# Management Skills for Library Professionals in the Digital Era

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*Abstract -* **The paper discusses the management skills for the library professionals in the present scenario. The main objective is to highlights the managerial skills for practicing library professionals. Information management is a cycle of processes that support the organization's learning activities: identifying information needs, acquiring information, organizing and storing information, developing information, distributing information, and using information. An analysis of each of these processes suggests new strategies for maximizing the value of information in organizations, and for a reinvention of the roles of information professionals, be they librarians, information providers, information technologists, or information scientists. It is also discusses the functions of library management, how it is benefited to library professionals. It is also discussed that a library professionals who have the managerial skills perform and maintained library.**

*Keywords:* **Management, Library Professional, Management Skill, Professional skills,**

## I.INTRODUCTION

In early time's man knew little. He could store the information only in his little brain. With the passes of time the tradition of verbal transfer of information came into existence. However information continued to grow and man had to resort to recording on mediums like rocks, papyrus and paper. At one time, a library was regarded as a storehouse and books were meant for preservation. The librarian was supposed to be a custodian, who did not encourage the use of books. The readers were expected to use the library on their own. At the most, if a reader asked for a book, then so called librarian would pass on the book and leave him alone. Now scenario has been changed today, information is growing at an unimaginable pace, leading to an information explosion. Libraries are organic, living, changing bodies of information and they are becoming increasingly "electronic" as their traditional, printed resources are being enhanced and extended through electronic technology. A library is considered as an "organization" within an "organization" as it deals with planning, co-coordinating, controlling and directing functions. The intelligent organization is able to mobilize the different kinds of knowledge that exist in the organization in order to enhance performance. It pursues goals in a changing environment by adapting behavior according to knowledge about itself and the world it thrives in. The intelligent organization is therefore a learning organization that is skilled at creating, acquiring, organizing, and sharing knowledge, and at applying this knowledge to design its behavior.

## II.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives are
1. To study the need for management skills for library professionals
2. To identify the library professionals for the management skills;
3. To describe the need for management skills for library professionals; and
4. To suggest measures for management skills for library professionals

## III.ROLE OF MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF LIBRARY FUNCTIONING

The management skills expected of new LIS professionals are quite vast. What is attempted to explain here is the management skills required for working in the electronic environment. To start with technological awareness coupled with skills for technology assessment or evaluation and selection of appropriate technology and products is fundamental. In the years to come, the new electronic environment is likely to require a small number of high-tech strategic planners, professionals who exhibit leadership in use of new media and those who are able to do lobbying and advocacy and play organization politics. Further, new LIS professionals need to have management skills required for information management in teams. In other words, skills to work in team environment and on collaborative basis (e.g. Library networks and resource sharing) is likely to be the new order of the day. A sort of leadership as well as fellowship skills is required to work in teams. A skill is ability acquired through education and training which can convert knowledge into performance. Skills are essential to achieve set objectives. Skills are aspects of human behavior that are learnt and improved with practice.
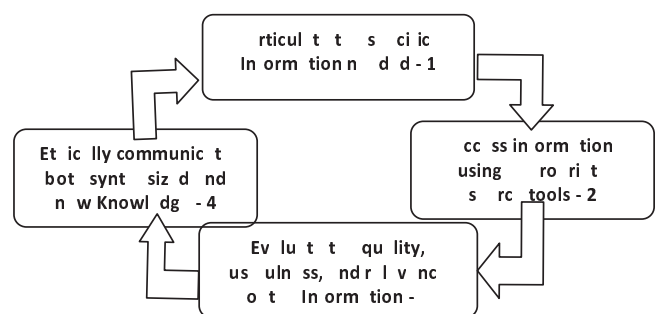


Fig.1 Role of Management skills in increasing the efficiency of library functioning

The above diagram states the cycle of information usage for development of intelligence organization. The first step is to articulate the information which is needed to develop the intelligence organization by using appropriate tools. The collected information is to be evaluated in terms of its quality, usefulness and relevance of the information and communicate the same ethically to the needed to the users.

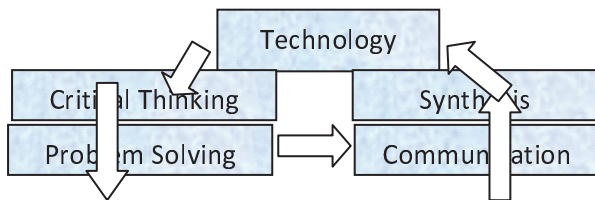***A.Management skills needed for library professionals:***



Fig.2 Management skills

A library professional that has management skills can easily grow. In the Information technology age the concept of library is totally changed. So all library professional are required to possess the following management skills to perform their duties.

*1. Technical Skills:*
Technical Skills implies an understanding and proficiency in a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, procedures, or techniques; it involves specialized knowledge, analytical ability within that specialty, and facility in the use of the tools and techniques of the specific discipline. Vocational and on- the-job training programmes largely do a good job in developing this skill. In organization, head of department or unit is to be chosen on the basis of some prerequisite qualities and qualifications. These skills basically involve the use of knowledge, methods and techniques in performing a job efficiently and effectively.
**Synthesis:** The collected information is to be sorted out in a proper way where the reader can access it without any inconvenience. The relevant data is to be synthesized and see that it is stored in a proper place.

*2. Communication Skills:*
Communication skills are most important and necessary at all levels of management. Communication is natural to all living creatures. Communication is established even between human and non-human beings if they live together. Communication skills are most important and necessary at all levels of management. Communication always has a purpose. We communicate because we want to make someone do something or take some action, or think or feel in a certain way. Communication is the way library leaders can bridge the gaps, stay in touch, build trust, monitor performance and attain the concerted vision. The best communication process forces one to listen, without good listening, the transfer of meaning is impossible. Simplicity and clarity in communication are very important. Proper communications help in controlling, misunderstanding conflicts and improving co-ordination in

the groups. Reading, writing, learning, speaking, listening, presenting are also the important communication skills.

*3. Problem Solving Skills:*
Another skill which is needed for the library professionals is to perceive the problem and solve it at the appropriate time. In keeping and tracking the volumes if any sort of problem arises, it is to be attended immediately as it would not affect other volumes sequence.

*4.Critical thinking:*
Critical thinking is the process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information to reach an answer or conclusion. This is needed to the library professionals. Apart from this process, there are other skills which help library professionals.

*5. Decision Making Skills:*
Good decisions are at the heart of good management. We are all decision makers. Every aspect of our lives-as managers, family members, librarian, and citizens-is governed by decisions. Decision-making skills are very important to library professional. Making a decision is much more than taking it. Like it or not, no decision will be successful without the co-operation, commitment and enthusiasm of your colleagues, team or users. Making a decision begins when we realize that something needs to be done.

*6. Leadership Skills:*
Leadership is a topic of great importance to people who are leaders, who aspire to be leaders, or who are on the receiving end of leadership. Leadership is the process of inspiring individuals to give of their best to achieve a desired result. It is about getting people to move in the right direction, gaining their commitment, and motivating them to achieve their goals. Leadership skills can be considered to be the personal qualities, behaviors, styles and decisions of the leader. According to Ralph Nader "The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers" Leadership skills are very important for 21st century library Professionals.

*7. Performance Skills:*
Performance management is a term being used increasingly to cover a number of personnel techniques. Performance development provides a means of communication what is happening within the organization and demonstrating its future direction in a way that has immediate meaning to the individual members of staff. Only that library professional that is performing well is called truly librarian. In some professional colleges employee gets special salary & promotion on performance basis. Library services may be improved through high performance of library professionals.

*8. Team Building Skills:*
Groups develop into teams when all the members understand their common purpose. In effective teams each member plays an assigned role using his or her talent to the best advantage.

Most wins or losses are the results of teamwork. In sports, feedback is often immediate. If teamwork is lacking, good managers can identify where the problems are, and initiate corrective action in order to change things until the desired results are achieved. The absence of teamwork at any level (or between levels) will limit organizational effectiveness and can eventually kill an organization. Team building concepts can be applied in any organization, without team building efforts library cannot grow.

### 9. Time management Skills:

According to Dr. S. R. Ranganathan's fourth law "Save the time of the user", it means he indicates about time management for library professional & user both. In this turbulent world we never seem to have enough time. Very few people have a true picture of how they spend their time. Working long hours is not necessarily a sign that you are overloaded with work. It can mean that you need to develop your time management. So Planning is a vital element of time management.

### 10. Effective Thinking Skills:

Thinking is an integral part of human existence. To gain maximum happiness and fulfillment we require a repertoire of thinking skills. Thinking skills helps the library professional both to prevent avoidable problems and to manage unavoidable problems construct.

### 11. Interpersonal Skills:

Interpersonal or interactive skills are those used by people to build and maintain relationships with one another in order to achieve a purpose. Interpersonal skills are exercised when someone, for example an appraiser, initiates action to achieve an aim, which is dependent on the reaction and agreement of another person. When you work in large organization, it is most important to build rapport with all departments, which helps in managing the library and providing better services to everyone.

### 12. Negotiating Skills:

These skills are required on special occasions such as handling bulk purchase, Journals subscription, and specialized database subscription with vendors.

### 13. Teaching skills:

This is essential for new user orientations. It also includes motivating reading habits in users.

### 14. Presentation skills:

The presentation skills are required in reporting writing, research proposals, project reports, library committee meetings, daily work which represent the library management, submit annual report which requires good writing and presentation skills.

### 15. Motivating Skills:

Motivating other people is about getting them to move in the direction you want them to go in order to achieve the task.

Motivation can be described as goal-directed behaviour. People are when they expect that a course of action is likely to lead to the attainment of a goal and a valued reward is one which satisfies their needs. Motivation starts when someone consciously or unconsciously recognizes an unsatisfied need. This need establishes a goal and action is taken which it is expected will achieve that goal. Motivational skills are also important managerial skills.

## IV. ROLE OF LIBRARIAN IN THE CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT

The development of IT is the gift of twenty first century. The role of librarian becomes very important in the modern environment. If he wants to adopt new technologies, it is necessary for him to motivate the staff and improve the professional skills. Different methods applicable for libraries have already discussed above. Librarian can use any one of them. The librarian can help them to update on latest Information technology and current techniques of Knowledge Management. Librarian can adopt SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) technique. The librarian should make the staff understand the reasons for change, there by motivating the staff to accommodate changes in information provision, information storage and information access and to do value additions to. The library staff must be educated to assume greater responsibilities and to grow into more demanding roles. End users of libraries generally view working staff in library as a "librarian". Libraries, like most other organizations, utilize several categories of employees.

The categories of staff vary from library to library; however, there are three basic groups:

i) **Professionals** - staff with Master's degree in library & information science and or/a subject graduate degree (librarians / professionals / subject specialists). The professional staff, particularly at higher levels, therefore they have higher academic professional qualification and several years of experience on the basis of which library needs are identified, problems analyzed, goals set, activities planned and executed. They play leadership roles, directing both the total organization and the various departments and divisions. They constitute the top and middle level officers of the library, holding positions like Director, Chief Librarian, Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Assistant Librarian and professional Assistants.

ii) **Semi Professionals** - are a number of essential jobs in a library, many of which are routine and repetitive in nature. These type of jobs are performed by a category of staff who have generally with a degree ranging from high school to under postgraduate qualifications and library training at a level which exposes them to all routine work in libraries. They also pick up skills on job because of their basic training in library work and carry out important routines. Such staff is referred to as 'semiprofessionals'. Persons who are involved in these types of work are designated as technical assistants, library assistant, catalogers, shelf

assistants, etc. They give the much-needed support to higher-level work in libraries.

iii) **Technical staff:** - current trends and future possible developments clearly indicate that in university, research and special libraries, a distinct feature would be the increasing use of computer, communication and media technologies for providing library and information services. Development of Local area network, computer application in libraries, reprographic services, and use of audiovisual material etc. require specialist staff. All these developments would naturally increase acquisition of sophisticated electronic equipment and machinery .The handling of which would require specialists in these field. Hence a large library may have to employee specialist to system design and operations.

iv) **Administrative Staff:** A library has to perform a number of jobs relating to administrative and financial matters. These include personnel, purchase, stores cleaning, security, accounting, budget preparation, financial control, accounting etc.

Due to different categories of staff there is big gap in thinking of Top management and Lower management. Individuals have different levels of abilities. If the two are incongruent, the individual would be frustrated and his job would not be done well. Conflict or cooperation both emergence processes occur within groups and between them. Lewin, Sherif, Klineberg, and others have demonstrated that conflict and its accompanying aggressiveness are features of interaction between groups and not the idiosyncratic or sick personality of leaders.

## V.CONCLUSION

To minimize the expense and maximize the output, management skills are must to library professionals. Especially to information management in the environment of advanced technological tool and highly flexible /sophisticated manpower, some soft skills are to be needed to handle them accordingly. Managerial skills, which are very common, like communication, motivation, leadership, performance, teambuilding, and time management skills.  Using motivation any organization like library can develop their staff work performance. As a means of effective motivation, the Knowledge Managers will do well in keeping their subordinates adequately informed of their plans, day by day activities, and changes in library' policies, rules, procedures, etc.  The careful attention is to be given by authorities in improving the environmental and working conditions to the satisfaction of the workers for enlisting their full cooperation in improving library services.

A lot of library in India (Especially in academic library) does not have trained & skilled library professionals. So a training program regarding management skill is required in regular basis, that would be definitely enhance and upgrade their skills in the functioning of the libraries. On the basis of above discussion we can say that management skills are very important to library professionals. Librarian's positions are

change and they meet the challenges of the internet, World Wide Web, Digital Library and online resources access in the knowledge society. So they must enrich their knowledge with management skills of the of the latest information communication technology development, to browse access and retrieve and they can provide quality information service to the knowledge society.

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