

Skills for Library Professionals in The Present Information Technology (IT)

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Abstract

In the present information technology era, knowledge gained by each and every individual plays an important role in the development of a country. Hence active participation and effective leadership qualities on the part of each and every individual is considered to be of greater importance in the development of the nation as a whole. Today various changes have been seen in various sectors and this is due to introduction of the concept of Information technology. The usage of ICT (Information and communication technology) have enabled various sectors such as industries, schools, colleges, institutes, business, hospitals, media etc., in easy management of resources and information, and here libraries are no exception because usage of ICT in management of libraries have great effect on the activities of acquiring, storage and utilization of various resources available in libraries. The management of ICT based libraries has been undergoing great transformation and change which requires the quality of effective leadership management on part of the Librarians. Leadership in general is a process wherein an individual influences or guides a group of other individuals to achieve specific goal. Librarian's today act as leaders with the ability to evaluate information, organize information, store information for enabling effective knowledge retrieval and dissemination of information. Thus Librarians role in building good team, good team work, right vision, providing proper direction, proper planning and right supervision enabling effective management and thus achieve specific goal is

important. Apart from Leadership qualities there are requirement of several other necessary skills on the part of the Librarians. This paper aims to justify the same.

Key words: Skills, Soft Skills, Librarianship, Information and communication technology.

Introduction

Education systems today are playing great role in imparting quality education to individuals by building knowledge individuals who work for the prosperity of the society. Libraries being the heart of the education systems have great role in development of the knowledge of the individuals. Thus Librarians role in managing libraries require multidimensional task which may be management of resources, exposure to digital management of resources and services. Apart from obtaining high qualification academically and being well trained technically, it is important to develop softer interpersonal and relationship building skills to enable effective communication among library users. The attitude of Librarians towards library users should be good in terms of behavior, politeness, and listening to users need with patience and finally to possess the quality of strong desire and positive attitude to guide users in right way. Good qualification, enthusiastic service commitment, and courage are the necessary qualities required for library professionals.

Role of Librarians

The society today has undergone tremendous changes and developments in which information is playing important role. The way information is created, consolidated and accessed has changed tremendously. Information communication technologies have great influence on producing larger volumes of information, developing new ways of packaging information, and developing new techniques for managing information. The impact of these developments has made librarians today to update their knowledge with new skills to meet the demands of users for information resources and services. Information explosion and developments in Information communication technology have called for great transformation and changes in the functions and services of library. Librarians today have to perform a wide variety of roles such as:

- **Educator/ Expert advisor:** As an educator/expert advisor librarian plays an important role in educating the users of library to identify their needs and guiding them to get

relevant information from wide pool of information to their preference. Educating users with respect to issues on copy right, intellectual property, information standards for organization and information management.

- **Trainer:** As a trainer, librarian trains his/her subordinates enthusiastically with regard to functions related to library.
- **Teacher:** Librarian as a teacher teaches group of students or individual on usage of library resources and services and tries to promote reading habits among users by facilitating and promoting reading clubs.
- **Initiator:** Librarian as an initiator tries to preserve the cultural heritage by organizing various cultural programs.
- **Hardline negotiators:** Librarians today act as negotiator so that the information needs of the poor may be catered who are in poor terms of having access to global information infrastructures.
- **Information management consultants:** As information management consultant, can help network users to provide access to the subset of networked information sources.
- **Intelligent Agents:** Intelligent agents act as catalysts to improve the role of librarians. Today librarians are becoming very important in the information centric universe as they are fulfilling new roles as content providers, search strategists and digital cataloguers.
- **Marketers:** Librarians as marketers play an important role in selection of information, and offering of access services and information services to remote users as information today is considered to be a valuable economic resource, marketable commodity and social wealth for development of the society.

- **Knowledge preserver:** Librarians today act as knowledge preservers who know digital preservation policies, strategies and copyright information and helps in preservation of digital and electronic information.
- **Collaborators:** Librarians as effective collaborators help users in information exchange by making use of the latest technology of connectivity and networking.
- **Content Manager:** As a content manager librarians play dynamic role to provide easy access to computer held digital information such as abstracts, indexes, full-text databases, dissemination of digital information from the computer held digital content.
- **Web-Designer:** As a web designer, the librarians play great role in creation of web page which aims to deliver information about library and its related services such as library work hours, location, library policies, library staff details, OPAC etc.

Skills for Library Professionals in the present Information Technology era

In this age of Information Communication Technology, skills for library professionals are necessary because, It helps to realize the the vision of the organization and thus strive for achieving required goal. It enables to equip themselves with latest modern technologies to meet the necessary user requirements in the changing competitive world and thus provide quality service for users of library to the maximum extent possible.

Soft skill is an important element of an individual working for any organization and here librarian in no exception because soft skill refers to individuals EQ i.e. emotional intelligent quotient. The success of any organization depends on the effective contribution of the individual in which soft skill plays an important key element. The term soft skill is related to those personal feelings, emotions, insights and that of inner acquired knowledge. They are the general behavior skill that helps in achieving the required specific goal of the institutions. Apart from several soft skills the other skills any Librarians require will be:

- Generic skills which comprise communication skill, flexibility, adaptability, self-confidence, creativity, innovation, problem solving, decision making, customer relationship, presentation skills, time management, stress management etc.

- The communication skill is very important on the part of the librarians because while communicating it is necessary to understand language which helps in solving the problem of any user community and also it requires that librarians hear to user's problem with patience providing convincing information to user's requirement.
- Managerial skill which comprises local and global thinking, planning and organization, finance management, leadership, team building, resource management etc.
- Professional skills which comprise Information technology skills which include knowledge of hardware, software, networking skills, library automation, database creation, internet, scanning, digitization, desk top publishing, and web based services etc.
- The conceptual skill which is the ability to work with that of new ideas and new concepts thus enabling comfortable express of ideas to give a shape to development of organization.
- The interpersonal skill which includes ability to work with sincerity, dedication, motivation, co-ordination, responsibility etc., which is important for any librarian as it becomes necessary to deal with various user community, management, Book seller, Book supplier etc.
- Librarian's role in maintaining public relation is a skill which is important because it enables librarians in providing right information to right reader at the right time.
- The art of writing is a necessary skill on the part of librarians as it enables good research work, project report, seminars and workshops.
- The skill of presentation of issues/concepts by librarians plays an important role during NAAC committee visits, library committee meetings and meetings with management.

- Librarians should use the skill of teaching when it comes to introduction of new rules and regulations for proper usage of Library, enabling information literacy for new courses and additions of Documents or new technology or catalogues introduced.
- Librarians should ensure the skill of proper time management when it comes to providing specific resources to users on time, reporting to work on time and thus building the level of confidence with users of library.

Thus in the present situation, librarians today must have willingness to learn new concepts/techniques, should have the ability to think, should poses good personal gesture, should have the desire to easily accept new responsibilities when changes occurs in library, and should be committed for providing quality service to users of library.

Conclusion

For any sector change is the necessary requirement including the education systems Change for survival and cause is a must. Thus the role of Librarians in transmission of knowledge to users through various skills is of greater importance because it ensures progress of the individual and the society as a whole. The skills acquired by librarians enable to bring out hidden specialized knowledge and creative ability of the users thus building a knowlegible society. It enables librarians to keep abreast of latest techniques and thus help in providing quality service to users. Participation and interest in attending seminar/symposia, workshops, and conferences enable librarians to extend their existing knowledge and thus build their required competency level. Efforts to getting exposed to new latest concepts and dimensions can be met through attending several training programmes.

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