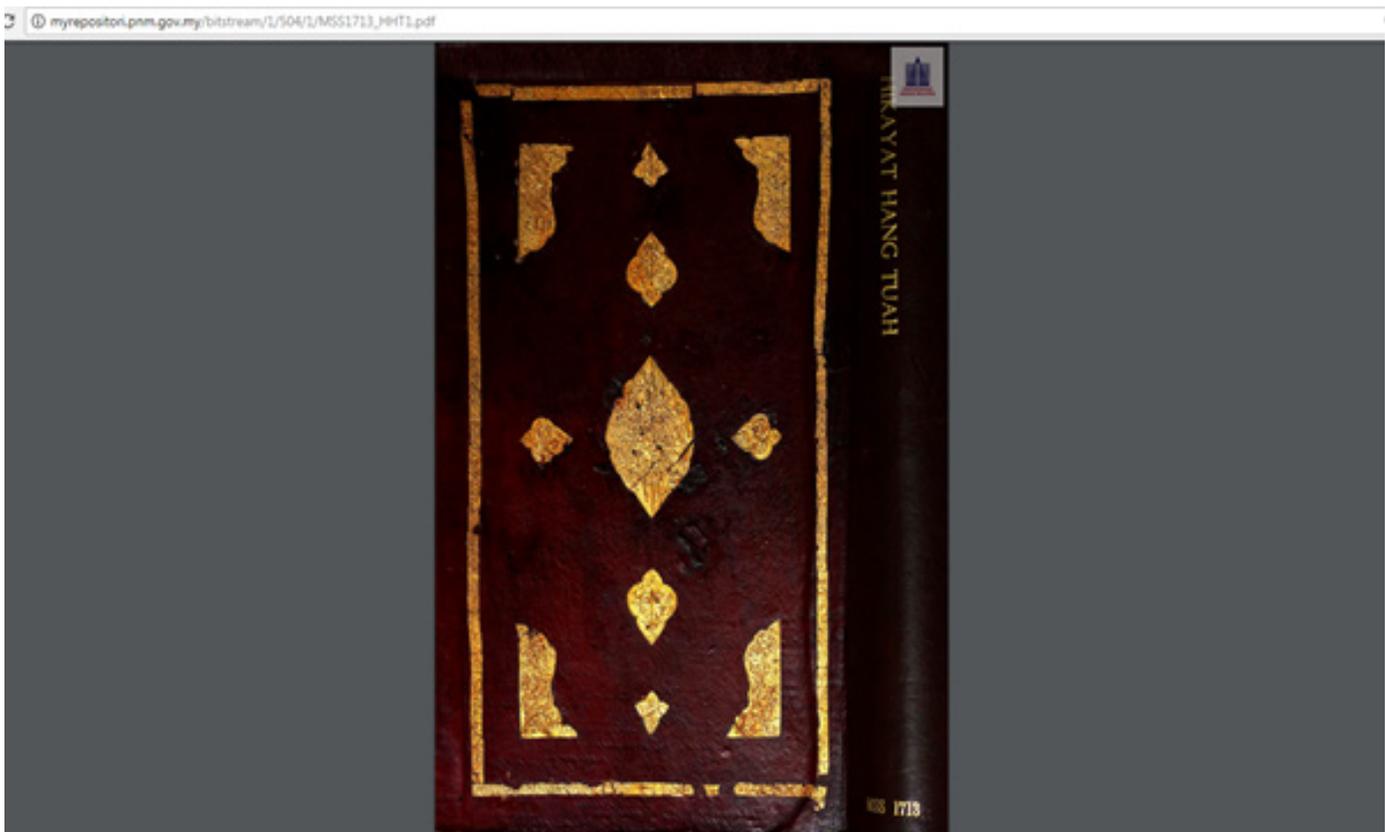


Figure 4 : Hikayat Hang Tuah



Conclusion

Manuscripts should be preserved to prolong their life span so that over the centuries they remain as the national heritage which reflects the rich civilisation of the Malays besides their intellectual capabilities.

Generally, Malay manuscripts found are in poor condition. Very seldom are they in their complete original form. Many factors contribute to their deterioration. Realisation that manuscripts can deteriorate quickly is not enough. If the problem of preservation is not addressed immediately, we may lose our documentary heritage. NLM is very much aware of the need to preserve the manuscripts. Besides doing preservation works whether traditional or digital methods, NLM also embarks on efforts to inculcate the need to care for and treasure any old, valuable items or artifacts. Besides that, NLM also provides microfilmed and digital copy of a manuscript to be used for reference within and outside the country.

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PEMBANGUNAN PERPUSTAKAAN DESA DI MALAYSIA 2005 – 2017: PENGALAMAN PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Abstrak

Kertas ini bertujuan untuk memberi gambaran menyeluruh mengenai perkembangan perpustakaan desa di Malaysia, mengkaji pembangunan perpustakaan pada masa lalu, kini dan pada masa hadapan terhadap komuniti luar bandar sejak tahun 2005 dengan menggambarkan kesan dasar awam yang berkaitan. Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia merupakan agensi utama dalam merancang dan membangunkan rangkaian perpustakaan awam di Malaysia. Kertas ini juga menyorot strategi yang dilaksanakan sejak peringkat awal pembangunan perpustakaan desa di negara ini. Pelajaran yang diperoleh dari pengalaman masa lalu adalah kunci untuk menentukan jalan untuk rancangan masa hadapan. Isu dalam membangun dan mengurus perpustakaan desa termasuk belanjawan operasi yang mapan, kakitangan, prosedur operasi standard, pembangunankoleksi, perkhidmatan perpustakaan, aktiviti membacadan perkongsian pintar dengan badan-badan yang berkaitan. Untuk memberikan nilai tambah kepada perkhidmatan perpustakaan, beberapa inisiatif telah diperkenalkan bertujuan untuk mengubah dan menjenamakan semula persediaan fizikal dan konsep perpustakaan desa. Model seni bina baharu untuk bangunan serta struktur fizikal juga diperkenalkan untuk memberikan pandangan yang menarik kepada pengguna.

Kata Kunci: Perpustakaan Desa; Pembangunan Perpustakaan; Malaysia, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the rural library development in Malaysia, examining the past, present and future of public library in rural communities since 2005 by illustrating the impact of related public policy. The National Library of Malaysia is the leading agency in planning and developing networks of public libraries in Malaysia. This paper highlights the strategies undertaken since the early stages of rural libraries development in the country. Lessons learnt from past experiences are key to determining the path for future plans. The issues in developing and managing rural libraries includes provision of sustainable operational budget, staffing, standard operating procedures, collection development, library services, reading activities and also smart partnership with relevant bodies. In order to deliver more meaningful services, some initiatives were introduced for the purpose of transforming and rebranding the physical and conceptual setup of the rural library. New model of architecture for the new physical building and structure was also introduced to give a new outlook that blends functionalities and new attractions to users.

Keywords: Rural Libraries, Library Development, Malaysia, National Library of Malaysia

Definisi

Perpustakaan Desa (PD) merupakan sebuah perpustakaan yang ditubuhkan di kampung atau di penempatan kecil dengan populasi penduduk kurang dari 10,000 orang, yang tinggal secara berkelompok, sejajar atau bertaburan seperti di FELDA, FELCRA, penempatan orang Asli, estet dan kampung baharu (PNM, 2010).

Latar belakang

Penubuhan serta pembangunan PD di seluruh negara bermula sejak Rancangan Malaysia Ke-6 (1991-1995) lagi. Sehingga tahun 2015, 614 buah PD telah dibina menggunakan Peruntukan Pembangunan di bawah Rancangan Malaysia (RMK) serta di urus tadbir oleh Perpustakaan Awam Negeri (PAN).

Pada tahun 2005, atas inisiatif YAB Perdana Menteri yang pada ketika itu Tun Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi telah mencadangkan agar pusat-pusat maklumat di kawasan luar bandar bagi memberi kemudahan akses kepada maklumat penduduk setempat selain menggalakkan dasar pembelajaran sepanjang hayat dibangunkan. Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM) telah diberi tanggungjawab bagi tujuan tersebut. Sehubungan itu, sebanyak RM30 juta telah disediakan di Bawah Peruntukan Khas Belanja Mengurus Kerajaan Persekutuan untuk membangunkan 200 buah PD di seluruh negara. Pembangunan PD ini hanya melibatkan bangunan awam milik kerajaan sama ada kerajaan negeri ataupun persekutuan yang sedia ada di luar bandar. Bangunan tersebut diubahsuai dan dilengkapi dengan koleksi bahan bacaan, perabot, perkakasan komputer dan dua orang kakitangan PD.

Pada tahun 2006, sebanyak RM85 juta telah diperuntukkan untuk meneruskan Projek Khas ini, di mana sebanyak 225 buah PD PNM telah berjaya dibina. Pada tahun 2007, sebanyak RM35 juta telah diperuntukkan untuk membina 50 buah PD dan termasuk peruntukan pengurusan melalui Memorandum Jemaah Menteri bertajuk “Penerusan Projek-Projek Perpustakaan Desa di Bawah Kementerian Kebudayaan, Kesenian dan Warisan” yang telah diluluskan oleh Jemaah Menteri pada 20 Jun 2007.

Dari tahun 2005 hingga 2017, sebanyak 512 buah PD telah dibina di bawah Peruntukan Khas Belanja Mengurus Kerajaan Persekutuan dan ditadbir oleh PNM dengan kerjasama PAN. Secara amnya, di Malaysia terdapat dua pihak yang mengurus tadbir PD iaitu PNM dan PAN. Sebanyak 512 buah PD di bawah urus tadbir PNM dan sebanyak 600 buah PD di bawah urus tadbir PAN. Jumlah keseluruhan PD di seluruh negara pada tahun 2017 adalah sebanyak 1,112 buah PD.

Visi, Misi dan Objektif Perpustakaan Desa Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Visi PD di bawah PNM adalah sebagai agen perubahan bagi pembangunan sosial dan pemangkin kepada pemantapan budaya membaca. Penubuhan PD adalah merupakan titik sentuh utama kerajaan bagi menjana aktiviti ke arah pembangunan sosial masyarakat khususnya di luar bandar.

Misi PD di bawah PNM adalah seperti berikut:

- (i) Menyediakan kemudahan akses maklumat kepada pengguna;
- (ii) Memastikan kesamarataan akses bahan dan perkhidmatan yang disediakan untuk masyarakat; dan
- (iii) Menggalakkan penyertaan masyarakat setempat dalam aktiviti galakan membaca.

Objektif PD adalah untuk:

- (i) Memberikan perkhidmatan perpustakaan secara percuma dan menyediakan sumber maklumat dalam pelbagai bidang perkara dan bentuk media bagi menyokong pembelajaran sepanjang hayat;
- (ii) Menyedia dan memberi akses pelbagai bentuk sumber maklumat kepada semua lapisan masyarakat untuk meningkatkan pembangunan diri, kemajuan sosial dan ekonomi masyarakat;
- (iii) Memanfaatkan masyarakat setempat dan dapat menggalakkan budaya membaca serta menangani jurang ilmu dan digital dalam kalangan masyarakat;
- (iv) Menggalakkan penyebaran maklumat kepada masyarakat;
- (v) Berperanan sebagai satu tempat perjumpaan orang ramai untuk aktiviti sosial ke arah mengukuhkan perpaduan dalam kalangan ahli masyarakat; dan
- (vi) Menyokong pembangunan kebudayaan dan kesenian tempatan.

Jenis Bangunan Perpustakaan Desa Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Pada permulaan kewujudan PD PNM pada tahun 2005, sebanyak 200 buah bangunan sedia ada seperti balai raya, klinik, sekolah, ruang masjid/surau, dewan orang ramai dan bangunan yang tidak digunakan oleh masyarakat setempat telah diubahsuai dan dinaik taraf untuk dijadikan sebagai PD. Bangunan-bangunan tersebut merupakan cadangan daripada PAN, Penghulu, Ketua Kampung, Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (JKKK), pemimpin tempatan seperti Ketua Kaum di Sabah, Sarawak dan orang asli serta masyarakat setempat.

Pada tahun 2006, sebanyak 225 buah PD telah berjaya dibina dengan mengubah suai bangunan sedia ada dan juga bina bangunan baru. Oleh kerana kesukaran bagi mendapatkan bangunan awam milik kerajaan sedia ada untuk diubahsuai menjadi sebuah perpustakaan, Kementerian Kewangan Malaysia telah bersetuju supaya projek ini turut melibatkan pembinaan bangunan baru di atas tapak yang telah ditetapkan dengan menggunakan pelan yang disediakan oleh Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) berkeluasan 1,000 kaki persegi (kps). Tapak cadangan bagi membina PD ini adalah daripada pihak PAN, Penghulu, Ketua Kampung, Pengerusi JKKK, pemimpin tempatan dan masyarakat setempat.

Pada tahun 2007, sebanyak 50 buah PD telah dibina dengan model bangunan baru yang mempunyai 3 kategori ruang lantai iaitu 1,000 kps, 1,300 kps dan 1,500 kps. Pemilihan kategori ruang lantai bergantung kepada keluasan tapak yang disediakan oleh Kerajaan Negeri dan juga jumlah kos pelaksanaan.

Pada tahun 2015, PNM telah bekerjasama dengan pihak JKR untuk menyediakan model baru bangunan PD yang lebih menarik dan mesra pengguna. Terdapat 3 kategori ruang lantai iaitu 1,000 kps, 1,300 kps dan 1,500 kps. Model baru ini akan digunakan bagi semua projek baru yang akan datang.

Sumber Manusia di Perpustakaan Desa Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Pada awal perkhidmatan PD di bawah pengurusan PNM, sebanyak dua jawatan diwujudkan iaitu Penolong Pegawai Perpustakaan (Gred S27) dan Pembantu Perpustakaan (Gred S17) di bawah skim Pegawai Khidmat Singkat. Pada tahun 2006, skim perkhidmatan bagi Pembantu Perpustakaan ditukar kepada "Contract of Service". Manakala pada tahun 2007, skim perkhidmatan bagi Penolong Pegawai Perpustakaan pula ditukar kepada "Contract of Service".

Namun pada tahun 2010, satu kajian penstrukturan jawatan telah dilakukan di mana jawatan Penolong Pegawai Perpustakaan telah dikurangkan kepada 141 jawatan dan diwujudkan jawatan baru di setiap PD iaitu Pembantu Am Pejabat (Gred N1). Penolong Pegawai Perpustakaan (Gred S27) berperanan sebagai Penyelia Zon PD yang bertanggungjawab menyelia PD di antara 2 hingga 8 buah PD berdasarkan keperluan semasa mengikut zon yang ditetapkan.

Pada tahun 2011, nama jawatan Penolong Pegawai Perpustakaan dipinda kepada Penolong Pustakawan. Manakala, pada tahun 2014, jawatan Pembantu Am Pejabat (Gred N1) dipinda kepada Pembantu Operasi (Gred N11).

Sejak tahun 2010 hingga kini, perjawatan di setiap PD adalah di antara 2 hingga 3 orang petugas. Ketiga-tiga jawatan tersebut merupakan jawatan di bawah skim "Contract of Service". Sehingga Julai 2017, terdapat seramai 1,161 orang petugas PD PNM di seluruh Malaysia.

Pengurusan Perpustakaan Desa

Pengurusan PD merangkumi tadbir urus, infrastruktur dan perkhidmatan. Perincian adalah seperti berikut:

A) Tadbir Urus

PD PNM telah ditadbir urus secara kerjasama di antara PNM dan PAN. PAN membantu PNM menguruskan hal-hal pengurusan seperti perkhidmatan perpustakaan, pengurusan cuti, penyenggaraan, pembayaran utiliti, aktiviti galakan membaca, tuntutan perjalanan dan Laporan Nilai Prestasi Tahunan (LNPT).

B) Penglibatan Komuniti Dalam Pengurusan Perpustakaan Desa

Perkhidmatan PD juga turut melibatkan komuniti setempat dengan mewujudkan Jawatankuasa Perpustakaan Desa. Jawatankuasa ini memainkan peranan penting dalam melicinkan lagi pengurusan PD iaitu dengan menyokong serta membantu melaksanakan aktiviti perpustakaan, mewujudkan hubungan baik dengan masyarakat setempat dan juga agensi-agensi lain.

C) Kemudahan ICT Sedia Ada

PNM telah menyediakan kemudahan perkakasan asas di PD yang terdiri daripada 2 unit komputer dan 1 unit mesin pencetak dengan fungsi 3-dalam-1 (cetak, salin dan imbas) atau 1 unit mesin pencetak serta 1 unit mesin pengimbas. Ia bertujuan untuk membantu kerja-kerja pengurusan dan pentadbiran harian di PD.

Pada tahun 2003, PNM telah bekerjasama dengan pihak Kementerian Tenaga, Air dan Komunikasi (KTAK) dan Suruhanjaya Komunikasi Dan Multimedia Malaysia (SKMM) untuk menyediakan perkhidmatan internet menerusi program Pemberian Perkhidmatan Sejagat (PPS) seperti berikut:

- a) Program Universal Service Provision (USP) oleh KTAK
 - Bermula pada tahun 2003 hingga 2011, sebanyak 245 buah PD terlibat dalam USP Fasa 2, 3, 4 dan 5.
 - Dilaksanakan bagi tempoh 5 tahun mengikut fasa dan telah tamat pada 2014 secara berperingkat.
 - Menerusi Program PPS ini, kemudahan yang disediakan adalah pengaksesan internet berserta perkakasan ICT seperti komputer, mesin pencetak dan telefon.
 - Kos langganan internet tersebut dibayar oleh pihak KTAK dan SKMM.
 - KTAK turut melantik seorang Pegawai IT untuk menguruskan perkhidmatan USP di PD dengan tempoh perkhidmatan mengikut fasa USP.
 - Begitu juga SKMM yang melantik seorang Pegawai IT untuk menguruskan perkhidmatan PJJ di PD dengan tempoh perkhidmatan mengikut fasa PJJ.
- b) Program Perpustakaan Jalur Lebar (PJJ) oleh SKMM
 - Bermula pada tahun 2006 hingga 2012, sebanyak 56 buah PD PNM terlibat dalam PJJ Fasa Perintis dan Fasa 1.
 - Dilaksanakan bagi tempoh 5 tahun mengikut fasa
 - PJJ Fasa Perintis yang tamat kontrak perkhidmatan pada tahun 2014 telah disambung sehingga tahun 2017 oleh SKMM. Manakala PJJ Fasa 1 yang tamat pada Ogos 2014 tidak disambung kontrak perkhidmatan.
 - Menerusi Program PPS ini, kemudahan yang disediakan adalah pengaksesan internet berserta perkakasan ICT seperti komputer, pencetak dan telefon. Kos langganan internet tersebut dibayar oleh pihak KTAK dan SKMM.

- c) Program Kampung Tanpa Wayar (KTW) oleh SKMM
Program KTW hanya menyediakan kemudahan internet menerusi pengaksesan tanpa wayar bermula pada tahun 2011 dan dilaksanakan secara berperingkat. Perkhidmatan ini disediakan bagi tempoh 3 tahun mulai daripada tarikh penyediaan di PD yang terlibat.
- d) Netbook 1Malaysia oleh SKMM
Pada Disember 2013, SKMM telah membekalkan kemudahan Netbook 1Malaysia ke seluruh PD PNM. Setiap PD telah diagihkan dengan 7 unit Netbook 1Malaysia. Tujuan Netbook 1Malaysia ini diberikan kepada setiap PD adalah untuk meningkatkan penggunaan ICT dalam kalangan masyarakat setempat. Secara tidak langsung, masyarakat setempat akan lebih berpeluang untuk menikmati kemudahan ICT.

D) Perkhidmatan

PD menyediakan pelbagai jenis perkhidmatan maklumat seperti peminjaman, pemulangan, rujukan, kesedaran semasa, pempakejan maklumat, pinjaman berkelompok serta penggunaan komputer dan internet.

Di samping itu, PD turut bekerjasama dengan pihak lain seperti agensi kerajaan dan NGO menyediakan perkhidmatan seperti Sesi Ulangkaji Pelajaran, Kelas Tuisyen dan Kelas Kemahiran Kraf serta menjadi tempat perantara antara masyarakat dengan agensi kerajaan lain termasuk mengakses penggunaan e-kerajaan. Sebagai contoh penggunaan e-kerajaan adalah seperti Daftar Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Awam, Permohonan Kemasukan Ke IPTA dan menyemak daftar pengundi.

Perkhidmatan PD mendapat sambutan yang baik daripada masyarakat sejak ianya mula diperkenalkan. Statistik PD dari setahun ke setahun menunjukkan pencapaian yang membezakan namun adakalanya menurun akibat pelbagai faktor yang perlu diatasi. Berikut adalah jadual Ringkasan Statistik PD di Malaysia dari tahun **2010 sehingga 2016**.

Jadual 1. Ringkasan Statistik PD Di Malaysia Dari Tahun 2010 Hingga 2016

PARAMETER	DATA SIRI MASA TUJUH (7) TAHUN						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bilangan PD beroperasi	475	481	480	500	501	502	504
Kumulatif Keahlian	384,997	399,062	447,893	515,893	559,036	607,132	666,603
Pengunjung	2,350,981	2,347,253	2,475,677	2,468,036	2,260,281	2,172,655	2,368,409
Bahan Dipinjam	1,645,863	1,595,391	1,493,417	1,429,041	1,322,845	1,407,021	1,878,591
Penggunaan ICT	482,615	571,310	607,929	738,990	595,757	440,296	429,137

Sumber: Bahagian Penyelidikan PNM, 2017

Jika dilihat dari statistik di atas, jumlah keahlian PD boleh dikatakan mendapat sambutan menggalakkan dan menunjukkan peningkatan yang begitu positif. Trend penggunaan perkhidmatan PD menunjukkan peningkatan setiap tahun.

Begitu juga dengan statistik penggunaan ICT menunjukkan peningkatan ketara daripada tahun 2010 sehingga pada tahun 2011 (571,310). Bermula pada tahun 2014, penggunaan ICT menunjukkan sedikit penurunan iaitu kepada 595,757 pengguna. Penurunan ini disebabkan oleh perkhidmatan USP Fasa 2 (tahun 2003 – 2008) , USP Fasa 3 (tahun 2004 – 2009), USP 4 (tahun 2005 – 2010) dan USP 5 (tahun 2006 – 2011) yang disediakan oleh KTAK telah tamat tempoh kontrak. Selain itu, perkhidmatan P JL Fasa Perintis (tahun 2006 – 2011) dan P JL Fasa 1 (tahun 2007 – 2012) yang disediakan oleh SKMM juga telah tamat tempoh kontrak. Keadaan ini menyebabkan penurunan statistik dari tahun 2014 sehingga 2016.

Tambahan lagi, jumlah pengunjung dan pinjaman koleksi di PD menunjukkan peningkatan dan penurunan. Pelbagai faktor telah dikenal pasti hasil daripada kajian oleh pihak PNM iaitu antaranya ialah koleksi bahan di PD yang tidak bersesuaian dengan kehendak masyarakat di luar bandar, kemudahan infrastruktur yang disediakan tidak mencukupi serta kemudahan ICT yang disediakan telah 'outdated' dan rosak.

Isu dan Cabaran

A) Kekangan Peruntukan

Peruntukan tahunan bagi PD PNM meliputi bayaran emolumen, ganjaran, koleksi, utiliti, langganan majalah dan surat khabar serta penyelenggaraan yang dibiayai oleh Kerajaan Persekutuan. Walau bagaimanapun, peruntukan ini adalah di bawah peruntukan Program Khusus dan bukan Belanja Mengurus. Ini menyebabkan peruntukan tahunan yang diterima tidak menentu, bergantung kepada kemampuan kewangan pada masa tersebut dan tidak sepertimana peruntukan Dasar Sedia Ada.

Sehubungan itu, PNM perlu membuat penyesuaian mengikut peruntukan yang diterima pada tahun semasa. Selain itu, PD memerlukan peruntukan tambahan lain seperti menaiktaraf keperluan ICT, penggantian aset yang rosak seperti perabot dan perkakasan komputer serta menaiktaraf bangunan sedia ada yang memerlukan kerja-kerja penyelenggaraan yang tinggi kosnya.

B) Masalah Jalinan Kerjasama

Sebahagian PD kurang mendapat kerjasama dalam pengurusan perpustakaan untuk memberikan perkhidmatan penyampaian maklumat kepada masyarakat setempat. Walaupun Ahli Jawatan Kuasa (AJK) PD telah diwujudkan, namun mereka kurang menyokong aktiviti yang dilaksanakan oleh PD. Ini ditambah lagi terdapat segelintir pengurusan di desa yang berhasrat untuk menamatkan perkhidmatan PD di kawasan mereka dengan mengambil semula ruang yang telah diperuntukkan kepada PD.

Peralihan AJK PD juga menimbulkan masalah besar kepada pengurusan PD, di mana segala polisi yang telah dilaksanakan terpaksa digubal semula mengikut selera dan kehendak mereka. Polisi yang berubah-ubah ini memaksa pengurusan PD mengubah dari segi perkhidmatan dan aktiviti yang dilaksanakan.

Sentimen penduduk setempat juga menjadi isu utama kepada petugas PD kerana kebanyakan AJK PD menginginkan agar petugas PD itu terdiri daripada penduduk kampung tersebut.

C) Perjawatan

Perjawatan di PD PNM adalah bertaraf kontrak. Oleh itu, kakitangan di PD sering meletakkan jawatan apabila mendapat tawaran jawatan yang bertaraf tetap. Kebanyakannya yang mempunyai pengalaman kerja yang baik di PD. Keadaan ini menyebabkan PNM terpaksa membuat pengambilan baharu dan perlu memberi latihan kepada staf baharu tersebut.

Penjenamaan Semula Perpustakaan Desa

Laman Ilmu Komuniti atau dalam singkatannya “**MyLIKE**” merupakan salah satu transformasi yang dilaksanakan ke atas PD dengan menjenamakan semula PD PNM agar dapat memberi nafas baru, menyegar dan meningkatkan penyampaian perkhidmatan PD sebagai gedung ilmu sumber rujukan utama masyarakat di kawasan luar bandar.

Hala Tuju Perpustakaan Desa

PNM sentiasa berusaha untuk menaik taraf pengurusan, modal insan dan infrastruktur PD di seluruh negara selaras dengan perkembangan ICT bagi menjadikan PD sebagai touch-point kerajaan kepada rakyat. Beberapa cadangan penambahbaikan perkara-perkara berikut perlu diberi perhatian untuk memastikan PD memberikan perkhidmatan yang cemerlang kepada masyarakat :

A) Tadbir Urus - Konsep National Blue Ocean Strategy

PD merupakan salah satu pusat penyediaan maklumat kepada masyarakat, khususnya kepada masyarakat luar bandar. Walau bagaimanapun terdapat juga agensi-agensi lain yang memberikan perkhidmatan yang sama. Dengan penyatuan fungsi PD dan fungsi agensi lain seperti pelancongan, pusat khidmat komuniti, pusat internet desa akan lebih menguatkan peranan PD sebagai satu touch-point kepada masyarakat selaras dengan konsep “National Blue Ocean Strategy” (NBOS) yang menyelaraskan perkhidmatan di satu tempat.

B) Infrastruktur

a) Menaiktaraf Dan Meningkatkan Bilangan Perkakasan ICT di Semua PD

Dengan perkembangan teknologi ICT terkini kebanyakan masyarakat telah mula beralih arah dalam mendapatkan maklumat. Jika dahulu perpustakaan memainkan peranan penting dalam penyediaan maklumat kepada masyarakat. Pada masa ini masyarakat lebih menggemari maklumat secara atas talian.

PD perlu bergerak seiring dengan kehendak masyarakat dengan memperkasakan perkhidmatan melalui penambahan perkakasan ICT untuk digunakan oleh pengguna. Pertambahan jumlah komputer kepada sekurang-kurangnya 4 unit bagi menggantikan 2 unit sedia ada adalah dicadangkan untuk memenuhi kehendak pengguna.

b) Penyediaan Kemudahan Internet Berkelajuan Tinggi Kepada Semua PD

Adalah dicadangkan PNM meningkatkan penyediaan internet berkelajuan tinggi sekurang-kurang kepada 4Mbps untuk menampung keperluan akses maklumat yang semakin meningkat daripada pengguna. Dengan meningkatkan kapasiti dan perluaskan perkhidmatan ini ke seluruh PD, pengguna perpustakaan mempunyai kebebasan untuk mengakses internet dari dalam dan luar perpustakaan dengan menggunakan komputer atau gajet sendiri tanpa perlu berkongsi dengan pengguna lain.

c) Memperluas Dan Meningkatkan Perkhidmatan WiFi di Seluruh PD

Teknologi WiFi merupakan suatu teknologi sistem komunikasi data yang paling popular dalam teknologi rangkaian komputer. Penggunaan WiFi yang menghubungkan dua dan lebih komputer telah banyak diimplimentasikan di semua organisasi awam dan swasta, sekolah, kolej dan universiti, kedai-kedai kafe siber dan juga rumah kediaman. Teknologi ini banyak memberi kelebihan kepada PD dalam menyediakan perkhidmatan sistem komunikasi rangkaian kepada pengguna perpustakaan. Ini sekaligus dapat mempertingkatkan lagi mutu perkhidmatan PD kepada orang ramai.

d) Sistem Perpustakaan Bersepadu

PD memerlukan satu sistem pengurusan perpustakaan dan sumber manusia yang efisien. Sistem Perpustakaan Bersepadu (SPB) ini bertujuan untuk menguruskan perpustakaan dengan lebih sistematik dari aspek sirkulasi (peminjaman dan pemulangan bahan), pendaftaran bahan dan pendaftaran ahli. Di samping itu, sistem ini juga berperanan sebagai medium pengurusan cuti dan kehadiran petugas PD agar pemantauan dapat dilakukan dengan lebih baik. Sistem ini dapat memastikan perkhidmatan yang berkualiti kepada rakyat untuk memastikan bahan perpustakaan digunakan pada tahap yang maksimum dan perkhidmatan yang disediakan memenuhi keperluan pengguna. Menerusi penggunaan SPB dapat membantu menyelaraskan perkhidmatan seperti sirkulasi (peminjaman dan pemulangan), pencarian bahan oleh pengguna dan dapat meningkatkan keupayaan PD dalam usaha memperkasakan perkhidmatan yang efektif dan berkesan.

C) Menaiktaraf Lanskap Perpustakaan Desa

Bagi memastikan persekitaran PD sentiasa menarik kepada masyarakat, persekitaran PD perlu dinaiktaraf selaras dengan konsep hijau bagi menimbulkan keselesaan kepada pengguna. Penyediaan wakaf/gazebo di luar bangunan PD juga mampu menarik pengguna untuk membaca dan mengakses internet dalam suasana yang santai.

D) Perkhidmatan

Dari segi fungsi, PD perlu meningkatkan usaha dalam menambah nilai pada perkhidmatan maklumat dalam perpustakaan itu sendiri melalui inovasi secara berterusan. Seorang petugas PD perlu mempunyai kebolehan multi-functional untuk memberi perkhidmatan maklumat yang memenuhi kehendak pelanggan. Dalam hal ini, PD tersebut perlulah mempunyai kemudahan peralatan ICT serta sistem rangkaian yang baik meliputi internet dan sistem pengurusan perpustakaan bersepadu bagi memenuhi kehendak perkhidmatan yang ingin disampaikan.

Petugas PD perlu berkebolehan melakukan pencarian maklumat di dalam dan luar PD, mengolah maklumat yang diperolehi, dan menyampaikan kepada pengguna. Manakala bagi pengguna yang berkebolehan dan ingin menghasilkan karya, mereka boleh menempatkan hasil karya/tulisan di pangkalan data perpustakaan yang diwujudkan PD supaya bahan tersebut boleh dimanfaatkan oleh para pengguna lain.

E) Menambah Nilai Pada Maklumat

Nilai sesuatu maklumat bergantung kepada kebolehpercayaan sumbernya dan juga sejauh mana maklumat yang disediakan itu sesuai dengan konteks masyarakat setempat. PD perlu menyediakan gerbang atau pintu masuk ke sumber-sumber yang terpilih mengikut kehendak masyarakat setempat dari segi ekonomi, sosial dan politik. Nilai maklumat tersebut akan meningkat bila diberikan pada waktu yang tepat, dan dapat digunakan dengan mudah.

F) Penyediaan Koleksi dan Maklumat Dalam Pelbagai Format

Maklumat kini boleh diperolehi dalam pelbagai bentuk dan sumber. Di samping bahan cetakan, ada bahan dalam bentuk multimedia, digital, hypertext, dan sebagainya. PD perlu bersedia dalam penyediaan akses ke semua sumber tersebut. Peralatan ICT yang disediakan di PD perlu mempunyai kapasiti minimum untuk menampung pengaksesan maklumat dalam format pelbagai bentuk. Disamping itu, petugas PD juga perlu diberikan latihan secukupnya dalam menggunakan sumber-sumber tersebut.

G) Perkhidmatan 24 Jam Secara Atas Talian

Kewujudan perpustakaan digital dan internet kini membolehkan sumber maklumat di perpustakaan diakses dan digunakan tanpa had waktu dan jarak. PD perlu bersedia menyediakan perkhidmatan ini kepada orang ramai dengan peralatan ICT dan talian internet secukupnya.

H) Perkhidmatan One-Stop-Center

Jika sebelum ini, PD lebih banyak memberi fokus kepada penyediaan dan penyebaran maklumat kepada orang ramai. Melalui transformasi ini, PD perlu bertindak sebagai one-stop-center dengan melibatkan diri secara lebih aktif dalam pengurusan pengetahuan penggunanya. Penyediaan kemudahan yang dapat membantu pengguna untuk melaksanakan e-publishing, e-perbankan, akses kepada pelbagai urusan antara kerajaan atau swasta dan lain-lain.



I) Perkhidmatan “Edu-tainment”

Pada masa ini, kebanyakan pengunjung dan pengguna perpustakaan terdiri daripada golongan kanak-kanak. Sehubungan itu, penjenamaan semula perkhidmatan kanak-kanak perlu dilaksanakan dengan menyediakan persekitaran pembelajaran awal bagi kanak-kanak yang terdiri daripada modul aktiviti seperti sesi play skool (sesi pembelajaran interaktif, sesi kreativiti, sesi tunjuk bakat), educational toys dan bahan bacaan interaktif (picture storybooks / nursery rhymes / wordless book / sound book).

J) Modal Insan**a) Meningkatkan Kemahiran dan Literasi Maklumat**

Dunia pada masa ini pesat dengan kemajuan ICT, maka PD juga perlu giat bergerak seiring dengan perkembangan ini. Melalui latihan yang mencukupi, petugas PD perlu mampu menyediakan latihan secara atas talian mahupun offline kepada pengguna. Pengguna perlu dididik supaya mereka dapat meningkatkan penguasaan dalam ICT dan kemampuan mereka untuk mengakses maklumat secara fizikal dan intelektual, memilih, serta mengeksploitasi maklumat yang diperolehi.

b) Transformasi Sumber Manusia

Kejayaan kepada sesuatu perkhidmatan yang diberikan amat bergantung kepada sumber manusia itu sendiri. Ciri-ciri yang perlu ada pada petugas PD seperti penambahan nilai, pengurusan ilmu, kemahiran dan literasi maklumat serta multi-tasking; semuanya memerlukan kemampuan yang lebih dari sekadar pengetahuan asas. Apa yang amat diperlukan adalah kemampuan sumber manusia itu untuk melihat dan memanfaatkan pelbagai potensi ICT dengan sumber maklumat untuk meningkatkan sebanyak mungkin kuantiti dan kualiti ilmu pengetahuan untuk orang ramai.

K) Latihan Sumber Manusia

Bagi memantapkan perkhidmatan PD, kakitangan PD perlu diberi kursus/latihan berkaitan jati diri, literasi maklumat dan penggunaan ICT yang terkini. Ia bertujuan melahirkan kakitangan yang berkemahiran serta mempunyai jati diri yang tinggi, lebih bertanggung jawab dan berdedikasi. Dengan pendedahan latihan yang secukupnya petugas mampu menjalankan tugas seharian serta memberikan perkhidmatan dengan lebih mantap dan efisien.

Penutup

Inisiatif Kerajaan Malaysia melalui PNM dalam mewujudkan 512 buah PD di seluruh negara telah mencapai pelbagai pencapaian dalam penyediaan perkhidmatan yang disediakan termasuklah meningkatkan budaya membaca dan sosio-ekonomi masyarakat setempat. PD juga dapat mengurangkan jurang ilmu di antara masyarakat bandar dan desa serta ia menjadi lokasi pembelajaran sepanjang hayat. Di samping itu, bagi menjadikan PD terus relevan, sokongan dan kerjasama daripada semua pihak terutamanya pihak kerajaan, badan bukan kerajaan, pemimpin dan masyarakat setempat perlu terlibat secara langsung bagi menyokong menyemarakkan budaya ilmu rakyat Malaysia. Penerusan dan kewujudan perkhidmatan PD di seluruh negara amat bergantung kepada keprihatinan pemimpin di peringkat nasional dan tempatan. Dengan sokongan padu semua masyarakat luar bandar, kita tidak ada jalan lain melainkan berjuang untuk memastikan perkhidmatan ini diteruskan dan ditambahbaik serta diberi nafas baru dari semasa ke semasa bagi mewujudkan masyarakat berilmu, di mana membaca menjadi paksi kepada budaya bangsa.

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TOWARDS BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY IN MALAYSIA: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

By

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Abstract

The establishment of knowledge based society in Malaysia is aligned with the current trend whereby information are fully utilized in everyday life. Knowledge has always been crucial factor in assuring the world goes round, just like money does, if not less. It will take a lot of initiatives and thorough planning to ensure that at the end of the day, objectives can be achieved. This paper suggests what elements can be considered to be applied by both parties, in this context, the government as well as the private sector. All the initiatives mentioned in this paper are initiatives that we think suits local culture and environment and hopefully it will be well accepted. It covers knowledge worker, education, infrastructure, policy, collaboration, technology, economy and as well as social. It is hoped that knowledge society could be well developed through out Malaysia without any parts are left behind.

TOWARDS BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY IN MALAYSIA: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is an open secret that the revolution of knowledge occurred due to the rapid development, particularly in information and communication technologies (ICT). The ICTs' existence caused massive impact on production and delivery of services, especially to the society. Knowledge has now become a key asset that determines competitiveness of our daily life including the global marketplace. It does affect governments and private sectors especially pertaining their capabilities in delivering quality services to society.

In order to bring up what so called information society, we must first understand what information society is all about. An information society refers to a society where the creation, distribution, use, integration and manipulation of information are significant in its economic, political and cultural activity. Information society emphasizes the amount of information available and its accessibility. Thus, it also emphasizes on modern technology. Castells and Cardoso (2006) suggest that the information society is the new mode of human existence, in which the production, recording, processing and retrieving of information in organized networks plays the central role. According to Castells, dominant functions and processes in the information age are increasingly organized around networks.

Knowledge societies are also known as a society that lies mostly on creation, dissemination and utilization of information and knowledge. The principle of knowledge societies encompasses much broader social, ethical and political dimensions. It is all about the capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development. According to Evers (2000), the characteristics of knowledge society are as follow:

- Its members have attained a higher average standard of education in comparison to other societies and a growing proportion of its labor force are employed as knowledge workers. For example, researchers, scientists, information specialists, knowledge managers and related workers;
- Its industry produces products with integrated artificial intelligence;
- Its organizations – private, government and civil society – are transformed into intelligent, learning organizations;
- There is increased organized knowledge in the form of digitized expertise, stored in data banks, expert systems, organizational plans, and other media;
- There are multiple centers of expertise and poly-centric production of knowledge; and
- There is a distinct epistemic culture of knowledge production and knowledge utilization.

Every society have always been a knowledge society, in the sense that they consistently use knowledge, formally and informally, in economic growth and in social development. However, the ICT revolution at the end of the twentieth century has revamped the way in which knowledge can be created, harvested, assembled, combined, manipulated, enhanced and channeled. This has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge in economic growth and development, to the extent that knowledge has become the leading factor or adding values for wealth creation in the market economy. In the current knowledge age, intellect and creative, innovative ideas have become a primary source of advantage. These factors also carry the promises of dramatically advancing human development and increasing the quality of life.

At the same time, while the creation and use of knowledge have accelerated, ethics have experienced difficulties in catching up. Unless the creation and use of knowledge are put in the framework of the desired societal context, that of human development, and supported by shared values, the increased impact of knowledge that serves its own agenda, market agenda and political agenda that will shape the societal context of its own. This can prove counterproductive from the point of view of the quality of life of all people everywhere.

Knowledge Society: Where to Start?

In order for Malaysia to create a knowledge-based society in the real context, 9 pillars have been identified to assess the country readiness to become one and be able to compete as a knowledge society. Those 9 pillars identified are:

1. Elements and principle;
2. Knowledge worker;
3. Education;
4. Infrastructure;
5. Policy;
6. Collaboration;
7. Technology;
8. Economy; and
9. Social.

All of these 9 pillars have been categorized into 3 phases, which are categorized as Driver, Carrier and Destination.

PHASE 1 - Driver

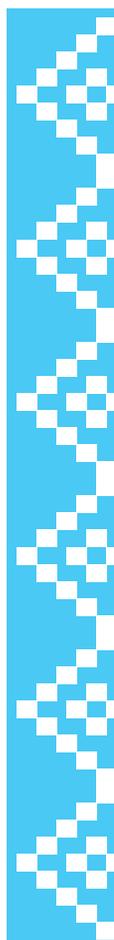
The Driver in this case, must consist of these elements:

- **Elements and Principle**

The information society need a clear fundamental of character and principles as to make them grow up with ethical surroundings. It has to be clarified, as this will become the references and guidance to the society if they are not clear about what need to be done. One other thing that need to be highlighted as well is that the ICT is the main element that can make information society move on the right track.

- **Knowledge Worker**

Former Finance Minister, Tun Daim Zainuddin when tabling national budgets for the year 2001 did touch on the importance of knowledge worker. According to him, “Malaysia needs knowledge workers to constantly upgrade their skills and efficiency, given that the K-economy is part of our daily life. Human resource development will remain a national priority”. This shows that towards achieving developed country status, group of workers known as knowledge workers must be established. So, what is a knowledge worker? Peter Drucker, who was a writer, professor, management consultant and self-described “social ecologist,” described knowledge worker as “Every knowledge worker in modern organization is an “executive” if, by virtue of his position or knowledge, he is responsible for a contribution that materially affects the capacity of the organization to perform and to obtain results”.



In other words, a worker who possesses some kind of knowledge or expertise in his field and contributes it to the organization is considered as a knowledge worker. To develop knowledge worker, human capital as well as knowledge is a must combination. This is because, highly productive human capital is important to grow in a sustainable way or to sustain growth.

- **Human Capital: Training and Knowledge Sharing**

In order to establish a successful knowledge worker, investment in human capital is necessary. They must be equipped with sufficient knowledge to develop expertise in their respective field. Training, attachment to other organizations and many other mediums will surely enhance their skills as well as their knowledge. Sharing of knowledge among those who have vast experience in a certain field will surely contribute in adding value to the newly joined group of workers. It is undeniable that the backbone of a country is a country that has the most knowledgeable worker. Of course, upon executing their daily task, they will go through certain experience and it usually differs from one person to another and can be categorized as tacit and explicit knowledge. By sharing this tacit and explicit knowledge among workers, a shortcut is created whereby it will shorten the learning process and decrease the trial and error part. Converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge will be helpful in executing their job. It is worth to spend a lot in preparing human capital because it will contribute back to the country in a certain period of time in terms of productivity and output. In doing their daily task, it is important to develop an understanding of what they know, which helps develop understanding of what can be done. Tacit and explicit knowledge may be divided into these categories:

'Know-How'	How things are done - processes, procedures in manuals, and other artifacts, heuristics that help people know how to act when a previously seen pattern of events occurs.
'Know-What'	The job-specific, academic and other subject-matter knowledge, experience.
'Know-Why'	The ability to understand the cause-and-effect relationships, what is likely to follow a given action - often also embedded in experience and heuristics.
'Care-Why'	The will, the motivation to do the job and grow the business and to protect and nurture other stakeholders.

Table 1: Elements of Knowledge Workers

Such elements as well as other relevant supporting systems are the main ingredients to produce knowledge worker. Numbers of innovations can be created and that might contribute to the development of the nation. These efforts are supposed to be ongoing part of lifelong learning, since a dynamic and fast-changing knowledge-based society requires continuous skills updating. In this context, the concept of “human capital” derives from the fact that workers no longer need to be assimilated to a “work force” but are instead considered “capital” due to their expertise and knowledge. It is known that knowledge created through innovation and technological progress is the long-term driver of economic growth. In an emerging global knowledge-based economy, creating excellent education and training sectors are crucial, this will enable the production of highly qualified human resources through technological innovation.

It is important for any country to lay solid foundations for building self-capability to acquire and create knowledge by acquiring, creating and using new and dynamic technology for innovation derive from its workers.

- **Financial**

The government as well as the private sector must allocate a sufficient amount of budget to ensure that their workers are well equipped and updated with new knowledge. It is money that makes the world goes around. They must also identify what is the priority of human investment, where to start, the effectiveness of the investment and at what level it should reach. This is to ensure that every single cent spent is worthy. Planning on training must be done to anticipate the expenses that will be invested. Monitoring process should always be done to ensure that the right staff gets the right amount of training so that the contribution that they will offer can give high impact to the organization.

- **Technology**

Using technology nowadays in a workplace is a must. Technologies are tools that makes a particular task easier, precise, and smooth with high quality. The application of technologies in everyday job will enhance the desired result in accordance with the specified quality and specifications. This will also increase the productivity as well as the output to cater the market needs. The knowledge worker who is able to use the technologies will come out with better and tremendous result. Collaboration with other parties also can be considered to be applied such as transfer of technology programs. This will cut costs and time in inventing new technologies because a particular organization will just have to apply the technology that they have shared. By using technology as a medium of communication among industries, knowledge is not constrained by geographic proximity, but offers more possibilities for sharing, archiving, and retrieving knowledge.

- **Education**

Education is another pillar that could help to develop knowledge society. Education in this context must be well structured in preparing for the next phase which is the Carrier. In other words, the education fundamentals must be strong so that it will be able to achieve the destination. Therefore, the education covers the information skills, information literacy and the education system. Education comprises of knowledge, skills, and understanding to get in schools, college, or university and this can never be denied (Definition of EDUCATION, 2015). Therefore, education refers to knowledge, skills and understanding need to be thinking at all levels of education as a driver to achieve the destination goal of knowledge society.

- **Information skills**

One of the models that can be implemented in the all level education is the PLUS model by James E. Herring which represents Purpose, Location, Use and Self-evaluation (Herring, 1999). The model eases the teachers or lecturers what to teach and what to focus on the information skills. The PLUS model as in Figure 1:

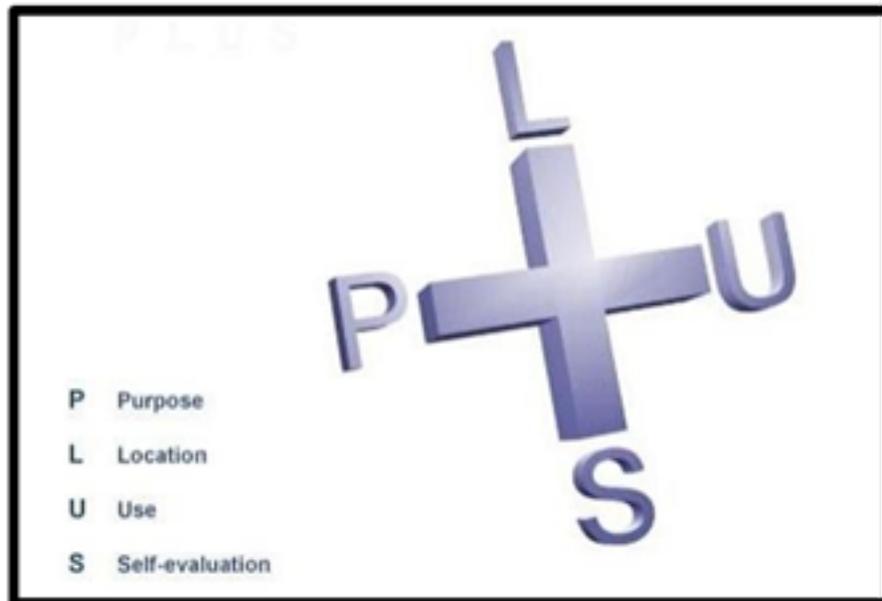


Figure 1: The PLUS Model by James E. Herring (1999)

Educators play a vital role in educating students to ensure they are able to find, locate, use and evaluate the relevant information instead of learning in details the syllabus or courses they are taking. The outcome of the model are that, students should be able to:

- i. Recognize what information they need;
- ii. Able to come out research questions;
- iii. Come out and use diagrams or headings;
- iv. Point out keywords used in and for research;
- v. Able to select and use information media;
- vi. Knowledgeable in using library finding aid and information representation;
- vii. Evaluate information retrieved are relevancy or not;
- viii. Write bibliography;
- ix. Analyze, synthesize information; and
- x. Learn from the information retrieved.

All these outcomes are the basic driver to drive them to survive in the future as well as achieving the knowledge society destination. The development of the information skills as a basic requirement in operating, handling, managing, using in carrier and meet the destination stage. Therefore, the information skills not only about to find, but also about to locate and use the relevant information as well.

- **Information Literacy**

Another development in education is the information literacy. Information literacy is the abilities that enable individuals to identify when information is needed and how to locate, evaluate and use it effectively (Ali and Dr. A, 2004). In the development to knowledge society, information literacy must be developed as a source of basic skills in developing new knowledge and innovation. The information literacy can be divided into 4 main components which are; basic literacy, library literacy, media literacy and technology literacy.

Basic literacy involves of readings, listening, speaking, calculating, perception, drawing and others. These abilities most basically learn from their home, but in education institution stage are enhancing the ability to the maximum. Library literacy is the ability to identify types of information materials, familiar with library systems, ability to use the finding aid in library to control, search for information and also ability to do the research process. Media literacy is able to share information and knowledge through broadcasting, printing and also online which the purposes are to inform what they had discovered, entertain and also persuade skills. While technology literacy is the ability to use technological tools including hardware, software as well as ethics and etiquette in using technology tools which they are sensitive to intellectual property issues for example.

- **Education System**

Education system involves all levels, which are primary, secondary and higher-level education. Towards the knowledge society development these are things that must be taken into consideration:

- (i) Education system must develop objectives and goals in providing knowledge sharing;
- (ii) Update the syllabus to the current knowledge and match with the environment in the country;
- (iii) Provide home exercises for continuous learning.

Teaching and learning systems can be made web-based, such as online group discussion, submitting homework, e-learning etc.

PHASE 2 – Carrier

In building an organized knowledge-based society, the elements mentioned below should be considered:

- **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure could be one of the important elements in developing a knowledge society. One area where infrastructure has been a catalyst in empowering innovations and entrepreneurs is information, communication and technology (ICT). Besides that, infrastructure is also fundamental to enable and facilitate research and development activities and hence innovation at individual, firms and institutional level. Infrastructure, higher education and technology readiness are all important to fuel and facilitate changes. Unreliable power supply, backward water and sanitation systems, poor transportation networks and services and ineffective information and communication systems directly affect the effective daily operation of research centers and firms. Besides that, discourage investment in sophisticated and delicate equipment, divert resources from innovative activities to adaptation and mitigation measures (e.g. investment in standby electrical generators and boreholes) and hamper improvement in health and education also affect the daily operation of firms and institutions.

There are two types of infrastructure that can fill in the gap between the information society and knowledge society. They are soft infrastructure and hard infrastructure.



(i) Soft Infrastructure

Soft infrastructure could provide access to management, intellectual and research and development resources. Besides that, it also could be considered as a key information on sources of knowledge, market opportunities and potential collaboration across national borders. The examples of soft infrastructure are networks such as internet connection and information technology such as computer software and system application.

(ii) Hard Infrastructure

Hard infrastructure, such as well-equipped centers, science and technology parks, technology and business incubators, among other common facilities, could reduce the costs for innovator and entrepreneurs in the process of taking research products and new products to market, increase cross fertilization of knowledge, improve chances of being funded and encourage entrepreneurship. In a way, the development scope of infrastructure should not be limited to laboratories in universities and research and development centers only. It should be broadened to public and private firms.

- **Policy**

Policymakers face the challenge of creating conditions that support these developments in their countries, whilst also creating policies and programs that harness their effects to support economic growth and the public good. For a country to become knowledge society, the application of technologies includes everything from the core digitization of public service to the digital infrastructure, governance, processes, cover both front and back office in order to deliver services. This is important as it is one of the criteria of knowledge society whereby the usage of technologies is almost compulsory.

- **e-Government Initiatives**

A conventional type of government must be able to transform from conventional to digital government. This is crucial as it was meant to improve citizens' satisfaction with service delivery, create a new level of engagement and trust as well to increase productivity of public service. Citizens no longer need to queue up at the counters in government agencies to do transactions as most of it can be done through internet for instance. This will cut short the red tape as it will deliver the services or product in just a moment. It is also as a mean to encourage the usage of technology (e.g. Internet, smartphones – hard and soft ICT infrastructure) by the whole citizens which consists of the people and the government. And of course, it will create comfort among the citizen in dealing with the government without having to face the hazards of going to government agencies.

- **Citizen-based Initiatives**

Whenever and wherever necessary, the involvement of the citizen in helping the government to the focus of the country is very important. It is because the government is formed based on the mandate that they get from an election. Therefore, a decision made must take into consideration the interest of the people. Changes from existing style of administration that does not involve much participation from the public should be changed.

- **Good Governance as Fundamentals**

Governance is the activity of coordinating communications in order to achieve collective goals through collaboration. It is obvious when there is an explicit goal to be implemented, resulting from a project, plan or strategy. By applying good ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability and professionalism, it will reflect the commitment of the existing government to ensure they practice a clean style of governing method. It is believed that the role of good governance in promoting knowledge-based economy can attract large volume of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), for instance. A country must prove that they are exercising good governance to ensure that their administration is clean. The trust gained from other countries will ensure that a good relation can be established in many forms regardless politics, education, economy, social, diplomatic and others.

- **Law Enforcement**

The law is basically the system of rules that a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and may enforce by the imposition of penalties. The law plays crucial roles and functions in society. Four principal purposes and functions are:

- i. Establishing standards;
- ii. Maintaining order;
- iii. Resolving disputes; and
- iv. Protecting liberties and rights.

To assure that law play its role effectively, the government must first ensure that enforcement agencies to enforce law that have been passed in parliament or any other bodies that are recognized by the country. There is no point having lots of laws, but we failed to enforce it and do not meet its purpose of creations. The government also at the same time must review the relevancy of existing laws and statutes by making amendments, create new laws as well as abolishing the outdated law that is no longer relevant. This to ensure that citizens are well safeguarding and protected under the constitution and this will contribute to the prosperity peace in a country.

- **Freedom of Expression**

The citizen must ensure that their rights to express freedom which are covered under the constitution are protected. The government itself must support it by allowing freedom of speech take place in any part of the country such as speaker's corner, social media, mainstream media and many other platforms. Access to internet (which mentioned as soft ICT infrastructure) must be given equally so that all citizens have access to information. They can access to social media, databases or online eBook subscription, so that it will engage in communication with local people as well as international to form a group or communities as a platform to discuss their issues in governance in their respective country. By sharing information, check and balance of the government can be done and sharing of experience will largely help to enhance the methods in governing a nation.

- **Collaboration**

Another pillar in the development of the knowledge society is the collaboration. The scope collaboration not focusing only among organizations, but also involving the educational institutions because learner must be exposed to the outside world and understand the real job situations.



- **Research and Development (R&D)**

Collaboration for R&D can be established in many ways. In Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), they conduct Invention, Innovation and Design (IID) events which allow participation from many universities and other industries to share and present their invention or innovative ideas, where it is judged by other parties. Besides, R&D also done in collaboration with between two different parties to play their own roles. For instance, internship where education institutions sent their student for internship and the industries provide practical training to teach the young generation facing the real job situation and learn from knowledge workers. Plus, it gives chances for intern to enhance their skills which could benefit to the organization.

- **Transfer of Technology**

Another method of collaboration is transfer of technology. This type of collaboration enables industries to do the exchange of technologies. Collaboration with Japan enables a local country sent their employee to learn the technology use in creating new technology such as car engines, computer hardware, software development etc. Knowledge from another country can be shared and implemented in their home country once they came back.

- **Training for Trainers**

Collaboration with local and international companies enables to enhance the knowledge worker to learn the experience from the expert to create new knowledge. The knowledge sharing can be conducted through exhibitions, training, conference, and seminar and so on.

PHASE 3 – Destination

- **Technology**

In this era, technology being used in many aspects of life for example, education and business for instance. The present of technology also gives a big impact towards the development of educational and business area. Furthermore, the technologies are being considered as an important medium to be used in daily life because with the technology people can communicate well either from the far location. But, the innovation that makes this technology become more developed from time to time is because the existence of information society. As from understanding, information society is one of organization that contributes in giving the right information in the development of any business. This information society also involves in the innovation of technology infrastructure that include internet access, application, social interaction and storage of information. The elaboration is as follows:

- i. **Internet Access**

Internet access is referring to the connection of personal computer and mobile device to the network. It also can enable the user in accessing the internet service such as email. The innovation of this internet or medium of connectivity can be seen from the present broadband based to the wireless connectivity. The increasing request from the user in the connectivity, broadband been available for the peoples' usage and this material can be on without disturbing the normal telephone. The other has been acknowledged that the fastest mobile broadband is from Korea, which it provides excellent service for content consumption. It has stated that in the year 1993-1995 broadband become reality in the Australian

country. Then, after that the wireless connection was available for use as a medium of internet access. The wireless connection can be used in the mobile phone or for the personal computer like laptop in order to connect to the internet. Wireless connection basically gives opportunity to many people in connecting to the internet. In the early 2000s Australia country has shifted their internet access from broadband to the wireless connection.

ii. **Application**

The application can be referred to the process that involves developing the system. With the contribution of information society indirectly it gives an impact of the rapid development of application. Before this, the application only been available for the personal computer but now it's been existent in the mobile phone which the people can download any application that they need. The availability of this application in the mobile phone it can help the people itself can get any information at everywhere and anytime when the mobile phone is being connected to the internet. For example, a student who wanted to look for dictionaries can use the application. They can simply download the dictionary application and used it.

iii. **Social Interaction** **Social Media**

Innovation of technology also gives the people opportunity in communicating well and more easily by using the social media. Social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp really give massive impact to the society. This is because many of the business organization or educational institution used the medium in the process of marketing the organization's product or for education discussion. Other than that, the other social media that quickly been use of the school environment is Telegram, this is because to inform any activities that will be done in the school and to make the parents know about each of the action that the school will make.

• **Storage of Information**

As the library is one of the institutions that can be considered as an information society organization, it is necessary that they must manage all information in such an efficient and effective way. Basically, the library will store and manage the information of the book into the system which this system can give the user to access the information of the library material more easily. In the archive, they also use one of the system in storing the details of the records available in the archive. This system really gives an impact on the management of archival records and for the purpose of retrieving information that been requested by the user. The system that's been used by both organizations is calling OPAC system that's been used in libraries and COMPASS system that's been used in archival institutions.

• **Economy** **Knowledge Economy**

One of the destinations that effect when reaching knowledge society is the economy. Basically, it will be called knowledge economy. According to Charles Leadbeater (1999), 'the idea of the knowledge driven economy is not just a description of high technology industries. It describes a set of new source of competitive advantage which can apply to all sectors, all companies and all regions, from agriculture and retailing to software and biotechnology'. It showed that to reach the economy,

it does not necessary to have the high or the latest technology. What is important is the use of the knowledge itself among all the workers and staff. If we have the technology, but only know how to use it for one purpose, it will be good but not effective. Unless we have the technology and can utilize it for many more purposes it will be effective. For example, a technology that's being used in agriculture can also be used in biotechnology, but at the same time the biotechnology sector had their own technology. It will show that the society had already know about how to manipulate and utilize their own economy. 'Economic success is increasingly based on upon the effective utilization of intangible assets such as knowledge, skills and innovative potential as the key resources for competitive advantage'. The term "knowledge economy" is used to describe this emerging economic structure' (ESRC, 2005). Imagine an economy that is being ruled by many professional researchers. Not only the economy becomes stronger, but also, we can predict the future for our own economy. That is why we need more intangible assets or tacit knowledge because it is far more valuable than the technology itself. We can build a new technology, but can we recover the tacit knowledge when it is gone? It will take many effort and time to recover the knowledge and other skills. Even though some are arguing that thus the 'new' economy because the ICT revolution that allowed the exploit of the scientific and technical knowledge, but then the knowledge itself in exploiting the ICT to become revolutionaries should respect and appreciated.

- **Knowledge Worker**

Naturally, knowledge economies are the economies which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information. Therefore, employment in the knowledge economy is characterized by increasing demand for more highly skilled worker. Because of the growing in high technology, jobs nowadays are more highly skilled and pay higher wages than those in lower technology sectors, such as textiles and food processing industries. This is because the knowledge workers not only know how to use the technology, but also have the ability to utilize it well especially earnest. The impact of growing ICT had placed increasing of awareness that need to ensure that workers are now information literate. If not, it will make the institutions to develop and establish methods for teaching and evaluating this literacy at all levels of education. It has also made the workers to continue in engaging in training, mentoring and professional development practices that achieve similar aims, but within the workplace. Other than that, what is the difference between a knowledge worker at the driver and knowledge worker at the destination? It said that knowledge worker must have trainings and embrace know-how, know-what and know-why and self-motivated creativity in order to create the knowledge worker himself. With all the criteria that aimed to be achieved, it show that knowledge worker at the driver are in the process to learn it while knowledge worker at the destination already master it. In a simple word, knowledge worker at the destination can already be called professional because of the characteristics.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, to achieve the knowledge-based society we need to consider all those 9 pillars. If Malaysia has to build a knowledge society, parallel efforts must be put into building the capacity of leaders to manage the opportunities and challenges that change and innovation entails. The entire society needs to be mobilized and the skills of many of those to be affected must be upgraded to secure their future. In particular, special effort is required to be put in place measures to help some members of society to cope with change. More importantly, the policies and strategies should be designed to attain a clearly defined future. The future will not be exactly as was defined. However, policies and strategies that are designed to address today's challenges are unlikely to meet the needs of tomorrow. This remains a major challenge as there are almost no efforts to make technology forecasts.

Besides that, lifelong learning is vital to build skills and knowledge. The strategy should mean to build skills through formal and informal education. It is important for all the relevant parties involved to provide the necessary supporting mechanism to develop skills for the knowledge society. Primary education is no longer sufficient to enable majority of the individuals to effectively participate in an innovation environment in knowledge society. Lifelong learning, informal training and attachments could be used to quickly build skills and knowledge.

Finally, innovation brings significant levels of uncertainty to many firms, institutions and societies. Malaysian policy makers will have to discern their own benefits and risks of innovation and change from those of others in order to make informed decisions as well as plan their development strategies. This could be achieved by developing the capacity of leaders to understand the real reasons why some of their development countries may be resistant changing. This is vital in enabling the Malaysian policy maker to sell their own vision of the future to their partners in developed as well as developing countries.



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KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY FRAMEWORK

DRIVER



Elements & Principal

- * Rules
- * Direction

Knowledge Worker

- * Sharing of explicit knowledge
- * Human Capital
- * Financing
- * Technology

Education

- * Information literacy
- * Information skills
- * Education system - primary, secondary, higher

CARRIER



Collaboration

- * R&D
- * Transfer of technology
- * Training for trainers

Policy

- * e-Government
- * Law enforcement
- * Freedom of expression

Infrastructure

- * Hard infrastructure - information center
- * Soft Infrastructure - network



DESTINATION

Technology

Economy

Social



KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

MAKING THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE THROUGH INFORMATION LITERACY: IN4SKILL CAMPAIGN FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

by

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Abstract:

This article is to demonstrate the appropriate model of information literacy for rural societies as to assist them in education, human development, economic development, social development as well as lifelong learning. Information literacy is the main catalyst for educational change transforming the rural societies of today to an information society of tomorrow, and to ensure that they are information rising literate societies. This will enable them to improve living standards, increase economic value and social welfare. Producing such societies will require a library to promote, integrated and teaching information literacy into their programs. High information literacy (IL) skills will enable rural societies to improve their decision-making, innovation capabilities and lifelong learning ability. The National Library of Malaysia (NLM) offers and provides comprehensive training to improve the IL skills among rural societies, with effective instructions and high-quality training materials. The NLM specifically designed a training program to achieve the national agenda, including Vision 2020, development of a knowledge society for a knowledge-based economy. The NLM has also produced an IL model and module to develop practical and focused IL competencies, such as information searching techniques, information evaluation, etiquette and use of information to enhance the skills in this information-rich world. An In4skills campaign was also launched by the NLM to promote information skills among the Malaysia society. The NLM also facilitates IL education by providing free databases and building partnerships with other organizations to enable rural societies to access accurate information sources and gain the information needed. This presentation will share the experiences of the NLM in developing and implementing a program, module and teaching method that can be used by other libraries. It also proposes guidelines for developing effective media and information training for the rural society.

Keywords: Media and information literacy, information literacy, rural societies, rural communities, community literacy

Introduction

The advancement of mobile and internet technology, today we are witnessing the vast growth of information into the society regardless of their status, whether rich or poor, educated or not, or even from an urban or rural society, people need information in their daily routines. If they successfully use information in every step, then they can succeed. The transformation of rural community must go through a lot of development and highly rely on knowledge creation, access to information and analysis of information. However, the rural community is much more disadvantaged because of the widening information gap or information poor, and as a result, they are less developed in every aspect of their life. The rural community needs information to alleviate their fears of uncertainties. Therefore, the information literacy program for the rural community will help them find more information and to do research to improve their knowledge in areas such as increased agricultural and fishery profit, health, social welfare and overall economic growth. Mchombu (1995) identified six sub-categories of rural information needs as follows;

- i. Information on income generation
- ii. Community leadership
- iii. Literacy support
- iv. Financial information
- v. Government policies on rural development
- vi. Soil conservation

This signifies that developing a rural community to become more information literate society requires knowledge and a rural community can only become knowledgeable if they recognize and use information as their tool for development. Stanley (1990) said “information is one of the basic needs after air, water, food and shelter. Man requires information to be able to manipulate the factors of production as land, labour and capital resources into meaningful and productive use”. Rural society needs to identify the information needs, locate, analyse and use information to allow them to survive. Based on the above discussion, we can conclude that information literacy is needed in the rural community, especially information literacy related to the agricultural, financial and others. The significance of the application of agricultural literacy and financial literacy in rural community emphasizes how information literacy can improve the economy, living standard, health and social welfare which contribute to the happiness of the rural community.

Background

The rural community in Malaysia is predominantly involved in agricultural, construction labour, fishery and even in the government sector, which have small or low income. The rural community also produces food for the citizenry. As a result, they should be exposed with the necessary information literacy skills, knowledge and resources that will assist them to achieve the goal of improving their sources of income. The population of Malaysia is 32 million peoples and approximately 26% or 6.8 million are living in rural areas. Most of the rural community (41%) are involved in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Unfortunately, the increase in income has not been substantial for the past ten years.

Rural development cannot be denied as one of the major focuses of the government and of course the main recipient of this development is the rural community. Malaysia has a systematic and effective plan for its rural development. The government of Malaysia has established two stages of rural development transformation and evolution. The first stage was conducted for 47 years starting from 1957 (the year of Malaysia's independence) till 1994. Two policies had been designed in this period and known as Pre-new Economy Policy and New Economy Policy. The focuses of these two policies were on providing basic infrastructure, agriculture development based on main commodities, equity development, poverty alleviation, land and regional development and dissemination of subsidy. The second stage of the transformation (1994-2020), which is still in progress, is based on the New Philosophy and Policy on Rural Development which has the mission of being a developed state in 2020. Under the second stage of transformation, two new policies have been developed and known as the National Development Policy and National Vision Policy. Unlike the first transformation stage, the second transformation stage is aimed at a balanced development, human resource development, regionalization of land development authorities, a better quality of life, achieving sustainable development, poverty alleviation and lower income group, developing attractive, developed and profitable rural areas and focus of rural development on specific groups (Ministry of Rural Development, 2018).

To support these national agenda, the National Library of Malaysia (NLM) play a vital role through the village library by serving as a community center. NLM organizes events like information literacy programs for the non-information literate farmers, fishermen, mothers and students. Librarians from NLM and the village library assist them in locating information, analyzing information and using the information to improve their living standard. NLM librarians also assist them to do a basic research technique to improve their living standards.

Definition of Concept

- **Information Literacy**

The importance of information literacy emerged with the development of information technologies in the early 70s. Over the years, information literacy has become a critical skill for the twenty-first century. Most cited definition of IL was issued by ALA (American Library Association, 1989), "information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." Some organizations interpret their own definition such as CILIP (2018) defining information literacy as "Information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgments about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to develop informed views and to engage fully with society". UNESCO stated in the Prague Declaration 2003, "Information Literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand; it is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society, and is part of the basic human right of life-long learning". This definition implies several skills. The skills (or competencies) needed to be information literate require an understanding of:

- i. A need for information
- ii. The resources available
- iii. How to find information
- iv. The need to evaluate results
- v. How to work with or exploit results
- vi. Ethics and responsibility of use
- vii. How to communicate or share your findings
- viii. How to manage your findings

- **Rural Community**

Community comes from the Latin word “cum” which means togetherness and “munus” which means giving each other. A common definition of community is a group of people with diverse characteristics linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or setting. The community is where people define an important social bond in building and identity, practice, role in an institution such as family, home, work, government and more broadly (James et. al., 2012). It can be said that the community consists of individuals who form a group based on their similarity and interest to a particular topic along with the social interaction that occurs within group which can deepen their knowledge and skills (Ninik Alfiyah, Anisa Septyo Ningtis, Nurma Pandwita Utami, 2017). There is a lot of definition on “rural” and has not been agreed on for decades because some organization defined “rural” as a geographical concept, a location with boundaries on a map, and some defined it as a social representation, a community of interest, a culture and way of life. (Ninik Alfiyah, Anisa Septyo Ningtis, Nurma Pandwita Utami, 2017) stated that “rural community is a community that is located in an area far from the city and has lower access than the city in terms of health, technology, and others.

Overview of Information Literacy Scenario in Malaysia

A) National Library of Malaysia Information Literacy Programs

As stipulated in the National Library Act 1972, one of the National Library of Malaysia’s (NLM) functions is to promote and facilitate the inculcation of the reading habit among Malaysians. Although the ability to read is still a basic survival, it is no longer enough. Information literacy skill is now a critical life skill in today’s information explosion. Information literacy means more than being able to read or use a computer. In this era of globalization and the advent of the Internet, getting information is easy but getting the right information can be difficult. Technology is changing the way we live, learn, work and govern. It means knowing how to find, evaluate, and use the best, most current information available to us and use it in our everyday life. Thus, NLM has a key role to play in helping our communities become information literate.

B) National Reading Promotion Programs

In this context, the Information Literacy Division was set up in 2002 to inculcate reading habits of Malaysians by planning and coordinating reading and information literacy programs throughout Malaysia. NLM as the National Reading Promotion Secretariat has collaborated with various government agencies, Government Link Companies (GLC) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to implement its reading promotion programs throughout the country and to inculcate reading habits and information searching skills among Malaysians. Most of the activities and programs are carried out in collaboration with other libraries, agencies and NGOs. NLM also have smart partnerships with relevant organizations such as Government Hospitals through “Lets Read My Love” Program, the Malayan Railways through “Travel Far Widen Knowledge” Program and the Prison Department “You Are Still in My Heart” Program. All the program are based on the “1Malaysia Concept” which form the basis of unity in this multi-racial country. A total of 5,804,052 participants for “Lets Read Together” Program which include the donation of books, reading promotion activities, information and media literacy workshops were carried out throughout the year.

IN4SKILL Program

NLM obtained a grant of RM20,000 (USD7,000) from the Malaysia National Commission for UNESCO to formulate the National Information Literacy Module and conduct a Training of Trainers Workshop on Media and Information Literacy in 2011. The Media and Information Literacy Module was launched on 23 December 2011 which consist of an Introduction and six (6) modules, namely Module 1: Identifying Information Needs, Module 2: Effective Information Searching, Module 3: Information Evaluation, Module 4: Information Management, Module 5: Ethical Use of Information and Module 6: Information Dissemination. NLM conducts Information Literacy Programs for its users to expose them to reference sources and techniques to access information available in NLM and online. Subsequently, NLM rebranded the MIL programs as the In4skill Program and continues to initiate the program throughout Malaysia in collaboration with various government and private agencies. NLM has developed three MIL modules for basic, intermediate and advanced stages. These modules will be tailored to the participants based on their educational background, type of work and upon specific requests of the participants. In4skill programs includes a definite objective of:

In4skill Information Literacy framework (Table 1) is specially designed to improve the information literacy skill among Malaysians, which is used as a guide for instructors in teaching information literacy. The mission of In4skill program is to empower Malaysians in becoming information literate and confident in their information seeking abilities, thus able to apply critical thinking in the retrieval, evaluation and ethical use of information.

Table 1: NLM In4skill Information Literacy Framework

Information Literacy Skill	Elements
Introduction to the information literacy	1. Importance of information literacy 2. Awareness about the use of information from the Internet/ social media 3. Benefits of information literacy skills
Information needs	1. Identify topic of research/information 2. Identify variety types and formats of information sources. 3. Identify type of research
Information seeking	1. Identify and construct search strategy using keyword, Boolean, truncation, command languages and online protocols 2. Locate and access information
Evaluation of information	1. Identify evaluating criteria for printed and non-printed information
Organizing of information	1. Identify method of organizing information (physical material and online material)
Ethical use of information	1. Identify and understand issues of intellectual property, copy right act and fair use 2. To demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism 3. To identify an appropriate documentation style and use consistently to cite sources 4. To identify and use appropriate language
Dissemination of information	1. Identify different types of channels to disseminate information (printed and online)

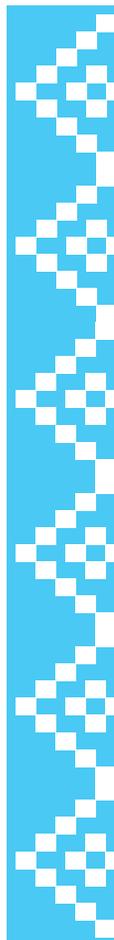
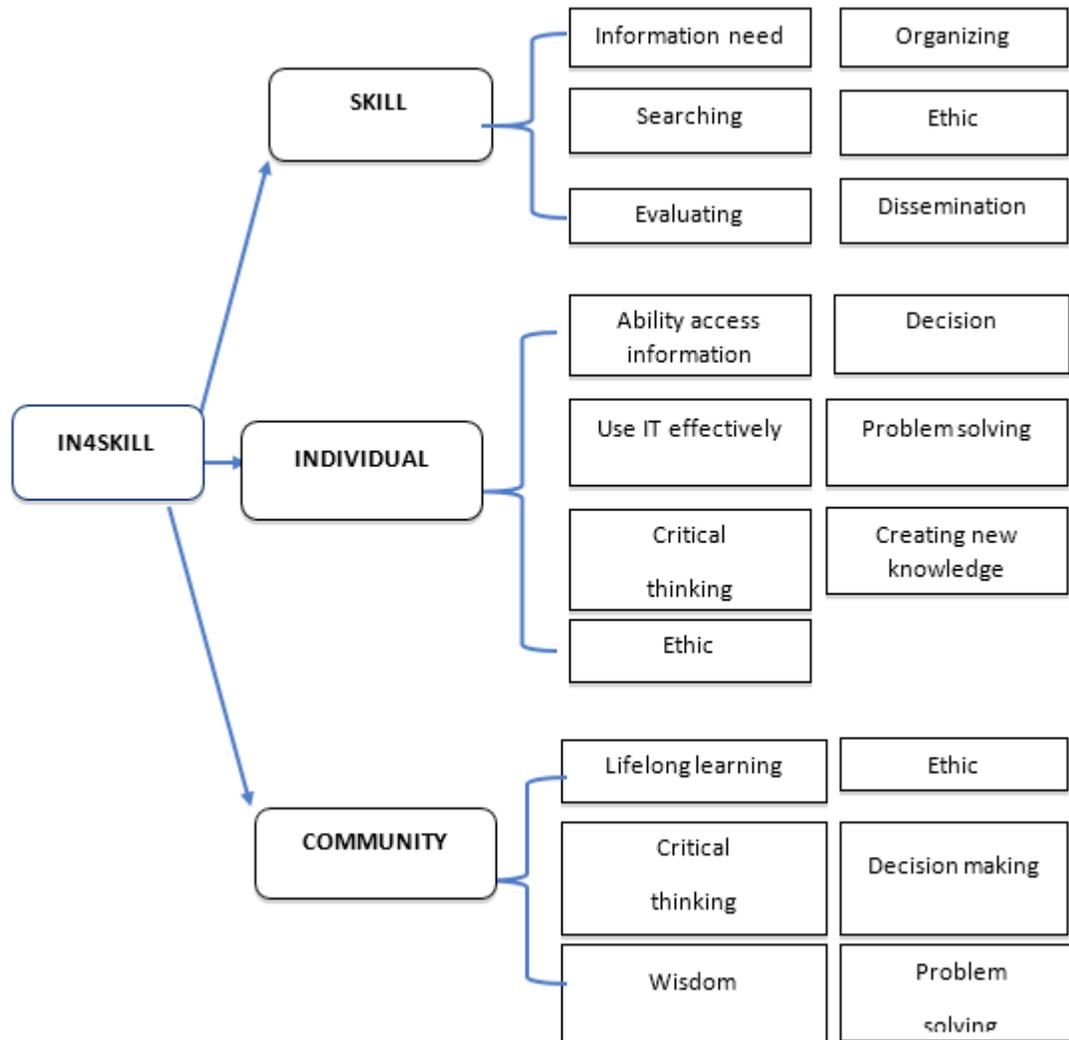


Figure 1: The impact of the In4skill for the Malaysians



Information Literacy in Rural Community

Information literacy for the rural community in Malaysia is an initiated program based on the background of the community. The rural community in Malaysia needs a lot of information to become more competitive and contribute to the Malaysian economy. Educational disadvantage and low income are the factors that affect the lives of rural community. The rural community requires information for the entire agricultural process, from selection of crops to be grown and suitability of the soil to the marketing of the agricultural produce. They also need information about health, education, avenues for additional income, and availability of financial assistance. Hence, there is a need for them to become information literate to make the best use of the available information (Parvathamma & Pattar, 2013).

From 2011 to 2017, the In4skill Information Literacy program has moved forward at a larger scale by collaborating with various rural community agencies, non-government agencies, rural schools, and also state and village libraries. Table 2 shows that NLM has organized 13 In4skill Information Literacy Programs with 769 participants. NLM has already trained 876 teachers from urban and rural schools and 1,529 libraries staff from the state and village libraries. Trained trainers will organize information literacy programs in their own community or collaborate with other organization/agencies to teach information literacy.

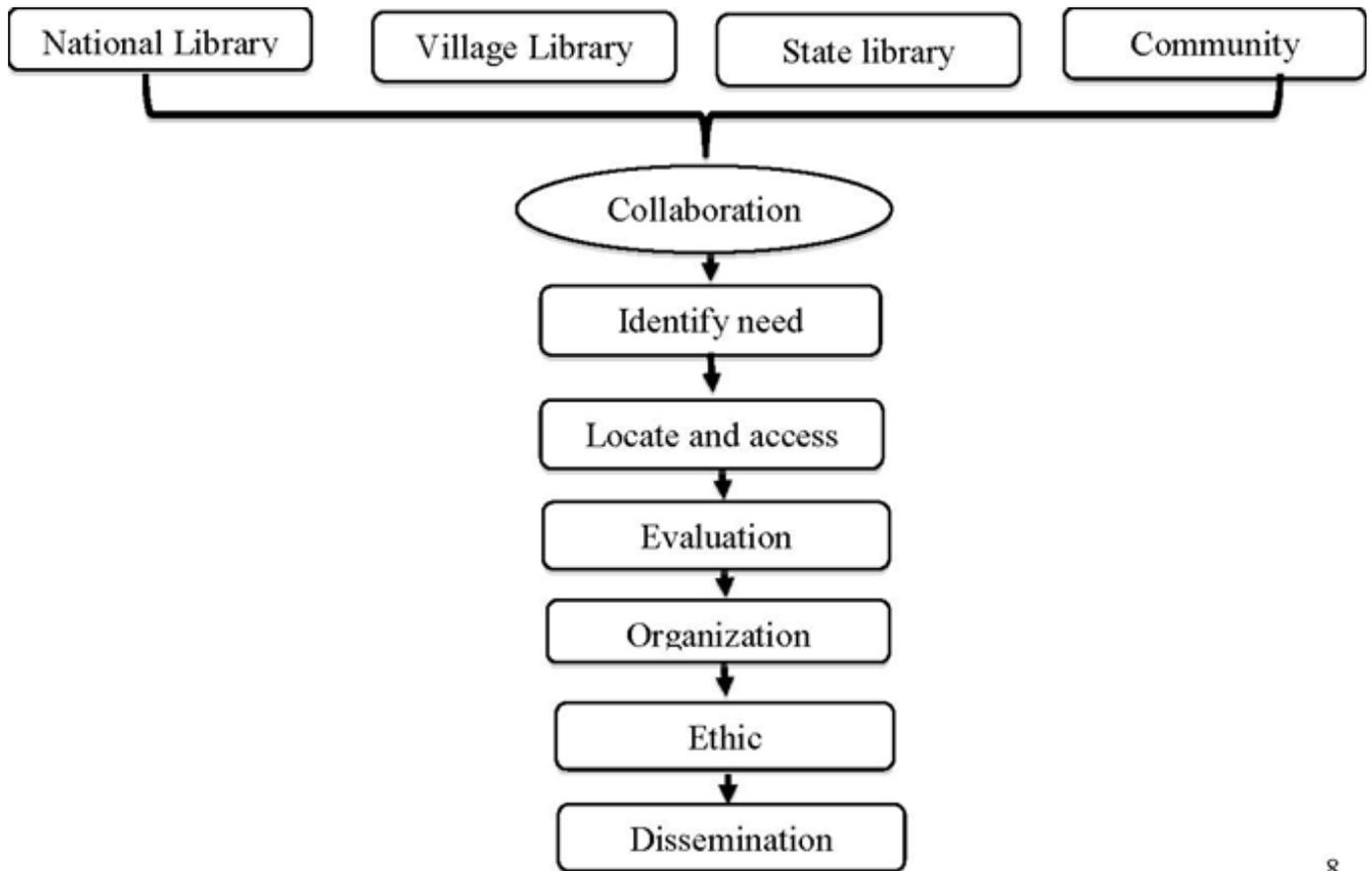
Table 2 : In4skill Information Literacy Programs Conducted and Participants

Years	Information Literacy Programs		Training of Trainers		
	Rural	Communi- ties	NGO	Teacher	Library
2011	-	-	-	-	-
2012	-	-	-	-	6 (582)
2013	-	-	1 (44)	2 (65)	3 (157)
2014	1 (100)	-	-	1 (25)	5 (152)
2015	3 (210)	-	-	1 (200)	1 (20)
2016	-	-	2 (40)	1 (34)	4 (239)
2017	2 (330)	-	-	3 (161)	3 (134)
2018 (May)	2 (41)	-	-	3 (391)	20 (245)
TOTAL	8 programs (681 participants)	-	3 programs (84 participants)	11 programs (876 participants)	42 programs (1,529 participants)

In addition to offering the In4skill Information Literacy Program, NLM collaborated with various libraries, such as the state library and village library, to promote the information literacy program. NLM conducts the Training of Trainers Workshop for the state and village librarians and assistant librarians. This is to ensure rural community are not left behind in finding useful information for their life and work.



Figure 2: Information Literacy Model for Rural Community



8

i. Identifying information needs

The librarians provided reasons for the requirement in defining the information needed and it can be done by introducing participants with the accurate technique. The need for information is based on the participants' requirement such as agriculture, government policies and programs, health and politics. This skill is aimed at providing participants on how to recognize the lack of information related to their life and work.

ii. Locating and accessing information

This module is concerned with the information searching strategies and tools to locate the information. The librarians will guide the participants on how to use basic searching strategies such as keywords. Participants will also be exposed to the different types of information sources such as printed materials/human sources/institutional sources/free open access for agricultural, health, financial and politics. NLM also provides ubiquitous library or U-Library to provide quick and easy information to the rural community. Most of the rural community are not aware of the existence of online sources which can help them to gain more knowledge about their life and work.

iii. **Evaluating**

These activities will use the evaluation strategies such as authority, objectivity, quality, time and relevancy. The participants will be given an example such as articles from printed and non-printed sources and they will evaluate the article.

iv. **Organizing**

Organizing of information is also important to ensure the participants can quickly retrieve the information that they have gathered. The librarians will share organizing techniques for printed and electronic materials including online materials.

v. **Ethic**

This session will lead into the mechanics of legal or copyright issues, intellectual property and plagiarism.

vi. **Dissemination**

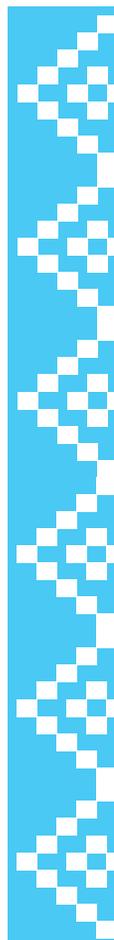
This module is all about how participants can disseminate their writings, such as articles, reviews, assignment, theses and others, using available mediums such as printed, electronic and new media such as social media.

The implementation of information literacy model in rural communities will close the knowledge gaps between urban communities and rural communities. In4skill Information Literacy Programs also provide solutions on how information literacy can improve the economy, health and social welfare, which in turn will also affect the lives of villagers.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are based on the NLM's In4skill Information Literacy Programs and initiatives in promoting the importance of information literacy. The importance of information literacy should be implanted in the minds of the people.

- a. Public libraries, especially state and village libraries, should cooperate more with various government agencies and NGOs in improving information literacy rate among the rural community, ensuring rural communities are information literate and having the skills to acquire information and use advanced technologies to use information effectively related to their work and daily life.
- b. Using audio-visual materials to conduct information literacy program for rural community with low literacy rates. This to ensure they are learning information literacy at their own capabilities.
- c. It is important to provide enough funding for the development of information literacy



- d. Collaboration between libraries and media organizations and professional bodies to promote information literacy.
- e. Establish an information literacy commission that can monitor the implementation of the standard for information literacy, information literacy initiatives, and giving advice to organizations and agencies regarding information literacy.
- f. Continuous support from the top level management of government agencies and private agencies for ensuring information literacy as one of the main skill that should master by their staffs for life-long learning
- g. Increasing the broadband speed in rural areas because the good broadband speed can help improve the economy in rural areas and to bridging the information gap between urban and rural areas.

Conclusion

The provision of information literacy for the rural community to empower rural community is necessary to ensure they can contribute to the nation in terms of economy and social development, as well as for their own living standards. These rural people are industrious and eager to enhance their lives, thus assistance should be provided to enable them to improve in their occupations. If librarians can contribute more on the information literacy programs for these people, more impact will be made to the people of the rural community.

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