

National commission on libraries

National Knowledge Commission gives nod



In order to reform the Libraries and Information Services (LIS) sector in India, the government has decided to set up an autonomous National Commission on Libraries. The decision comes after recommendations made by the National Knowledge Commission (NKC). “The NKC had recognised public libraries as an important element of the foundation of a knowledge economy. Hence, we recommended to the government to set up a commission and it has agreed,” said Sam Pitroda, chairman, NKC.

“The commission would be set up as a statutory body to address information and learning needs of the citizens of India,” he informed. He said the commission would also oversee the functioning of public and private libraries in India. A national census of all libraries would also be prepared by undertaking a nation-wide survey to know how many public and private libraries exist in India. Collection of census data on libraries would provide baseline data for planning, Pitroda informed at a four-day international conference organised by Delhi University on academic libraries.

The NKC recommended that the commission must assess the manpower requirements of the country in the area of LIS management, and take necessary steps to meet the country's requirement through LIS education and training. "For establishing a well-equipped institute for advanced training and research in library and information science, the government should also set up an Indian Institute of Library and Information Science," he added.

"DU has spent 2.2 crores on subscription of electronic resources. At present, Delhi University Library System (DULS) has access to 30 databases of the world under which students can access around 3,000 journals. And around 25,000 online resources in the form of monographs, conference, proceedings and audio-visual material," said S Majumdar, university librarian and head of DULS (TNN 12 October 2009).