

IMPORTANCE OF POLICY UPGRADATION FOR LIS PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

The mandate for guidance to the LIS specialists are accruing as the knowledge, communication and technology (ICT) approaches to LIS services and users' desires are altering day by day. The Librarians at numerous levels from various educational institutions, R&D committees and Government of India approaches have to assist their contrary categories of users with many kinds of motivations. In order to meet the guidance demands, there are many LIS institutions from Universities, Colleges and from defined institutions like Research & Development Centre and other National Institutes are operating at contrary locations, by balancing consistent courses and compact courses. There are delegations like SYMBIOSIS and other distance universities have altered their way of offering guidance by providing virtual classes, with assignments and exercised classes. That also assists the staffs who continue training to get information about the upcoming manners. The infrastructure at various categories like IT systems with LAN, Internet facility, existent library (along with departmental library) up gradation, architecture of the course, resource establishments like purchase, mentors to the literature, web means, human resource and others are to be updated.

LIS experts either a fresher or a scholar has to be assisted to accompany the training program. They also have to be adjured with financial attendant either from the sponsoring committees or through the National level committees / affinities for admonishing them. Teaching may of contrary categories like i) a commencement program ii) assignment activities training iii) job aptitudes and personnel development program and iv) an annual training and conception examine. The content of the training module has to be altered as per the altering approach. Technological establishment and its impact on evidence condition must also be taken into attention. There is also a need for control among the LIS Institutions at National and International level. Guidance can be offered for i) Encouraging and co-operation ii) Competency and contemplation and iii) Alter actors and Facilitations. It should centralize on constructing intelligence knacks, attitude as well as behavior in the library environs. In e-environment the role to be dramatized by LIS professionals are altering from purchase development to development of digital content, buckling to other accompanied sources, committees, resources, etc. This paper

would advise altering /revising the training modules as per the altering approach and the training should be garnished by the librarians, mentors of LIS institutes and others in this area.

INTRODUCTION

Library and information science has consistently been immersed with the collection, organization, storage and retrieval of materials and information, in order to acknowledge to users" inquiries. It has also often been archived that latest technologies for the generation, diffraction, processing as well as accumulation of important data have brought alterations in the description, volume, and format of the data. The constraint for library and information professionals has also been accruing over the decades. This increment in inexorability has been approached by an increment in the number of educational institutes that groom library and information professionals throughout the globe. Education of library and information professionals in developed countries such as the UK, USA as well as other countries has also acknowledged analogous demand. Education of library and information experts in developed countries has been made autocratic over a many of years by the better training infrastructure that abides in these countries. Akin education has allowed scholars to get experience of libraries of grown-up countries. On the other side, there have been difficulties of conducting all the aptitudes approached conveniently. This has been due to the low level of establishment of libraries in most of the countries. Another condition, and the latest one, has been the desensitizing number of scholarships allotted. Few developed countries now ascribe scholarships for studying in one's own country or another enduring country also discerned as third party country scholarships.

1. NEED FOR TRAINING

Libraries have become new and exciting places in the twenty- first century. LIS professionals are being called upon to work closely with ICT users and providers (including IT staff) and to work in collaboration with others in the profession. Some groups of users lack the necessary IT skills to obtain quality information and LIS professionals will therefore be called upon to act as both educators and intermediaries. Given these circumstances, LIS professionals are required to have increased teaching and communication skills. IFLA/UNESCO (2002) guidelines for development of the public library service define training of librarians as a vital element of the activities of a public library. The guidelines require every library to make a planned and continuous program of training for its staff. There is stronger emphasis on utilizing IT, collaboration in collection building through consortia and working in learning environments than

ever before. The environment is dynamic, with pod casting, wikis, SMS and other technologies offering more great opportunities to deliver services in new ways. With such a changing world, we need to review how a set of skills could be identified which will be relevant and useful for education and employers. Therefore, training has to be imparted due to the following reasons (4):

- The need to train librarians locally so as to suit the peculiar needs of the immediate environment.
- The generic skills needed by all librarians.
- To understand the skills needed by the next generation of LIS professionals on which employers and educators need to engage.
- For the profession as a whole, current and future staff needs to be developed to ensure that they have the relevant skills to be able to perform as an effective information professional in a very complex and changing environment.
- For employers there are quite specific challenges – to retain and develop staff, to recruit skilled staff and to develop employment opportunities to retain those who are new to the profession.
- Recruiting and retaining staff is an area that has been affected by the expansion of information management positions – in records management, information technology and knowledge management.

2. REQUIRED SKILLS

LIS expert is needed to comport in numerous areas and with many asymmetric skills. Current research advises that the proficiencies can be categorized to demonstrate education and development conducts that can be applied to develop these aptitudes. In the UK, Fisher conducted an examine and also interviewed experts and scrutinized the literature. She determined two classes of aptitudes – skillful and common. Both aptitude types are needed for activities in the industry. There is a combination of skills that allow educators, employers, individuals as well as the professional body to take on co operational roles and obligations for abilities development (6) (Table I).

3. TRAINING TO BE IMPARTED

Training commences fortitude for any healthy organization. This approach applies to all organisations whether middle level or big. The only point of deflection is the impartial and category for which training is ascribed. Training is hence given mainly to develop the trainee with information to attain a categorical activity. Such education may be attributed for fresh recruits as induction and also for those already on the job. According to Noon (1995), such education must combine asymmetric factors that contain education and conception, which sees training as a multilevel four-part approach enveloping all the desires of an autocratic as well as suitable workforce (9). He mentioned the four approaches as:

1. A program introduction;
2. Career tasks training;
3. Career skills and personnel development program; and
4. An annual education and development review probably included in employee appraisal.

Taking into consideration that any training program requires a clear focus, with a clear definition of objectives. Such objectives stipulate, among other things, the content of the program and the way to achieve it in the most efficient manner. Noon (1995), has pointed out four objectives as follows:

- To provide staff at all levels with the skills and competencies to contribute to an effective and efficient library and information services (LIS).
- To identify and develop new skills and competencies in order to ensure that the LIS continues to provide a high quality service.
- To provide staff with the opportunity for personal and professional development for the benefit of themselves and the service.
- To monitor the training and development program to ensure that it meets the needs of the service and its staff.

4. TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The training program can be organized in different methods. It can be conducted as classes, tours of libraries / library associations and interactions with librarians / specialists in the field. Training in the classroom should include the use of latest information technologies relevant to the library and information science profession. Some of the classes included those on Web design, management of electronic resources and digitization of materials. Also included was the instruction on the creation and management of institutional repositories, which would increase the visibility of faculty publications/research. Lectures may be organized by inviting professors / specialists and they may include the topics on management theories, library budgeting and organizational communication (10).

Visits to a variety of library across and outside ranged from school, college, and academic, special to public libraries. Attending conferences will definitely provide knowledge generated during discussion of the seminars / conferences and during social networking environments. Interactions with librarians would get ideas about the new developments, which are taking place in their respective libraries from library automation and its problems, digital library development activities, institutional development activities and use of different types of software from open source to purchased ones. Also arrangements of the staff meetings, open lectures and public events, would also invite topics for discussion during that time would be high value.

5. INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

UNESCO's EFFORT - In June 2005, Unesco launched six modules of a training package on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for LIS professionals. It consists of the following module:

1. Introduction to IT and communication technologies
2. Introduction to integrated library systems structure
3. Electronic environment and utilization of information
4. Database design, information storage, data security and retrieval
5. Utilization of internet as an key information resource

6. Web page development and design; web publishing

They used mixture instructional techniques – lectures, demonstrations, hands-on-practice, case studies, group discussions, site visits as appropriate (11).

6. NATIONAL LEVEL

Effort in training LIS personnel can be outlined as: Conducting a regular course (Two years Associateship in Information Science) (2) Short-term courses ranging from five days to five weeks relating to ICT applications to LIS activities. It also conducts courses for SAARC countries at Training providers and at their places also at regular intervals. It has also included recently two new topics like “Recent Trend in LIS” and “Patent drafting” courses from this current year. The course covers the recent topics and hands-on experience (computer practical), which benefit the participants to have a feel of the course.

7. INFOLIBNET’S EFFORT

INFOLIBNET conducts short-term training courses at regular intervals depending upon the libraries request received from different parts of the country. It conducts training programs at INFOLIBNET office or even at the requested libraries place. The course also ranges from three to fifteen days. They provide training for hardware aspects and for SOUL software. INFOLIBNET once conducted a training program for the librarians of Kendria vidyalaya schools in Ahmedabad (12). The broad topics they covered include:

- Development of personality and communication
- Basics of standards for computer hardware and bibliographic
- Library management software and SOUL
- LAN services planning
- Issues related to networking security
- Configurations and applications related to mail server and web server
- Designing and hosting of web site

- Greenstone Digital libraries creation
- Identification of resources and impact of Internet

DRTC, Bangalore also conducts short-term and long term courses (2 years course AIS being renamed as MS in Information Science) for LIS professionals to update their knowledge in the field of Library, Documentation and Information science. They started conducting courses on Digital library and creation of Institutional repositories, etc. as per the changing scenario. NCSI of IISc Bangalore also conducts various types of training program for the benefit of LIS professionals and for fresher in the field. They have a specialized course on Knowledge Management applications to LIS also. It is also to be considered the efforts being made by NIC New Delhi in the development of Library software (eGranthalay), which is being made available, free to Government institutions and others.

8. LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS' EFFORT

American Library Association (ALA) is conducting courses at regular intervals by keeping its Mission as: "To provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all". (ALA Policy 1.2) (13). ALA Vision: ALA is the leading advocate for:

- The value of libraries and librarians in connecting people to recorded knowledge in all forms.
- The public's right to a free and open information society.

The Key Action Areas: Diversity, Equitable Access to Information and Library Services, Education and Lifelong Learning, Intellectual Freedom, Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession, Literacy and Organizational Excellence. ALA „s Continuous learning is critical to renewing the expertise and skills needed to assist patrons in this information age. Library workers must continually expand their knowledge in order to keep up with the rate of change. Whether you are an entry- level professional, mid-career librarian, support staff, senior management staff or trustee, the American Library Association has continuing education resources for your own development or that of your staff.

In UK, LIS continuing education is provided by three main providers: Aslib, TFPL (a specialist professional services company focusing on knowledge, information, library, records and web and content management, London) and CILIP (Chartered institute of Library and Information Science Professionals). All these are one-day or two-day courses, including conceptual, syntactic and semantic aspects, but not usually technical skills. Their current training program details are given below: The Aslib covers the topics like: Organizing digital information and knowledge, metadata, virtual learning environments and library / information services, Electronic serials management, information literacy, strategic approach to internet research and intricacies of internet and search tools. TFPL covers on: Information architecture, internet searching and library portals and CILIP coverage is on metadata (2).

Swaziland Library Association's Effort: - To complement the training program sponsored by employers and government, SWALA has solicited funding from such organizations as the British Council, DSE and the American Cultural Centre and sponsored external and local resource persons as well as its members to attend in- house seminars, courses, conferences and workshops. The content of the courses is varied and targeted at both professionals and para-professionals in public, academic, college, school and special libraries. The topics covered range from the principles of librarianship, school libraries, national library services, publishing, marketing of library services, total quality management and customer care, community profiling and interpersonal skills, library legislation, a professional code of conduct, and information services to rural areas, to information technology in libraries, information censorship: a legal perspective, publicity, developing a public relations strategy, library services to young children, cataloguing, and study tours of South Africa and Namibia. It also conducted training program for its members, viz. "training of trainers" course in Botswana in 1993. The course provided practical training skills thereby creating the nucleus for locally based expertise. The cataloguer workshop (1995) imparted practical cataloguing skills based on Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, second edition (AACR 2). Cumulatively, the effect of these training efforts on the attitudes, knowledge and skills of SWALA members is to enhance the long term quality of library services in Swaziland (7).

Delhi Library Association, Ranganathan Research Circle New Delhi is also conducting seminars and special lecture at regular intervals. IASLIC, ILA, SIS, SALIS, MALA, IATLIS, and other associations are conducting regularly at least once a year, an Annual Seminar / Conference related to the applications of ICT to library activities. Even at the Distance learning (IGNOU and other open universities) where a teaching- learning relationship, where the learners and teachers are geographically separated and communication between them is through technical media such as audio and video teleconferences, audio and video recordings, PC, correspondence texts and multimedia systems. Here also the training is done indirectly through media or by assignments or by video conferencing, etc.

9. FACTORS AFFECTING TRAINING

First, is the capability of library institutes to ascribe LIS education productively as well as advantageously allowed the present resource foundation which is commonly not so up to the level. Second, is whether the content of the curricula in use in LIS institutes are considered to cope with the current and future requirements of the activity. Construction of the curriculum as mentioned out by Lancaster (1994), must take into account among other things, the following normal difficulties in the existing curricula:

- resources;
- greater bureaucracy;
- low demand for information services;
- traditional teaching methods ± textbook / lecture oriented;
- lack of standardization, cooperation and centralization;
- Significant differences existing among types of libraries and diversity of cultures and language (5).

Technology development and its impact on information provision must also be taken into consideration. To what extent these issues and others are taken into consideration, would determine to a large extent the success of training. Several factors have been identified as being responsible for inadequate textbooks in library and information science disciplines. Prominent among these factors are:

- authors' inability to write basic textbooks at the tertiary level;
- lack of interest on the part of publishers to publish tertiary books; and
- Authors' inability to write basic textbooks on librarianship
- Lack of support by professional associations and other relevant bodies
- National library associations and other relevant bodies such as the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and Unesco should encourage authors by giving them grants to enable them to write good textbooks.

- Outstanding librarians should also be commissioned to write books appropriate for the African setting.
- Authors should also be rewarded by library associations with national awards (1).

10. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum development must cater not only for the traditional courses in librarianship, but must also be able to inculcate in students new management skills. It must also be able to provide training on the new aspects of information collection, processing and dissemination using new information technologies. All these areas must be designed in such a way that they can take into consideration the particular environments of their application, government policies on education and needs of society at large. This has been the practice in most of the developed world where, as Nauta (1988), noted: The structure of LIS in Western Europe is diverse owing to each country's general educational policy and government structure. Even within a country there is more than one type of LIS due to different backgrounds, levels and objectives of the program offered. For a curriculum to be effective it must come to terms with the structure and environment of its working. Nauta (1988) argued for the relevance of system theory in the development of the curriculum whereby this theory emphasizes: . . .the close relation between a structure and its supporting environment. . .in which. . .a library school that no longer interacts with its environment is dead and the production of glossy prospectus is but the final act of mummification (8).

11. CO-ORDINATION

Coordination would allow maximization of resources which are already inadequate. This would alleviate situations such as:

- lack of articulation of training programs between institutions;
- high costs;
- lack of coordination, for example between the training institutions situated in the same country or region.

To solve this problem, institutions offering LIS training in each country should come together and streamline their courses according to local, regional and international needs. This would enable them to offer all important courses from certificate to postgraduate levels by using the available resources in terms of manpower, infrastructure, funding etc. Such coordination would increase their bargaining position when soliciting for government assistance or funding from other organizations. Such coordination may also be extended to a regional level. In this case, countries in the same region should come together and plan training of LIS based on the needs of their regions, available resources and international demand. The highest stage of coordination may involve the whole continent. This may include preparation of appropriate curricula, exchange of staff, exchange of students and exchange of information on the development of new issues including research findings among LIS training schools. Coordination would be useful in two ways. First, it would reduce continued replication of such training institutions situated in the same country, or replication of courses of such institutions in the same region. This would lead to redistribution of resources of all types and specialization. Second, there would be harmonization of those courses that are offered and those that could be offered in the future. Such a process would produce well-tailored courses to satisfy the needs of library and information professionals. It would also produce economies of scale in the use of existing and future resources.

12. CONCLUSION

The current trend of LIS training must change in order to cope with the new emerging scenario. Governments, existing library schools and professionals must spearhead this effort. Library association forums, conferences and workshops must address this issue in a more concrete way. Furthermore current issues facing LIS schools must be examined in the context of their current and future practices. Any curriculum developed must consider wider societal information needs. There is a greater need for LIS schools in to come together to solve their problems in the light of the newly emerging changes in the world. Strategic training must be adopted which would enable the provision of adequate and appropriate training. Such training would consider the existing training infrastructure, needs and resources. A thorough study is required in this case, as this would permit development of common strategy based on concrete information from different stakeholders in LIS.

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Professional information skills	Generic skills
Knowledge management	Project management
Information architecture	Planning and evaluation
ICT skills	People management
Technical (traditional) professional skills	Research skills, Bids and proposals

Subject expertise	Critical skills
Collection management	Thinking
Collection description	Planning and evaluation
Technical (traditional) professional skills	Analysis, Problem solving, Research
Information technology	Leadership
Design	General management
Application	Communication skills
Systems	Strategic management
User support (problem solving)	People skills , Financial skills
Service development	Promotion and marketing
User information	Design appreciation
Surveys	Presentation skills
Service impact analysis Planning and evaluation Promotion and marketing	Multi-professional appreciation

Table I. Summary of skills