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Importance of Ethics in Library Profession

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Introduction

Today information has become fluid and imperial. Librarian has been defined as the collection preservation, organization and use of recorded communication. Librarianship is generally recognized as a vocation for which special training is required. Librarian is an administrator without being any less than scholar. He is lover of book and interested in people. Librarianship of today is multidisciplinary which encompasses the various field of human endeavor. The role of library in which require professionally competent profession also. Each and every profession has code of ethics. Library profession also found useful to the clarity of standard of profession. Ethics are important in every profession. We learn ethics as we interact with elders, teachers and classmates and learn respect and other skills. In the work place, we learn responsibility, teamwork, punctuality, and communication skills. When we understand why these ethical values are necessary, we realize the importance they have in our success as well as our everyday lives. When work with the use of these skills, ethics we contribute to the good of profession as well as society.

Definition of Librarianship

According to Butler 1951 Librarianship is growing process yet it has to possess most all the prerequisite of profession.

According to Encyclopedia of librarianship "Librarianship is collection, preservation, organization and use of recorded communication. "Librarianship is the discipline and profession that is concerned with helping individuals obtain reliable information to increase their knowledge in all spheres of their lives from the cumulated information store of mankind". (Choy Fatt Cheong 2008.)

Libraries are always service providing institution, providing its services to the different types of users may be students, research scholars, teachers and readers also. Librarians purchased printed or non printed information resources according to the needs of its users and they are classified, catalogued for the essay and accurate access of it. A librarian always tries to help his or her user that they should increase their knowledge, find more relevant information for their research work without wasting their time. So we can say libraries are service providing institution and librarian provide services up to the satisfaction of its users on the basis of no profit no loss.

Librarianship as a Profession

“A word profession which means a vocation that involves some advance branch of learning or science.”

According to S.L. Sharma “profession is an occupation defines by feature of monopoly, authority and autonomy”.

A professional is one who is characterized by ethical, technical standards of profession. A profession is also having the quality of skill and education. Librarianship is emerging marginal growing or developing profession yet it has to acquire the maturity of the profession. Librarianship as a missionary work, as an occupation market by the attributes of intellectual training, service oriented and code of ethics for its professionals.

The main characteristic of the profession

1. Specialized skill and knowledge
2. Research and continuous updating of skilled knowledge while in service.
3. Intellectually activity
4. Social necessity
5. Service to the society rather than personal gaining
6. stability of the profession through permanent membership
7. Autonomy of profession and Authority of professionals

Ethics: Meaning

The word ethics derived from the Greek word ethos means habit, custom or character. This is a major branch of people or group of people. Ethics is set of moral principal which governs the conduct of person, behavior, commitment, humble duties to self improvement to the society and has obligation to the profession, institution of the society at large.

Definition:

According to Webster's Dictionary “Ethics as discipline dealing with that which is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation”

Ethics is science of moral. It is drawn philosophy which is concern with human character and conduct. Ethics is a systematic values, rules and critical analysis of morality of the moral factors that guide human conduct in particular society or practice.

According to Seetharama in ethics includes the following items

1. Professional Competence
2. Integrity of Members
3. Financial Ethics
4. Ethics in Teaching
5. Ethics in Research
6. Ethics in Information Activity

Development of Code of Ethics in Library Profession

The IFLA Code of Ethics, following Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), is unequivocal in its protection of access by all to the full range of knowledge and information, and its rejection of censorship in any form. Article one; paragraph two of the IFLA code states that:

Librarians and other information workers reject the denial and restriction of access to information and ideas most particularly through censorship whether by states, governments, or religious or civil society institutions.

Some of the elements of IFLA code of ethics and ethical code of other organizations are as under:

a) Access to information:

The core mission of LIS professionals is to ensure access to information for all for personal development, education, cultural enrichment, leisure. Economic activity and informed participation and enhancement of democracy.

LIS professionals deny all types of restrictions that prevent free access to information. These restrictions are in the form of censorship posed by government, religious barriers or even community created bias. All distinctive and distinguishing features like caste, creed, color, age, gender etc are being ignored by LIS professionals while delivering information to their users.

LIS professionals build balanced collection keeping in view the information needs of their users.

b) Responsibility towards individual and society

In order to promote inclusion and eradicate discrimination, librarians and other information workers ensure that the right of accessing information is not denied and that equitable services are provided for everyone whatever their age, citizenship, political belief, physical or mental ability, gender identity, heritage, education, income, immigration and asylum-seeking status, marital status, origin, race, religion or sexual orientation

c) Privacy, secrecy and transparency

Librarians and other information workers respect personal privacy, and the protection of personal data, necessarily shared between individuals and institutions.

d) Open Access and Intellectual property

Librarians and other information workers' interest is to provide the best possible access for library users to information and ideas in any media or format. This includes support for the principles of open access, open source, and open licenses.

e) Colleague and employer / employee relationship

Librarians and other information workers treat each other with fairness and respect. Librarians and other information workers share their professional experience with colleagues and they help and guide new professionals to enter the professional community and develop their skills. (Shabir Ahmad Ganaie)

Ethical principles of the library and information profession are of great importance as librarians strive to bring to the public unbiased and equitable services, matched with the promise of confidentiality and the safeguarding of intellectual freedoms. Particularly in the digital age, our collective understanding of ethical issues needs to be reevaluated and reinterpreted in response to the all the changes brought by technology evolution and social transformation (Cassell & Hiremath, 2012). Code of ethics makes the librarian aware about his role in the self regulating profession. For the purpose of achieving collectively good in librarianship code of ethics are very important. From the very beginning of the 20th century efforts have been made in U. K. and U. S. A. for the development of the code of ethics. The first code was developed in 1930. It was general without giving emphasis on librarian's duty to society. American Library Association developed the code in 1975 for Library Profession.

ALA developed the code of ethics for library profession in following relation

1. Librarian's relation to governing body
2. Librarian's relation to the consistency
3. Librarian's relation to his professionals
4. Librarian's relation to the society
5. Librarian's relation within his library

Another attempt was made in U.K. in 1983 by the Library Association which set standard for library profession. American society proposed another code of ethics for information professional in 1990. Further Japan Library Association developed the code of ethics in 1980 where as in India; Joint Council of Library Association in India has finalized draft code of ethics in 1984. Content of it as follows-

- Library and Information Science is a service profession, and professionals should gather information, organize it into easily accessible collection and provide mechanism that productivity utilization by eligible clientele.
- Library and information professionals should be govern by democratic principles by giving every user his/her opportunity to accesses the resources and make the special effort to keep their interest growing for further development
- Librarian should be familiar themselves with available resources that are the interest of user either on demand or anticipation
- Personal philosophy and attitude should not interfere with those of organizational institution
- Avoid unlawful and unethical interest and must serve their clientele on equitable basis
- Should keep timeliness as a prime factor in serving information services.
- Should aim at the development of their own professional organization and must encourage younger professionals with their own example
- Should cultivate their knowledge in a professional way.

Conclusion

It is important to have a fixed set of ethical values for any profession. Library profession is a service oriented profession means librarian must acquire the knowledge about professional ethics for the betterment of his or her profession. It is the duty of every professional to inculcate the importance of ethics among the student not for the sake of education but also throughout the span of life. At the same time, librarians have to be aware that their professional codes of ethics are neither unchangeable nor completely universal. Yet we must have to accept the challenge to provide the right information to the right user at right time.

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