

Managerial Skill for Library Professionals in the Digital Library Environment

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(Received 21 December 2018; Revised 23 January 2019; Accepted 5 February 2019; Available online 12 February 2019)

Abstract - This article throws light to the Skills which should be acquired by the Library Staff in the Future Library Environment. The functional areas of library is diversified to vast service areas including Research, Educational Support, Social Activities, Women Empowerment, Cultural and heritage protection, Information Technology support to clientele, Effective administration of library Resources, Utilization Staff Man Power, Preservation of national Integrity, Support to senior citizens etc. In such a situation there arise the skill sharpening process in a modern and technology based context. Librarians are the connecting point between the actual user and the information sources. In order to satisfy the user's information thrust for knowledge, the librarian should cope with new innovations in the technology and work.

Keywords: Staff Skills, Library Services, Future Library Staff Roles, Professional Competencies

I. INTRODUCTION

Library is a public service oriented institution. Its main aim is free service to its clientele without material profit oriented output. The services offered by the library, the clientele of the library, the working pattern of the library etc. are changed a lot. The modern concept of library service entirely different from the past concept. The entire society and mankind underwent great changes during the recent years. Many reasons accelerated this change. Library as a social institution cannot stand apart from these changes. In order to compete with emerging trends, the library staff should equipped with new weapons and tools. The path change from "Traditional to Technological" is not so easy. The traditional ways of information preservation, search and dissemination should be in cooperated with the technological and modernized methods. The tasks of new generation libraries are identified as the extraction of maximum available resources and services in the most beneficial way and easy distribution to the clientele without delay. For achieving this task the library staff must be skillful persons in diversified fields of information related areas.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In his article Peacock (2000) explains the role of librarian as a multi tasker. He says that the multiple roles of library staff will be redefined on the basis of increasing and changing user needs.

Ascione (2003) in her article Information Literacy Skills for Librarian says that Information Literacy is the 21st century librarian skill which would contribute much to the information search process.

Hilde and Johannessen (2006) in their article Advice from a Librarian: Information Literacy Skills in Research Process emphasis the role of librarian in helping the research workers and maximize the utilization of library possessions for quality research.

III. RESEARCH QUESTION

The intension behind this study is to analysis

1. The changing and new domains of library service and user needs.
2. To understand the latest and up to date skills required by the library staff.
3. The need and importance of skill development in service procedure and quality.
4. How to achieve professional competencies.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method is adopted for the study. Literature on the same subject and topic was referred and analysis was made. Observation method also adopted. Library staff working in various types institutions was observed and based on their present skills; evaluate the service provided by them. Various competencies essential for future library service is under stood by the evaluation of user needs with relation to the future library service atmosphere.

V. MAIN SKILLS DESIRABLE FOR THE FUTURE LIBRARIANS

A. Working Skills in Digital Environment

Librarian's role has changed from custodian of documents to Information Scientist. Libraries and staff should renovated with new technologies. Information in the current and future world should be stored in digital format. Collection development, processing, storing, preservation, dissemination of knowledge in digital atmosphere will be developed and the main user interest will divert to digital

format from print format. The core areas in which professionalism needs to acquire including Library Automation, Digital Library initiatives using open source software's, Online Learning Courses ,On line resource usage, building up of institutional repositories etc.,

Electronic Resources are the main items in the digital environment. The administration and utilization of these resources are the core specialized area of the librarian. E-Journals, E-Books, E- Thesis, E-Newspapers, and E-Magazines etc. are the store of information in the digital atmosphere. Information storage and access from Databases is a field of expertise of the library staff.

Collection development in the digital environment is very crucial task. The already existed collection can converted to digital format, new collection can process in digital format, maintains the collection, provide external equipments to access the digital collection are the core areas librarians skill.

B. ICT Skills for Library Staff

ICT skills include basic knowledge of Information and Communication Technology tools and techniques to advanced knowledge in the technological field. Staff should able manage the hardware and software, web pages, operating systems, social networking medias ,copy right issues and intellectual property rights in digital area, etc. LIS Curriculum needs to update with ICT Skills for Library Professionals. At the present and future information world majority of the information will be in digital format. Skills should be developed for the Preservation, Organization and dissemination of digital information.

Internet is the compendium of information. Skills should be developed to web site creation and management, the working knowledge with different web browsers, familiarizes the search patterns of search engines etc. Publication knowledge of academic journals in OJS platform will definitely sharpen librarian's digital skills and knowledge.

Networking is a crucial area in which the library staff needs expertise. The benefits of local area networks and wide area networks should effectively utilize for resource sharing and other information related activities. Networking protocols should be familiar with the staff. Audio Visual materials forms an integral part of library resources. Special care should give to this field to satisfy user needs.

C. Organization of Knowledge

It is the prime skill of the library staff. Diversification in the physical as well as digital forms of the library collection necessitated the advanced and convenient arrangement of the information sources in the most suited ways to user needs. Classification and Cataloguing are the traditional

ways of knowledge organization in libraries. Library staff should build a sound base on the traditional systems, at the same time they will be in a continuous process of finding out new innovations in classification and cataloguing methods. They develop strong working knowledge in the Web based technologies in both fields. They should create through knowledge in Bibliographic Data exchange in national and international level. Indexing and abstracting skill should be updated with current trends.

D. Library Managerial Skills

Library staff should develop managerial skills to manage the entire library activities in an efficient way. Luther Gullick keyword 'POSDCORB' (Planning, Organizing, Staffing Directing, Co-coordinating, Reporting & budgeting) is most applicable in the case of library staff also. Development of managerial skills leads to the efficient service and products. Among the managerial skills Time Management skill can be utilized to save the time of the users and there by providing quality service. Time is an essential component in Research scholars and other busy users. Time management tactics can be used in giving services and arranging the library routine works. The Leadership quality of the librarians resulted in better service inside and outside the library. As a good leader the librarian inspire the entire library team as well as the whole clientele.

Decision making and Decision Implementing skill should be encouraged among the library staff. For making the work place as a highly qualitative one, the staff should take sensible decisions in quick manner. Implementing the decisions in an effective and use full way is another method of betterment of the profession.

Skills to Works as Team Member are considered as essential for library staff. Sharing resources and man power is a common phenomenon in modern library service. Library staff can act as a member of global information providers and local information provides. In both cases the staff needs to prove their working ability in teams.

E. Research Encouraging Skill

Modern libraries will be the hub for research activities and there by laying foundation for qualitative research work which leads to society's and nations overall development. Library staff will create favorable research conditions both in physical and intellectual aspect. Knowledge in using research tools, utilization of research related materials, creation, maintenance and utilization of institutional repositories, Citation Index, databases etc. are the prime areas in which the library staff gets expertise.

Research data collection, data analysis using statistical tools, use of digital journals, magazines, books and other information sources for research purpose are the supporting works which can be done by library staff. The library staff

should maintain a direct contact with the research scholars of their parent institution, understand their research topic, and help the researcher to find out the data for their research purpose etc., will create a research friendly atmosphere in the library.

F. Financial Management Skill

Finance is one of the important pillar on which the entire library system and service made its foundation. Library is a nonprofit organization. The income is less and the expenditure is more. To bridge the difference between income and expenditure the librarians should have strict control over the financial matters of the library. While making the budget proposal, the available resources and services must be utilized completely and future plans also keep in mind.

The income sources like government funds, university grants, donations from national and international organizations and individuals, gifts and endowments must be collected and spend in a most useful manner. The fines and other penalties must be collected timely. While planning the financial resources, always consider the user types, available resources, future needs, coordination with other sections of the organization etc. Collection development shares the majority of expenditure. A justifies methods should be adopted for collection development. Implementing technological advancement in user services may minimize the service expenditure.

G. Information Literacy Skill

Literature search is an important task of library staff especially in research and academic libraries. Library staff should possess in depth subject knowledge in different fields and they must update their knowledge at every time. Literature search combined with Information Literacy skills give an opportunity for the library staff to master in their work fields. To achieve the strategic goals of library, systematic training should be provided to improve information literacy skills.

H. Skills to Co Ordinate Activities of Social Responsibility

From ancient times onwards library is considered as a social reforming institution. In the present and future scenario library staff can contribute much to the social uplifting. Library staff should develop skills to organize various programmes like protection of environment, cleanness, Information literacy, Knowledge management, Awareness programmes in various fields, Educational programmes for senior citizens, Women Empowerment etc. Library extension activities can be conducted with the cooperation of other agencies. Various cultural activities, coaching classes for employment, Social welfare activities are conducted by library staffs which are useful for common public.

I. Communication Skills

As library staff and users are in a continuous state of intaction for various purposes, developing communication skill among the library staff is an essential component of future librarianship. Effective communication should be there to achieve the organizational goals. Skills to use of various Communication channels, Communication Directions like Top – Bottom, Horizontal and Vertical should be practiced among the staff. Proper communication among the library staff, between the library staff and clientele, throughout the organization should be followed. The librarian needs to analysis and interpret the thoughts of the users and express in proper communication channels. Librarian needs to be a patient listener to solve the quires of the users. Communication creates an easy approachable attitude between the staff and the users. In the Communication process the staff should adopt an open mind, happy, free, understanding, and welcoming attitude. The reference librarian needs more communication skills while dealing with user quires. The circulation section staff always in touch with the users. Here also communication helps to improve the service. Over all communication can be used as an effective weapon in achieving the organizational goals.

J. Skills to promote Information Products and Services

Marketing is the best tactics for improving the business. In the context of library and information science, the marketing of information products and services earned more important. For better user satisfaction, the information related products like books, periodicals, journals, Reference works, and digital objects like CD, DVD, and Video etc should be marketed. Different user oriented services like training to the clientele, Current Awareness Service, Selective Dissemination of Information Service; Reference Service etc. should be properly marketed to get the maximum benefit to the ultimate users.

Each library has many services and products of its own. Normal activities like User education, User Studies, Library Bulletins, Library News Letters, Annul Report, Library Budget, Library Notice Board Informations, User Meetings at regular Intervals, Library publications etc. conducted in all libraries. All these activities can be utilized for Information service and products promotion. Librarian's skills can be utilized to convert even these normal activities and also latest marketing strategies can be used to promote the library services. The possibilities social media, social networking sites should be utilized for the promotion of library services.

K. Teaching Skills and Learning Skills

In the age of self-education and distance education the role of library staff in more crucial in information dissemination. The library staff working especially in academic libraries should sharpen their teaching skills to satisfy the user needs.

In the same manner the staff should always in the process of learning new things and implement those things in their work station to improve their service to the users. The role of librarian as teacher started earlier with the method “user education”. Now the library staff can conduct training programs for ICT related services in library. They can organize sessions on better utilization of information resources globally, exchange of data, information processing and retrieval etc.

Learning is another skill of the new era. Library staff should be continuous learner. They should learn new technological and practical developments in the information world and apply all those things without delay. Other than the curriculum, the staff must acquire knowledge from different sources and share it with their clientele.

L. Skills for Providing Quality Library Service

According to Robinson, “Quality is meeting the requirements of customer- now and in the future.” Providing quality service becomes the motto of library staff. For that purpose several measures needs to take. Improving staff skills in overall service areas and physical conditions are the main purpose of quality service. Total Quality Management gets more prominent in the library context. For providing quality library service, the staff needs skills to attract the users to the library, keep the users with a close relationship, to satisfy the user needs in current and fast approach, provide the users with latest collection both in print and digital media, provide best, nature friendly, clean physical facilities etc. The staff should be always user friendly.

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The entire library system and concept of library service modified.
2. User approaches and needs are diversified and changed.
3. The physical and virtual arrangements of library set up revolutionized.
4. New skills are most essential to provide best user service.
5. Skills included analytical, intellectual, managerial, technical, human resource etc. possess high rating in improving the service and products.

6. Existing staff needs to undergo continuous learning and training process to acquire new skills.
7. LIS Curriculum should be based on international standards to mould new professionals
8. Dr. S R Ranganathan’s 5th Law “The library is a growing organism” getting more prominence in the new library context

VII. CONCLUSION

Library and library service are in path of change. Library staffs are not the mere custodian of documents. Their functions, rolls, services, attitudes etc. should be renovated according to need of the age. Developing and achieving new professional skills is an inevitable part of the library profession. Dr. S R Ranganathan’s Fifth law states that “The library is a growing organism”, to satisfy this principle library staff also grow as per the situation and modified their skills in Service and Products.

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