

Future Skills for LIS Profession

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Abstract:-

In the last few years there have been dynamic changes in LIS profession. Due to advent of new technology, internet, e-library, proliferation of online catalogue the role of librarian has changed. It has become important to keep abreast of the rapidly changing digital environment and to look at the recent trends and developed various skills and abilities to adopt changes. Even the institutions must provide short term training courses to meet changing library needs. The paper studies the challenges in LIS profession and future skills required for LIS profession.

Keywords: - Information Technology, Digital Environment, Library Skills, Library Profession.

Introduction:-

There is a constant change in a higher education, the academic library is subject to these changes and to cope up with this pace of change, it is necessary to develop certain skills for librarians. David Lankes in his book *The Atlas of New Librarianship* states that 'future libraries will be valued more for services than for book collections.¹ The 21st Century, librarian is a professional who understands the millennial library customer, is able to adapt existing services and create new ones to meet their community's needs, and change the public perception of "library".² Now he is more efficient and has new roles as intermediary, facilitator, end-user trainer/educator, web organizer & designer, researcher, interface designer, knowledge manager/professional and sifter of information resources.³

Literature Review:-

Various authors have gone through different studies and research. They identified the importance of skills in library profession. Many authors agreed that different range of skills is required in new modern libraries and digital environment.

Sandra Hirsh (2018) in his book has provided the overview of libraries, discusses how

technology has influenced on information professionals in today's digital information. The author has highlighted recent trends, issues, challenges, opportunities and innovations in future. The book emphasize on various management skills needed by information professionals. The book provokes critical thinking, interaction, discussion to facilitate the learning process.⁴

Jeffrey G. Coghill and Roger G. Russell (2016) focus on changes and challenges faced by health science librarian. The author stated that new technologies and customer needs required librarians to continuously cope up with new principles, skills and systems to manage digital information. The author studied that the various technical skills, administrative skills, budgetary skills, digital skills etc. are needed to be successful in future. He mentioned the ways of developing and accessing those skills.⁵

Patricia A. Kreitz and JoAnn DeVries (2007) studied that there is a shortage of Sci-tech librarians and it is crucial to train and retain Sci-tech librarian. The book covers the topics / strategies to recruit train and retain Sci-tech librarian. She also covers the skills / professional competencies needed to become successful Sci-tech librarian.⁶

Biddiscombe (2001) states that the 'hybrid library' poses the need for 'hybrid information

professionals.' According to him, it is difficult to acquire a large number of skills within an individual, but modern librarian must be able to identify the informational needs, manage users and motivate people with different skills to work in a team.⁷

Patridge and Hallam (2004) stated a profile of skills and qualifications to needed in a librarian. He divided the qualification into technical and generic ones.

Ashcroft (2004) identifies basic six skills required for librarian like marketing, professional, communication, negotiation, collaboration and personal skills.⁸

Marion (2001) conducted a research on job advertisements and concluded that communication skill is most wanted qualification.⁹

Steele and Guha (1998) studies that ICT skills, communication skills and administration skills are essential for modern librarians.¹⁰

Mahesh and Rekha Mittal in their studies concluded that new information professionals must understand the expected skill in employment sectors and develop their own skill to bridge the gap.¹¹

Nirmal Ranjan (2007) studied about various skills required for LIS professions in IT environment and highlighted on various programs to enhance this skills.¹²

Objective of the study:-

- To study the problems/ challenges for librarian in new digital era.
- To identify the skills/ competencies required for future librarian.

Methodology:-

The study is based on comprehensive review of related literature & available material on the internet was also explored.

Library and Library Profession:-

The modern academic courses in LIS should aim to create the "complete librarian". Fourie (2004) points out that the education should not only focus on the technical matters of Library Science, such as the creation of a digital library, but should also be orientated towards the development of survival and affective skills.¹³

Library and information centers are now becoming a global information hub therefore library professional must be a continuous learner. The

future of librarians is exciting and vibrant with endless possibilities shaped by changing technology

According to ALA (American Library Association) glossary of library and information science "Library as a collection of materials organized to provide physical bibliographical and intellectual access to group with a staff that is trained to provide services and program related to information needs of the target group."¹⁴

UNESCO define Library as, "any organized collection of printed books and periodical or any other graphic or audio-visual materials with a staff to provide and facilitate the use of such materials as are required to meet the informational research, educational and recreational needs of users."¹⁵

A **librarian** is a person who works professionally in a library, providing access to information and sometimes social or technical programming to users. In addition, librarians provide instruction on information literacy.¹⁶

Librarians are critical agents in broadening the range, increasing the depth and improving the quality of the information on the web. Librarians are coined up with an umbrella term for the profession to embrace the varied information roles like archives, knowledge management, librarian, library technician, records management, data professionals etc.

Set of Skills (Definition)

To get the work done effectively and efficiently it is necessary to have various skills within an individual .Skill is an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carryout complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills), and/or people (interpersonal skills)¹⁷

Skill includes various sets like human relations, research and planning, accounting, effective communication, decision making, problem solving, team building, leadership, relationship-management, and computer skills.¹⁸

Challenges for librarians: - Libraries values and mission remain highly relevant to today's society, but technology has brought new ways of realizing these objectives and librarians find themselves facing greater competition. No one can predict where technology will take us next. There are

numerous challenges the library professionals are facing.

- There is shortage of computers and computer skills among LIS professionals.
 - There is lack of awareness program, inadequate library materials, infrastructure, financial constraints, lack of trained and skill staff, lack of information literacy, lack of appropriate government policies and agencies, poor connectivity etc.
 - Librarians face problem in management of digital information systems. Librarians lack advance technology and skilled staff, technical experts for preserving the digital information.
 - Preservation and security of digital information is a big challenge for librarians. Piracy, virus inversions etc. are some problems.
 - There are various myths about digital collection, electronics resources, e-libraries etc. which creates feelings of fear and anxiety.
 - Lack of financial support from government and management.
 - It is important to have good library collection, but many libraries face problem of outdated collection materials.
 - Barriers in collaboration with other department, institutions, sectors etc are also a major challenge in LIS profession.
 - Diverting users towards modern library services is also another challenge.
 - Lack of marketing skill among librarian affect on use or awareness on electronic resources and for maintaining good public relations.
 - The new challenge for LIS professionals and researcher is complying intellectual property rights, copy rights and other related issues.
- Skills for LIS profession- Library professionals are intelligent, well educated, experienced, skilled knowledgeable etc which is important to all the organization, besides this they need to sharpen their business skills, endure flexibility, lateral thinking and good adaptability to embrace change. LIS professionals need to be skilled

in many ways. Librarians required certain core competencies which is a foundation of good librarian. The numerous skills and abilities are required for being a good librarian and are important aspects of a career in this field. A good candidates required certain personal traits and skills which helps one stand as a good candidates for a position as a librarian like:-

- One should have love for knowledge learning and reading.
- Desired to work around people.
- He or she must be friendly and ethical.
- Must acquired good communication and computer skills.
- Ability to work with large information, data and numbers.
- A good librarian must be creative and initiative.



<http://futureready.org/about-the-effort/librarians¹⁹>

As these personal skills are important aspects of the career in the library field, the basic core competencies are also required for entering position as librarian. These basic competencies are:

- Use of technology- Librarian should be able to use new technology to enhance the effectiveness of a library. Implementing web- based method to access the information digital humanities, use of social media, research etc. are some areas for developing.
- Learning and improving ICT skills- Librarian should improve their ability to retrieve information and serve users. Self

learning and understanding new tools, e-resources, handling of operating systems, library automation and application software, knowledge of databases and programming etc. are some required skills to acquire.,

- Skill of using computer communication networks- All the librarian must possess the skill of handling different computer networking systems and other library related networks like DELNET, INFLIBNET, JANET, NICNET, IDONET, ERNET,CALIBNET etc.
- Ability to learn Library Webpage design- Library webpage is an effective tool to provide tips to researchers on search strategies and effective use of resources. LIS professionals should have ability to learn webpage design and other ICT skills to helps users.
- Archiving and filing information- A Librarian must have knowledge of maintaining and filling databases and reference information and must preserve documentary heritage.
- Digital information management- Preservation, communication, dissemination and management of digital information are important. Library should have knowledge of cryptography, firewall, and antivirus software for preventing e-resources.
- Ability to quickly and professionally search databases, catalogues, internet resources as and when needed.
- Good communication skills- Librarian need to interact with many people in the library. They need to plan program, train their staff, assist their customers etc. They also need to fax, e-mail, blogs, bulletin board and use of other social networking sites. Librarian must have strong communication skill and ability to communicate with library staff, patrons, guests, students etc. and promote them for reading and provide good customer service.
- Managerial skills- Proper management of library is role of librarian, as a manager of library and information center they should be able to manage various departments like Human resource, finance etc. They should

have certain managerial skills like planning, decision making, time management and total quality management of library and information center.

- Problem solving and Leadership skills- Librarian must have an ability to overcome issues and provide solutions to the problems. Leadership qualities, proper use of human and financial resources can help to meet the challenges in LIS.
- Organization skills- Librarian must have good organization skill as he need to organize and conduct programmes, lectures, book discussions group, students related programmes, exhibitions, talks, events and other such activities regularly.
- Management of Change skills- There have been continuous change in policies, system, technology, behavior which have impact on institutions, librarian must be able to manage the change.
- Ability to collaborate – Now a day the trend of collaboration with other institutes is growing. Librarians must have good skills of global collaborations, international research collaboration etc. Stronger partnership between public libraries and academic libraries will also be beneficial.
- Marketing skills- Librarians need to develop marketing skills as it will help the LIS professionals to develop good marketing plans, marketing strategies for better promotions and librarians to know their customers and develop a user- centered approach. This also helps to improve the image of library.²⁰

Conclusion:-

- It is crystal clear that 21st century librarians must be different from all previous concepts of librarians. These skills are not only necessary to become professional librarian, but also prove librarianship is good career choice in order to succeed in the field. We need to be architecture of our own destiny, anticipate changes and adapt our library and Information services to be part of the flow.

Hence ongoing learning will be compulsory to retain and sustain in LIS field.

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