
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS FOR IT APPLICATION IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

University is the apex institution of higher education. Again, development of any society / nation has largely depends upon its quality of education and Research & Developmental activities. Due to the rapid growth rate and ever-growing demand of information application of IT is indispensable to ensure the accessibility of information. The supply of right information to the right user at the right time is possible when right human resource employed and developed on continuous basis at par with on going changes. In this direction, this paper made an attempt to accentuate human resource development for information technology application in libraries from the training and development point of view. The paper covers the various aspects of HRD in Library services and its role in the present information society.

Keywords : Human Resource Development, Information Technology

1. Introductions

In the present day society the provision of accessibility of information is act as determinant factor of development of any country / Nation. The countries that have sound information systems are more developed than the other. Automation / IT application is an essential consideration for all libraries. First, it must be considered and evaluated, because now libraries do not function that well under manual systems. They are under funded, understaffed and when understating occurs, professionals work as clerks as because clerical tasks predominate. Automation may change that mix. Second, it must be considered because there are many services that manually functioning libraries cannot provide at all, such as cumulation of indexes. Third, libraries must consider the application of IT, because they provide the most direct and perhaps only realistic mechanism for sharing bibliographic access and document availability. Finally, libraries must consider application of IT as they represent changes and innovation. Now, if any library finalizes the decision for the introduction of IT then, one thing should be taken into consideration on priority basis that, whether the existing library personnel are able to adjust with that technology because, they are the catalyst in between the technology and users in general. Therefore, proper planning is to be formulated to train and develop the library personnel to cope with the advancement of the technologies (6) .

2. Human Resource Development (HRD)

Human Resource is a collective term for all the people employed by an organization, agency, or institution. Also, the administrative department responsible for matters pertaining to employment (hiring, evaluation, promotion, termination, etc). Large independent libraries and Library system have their own human resources office. Libraries that function as a unit within a larger organization may rely on the parent organization for such services (10).

Human Resource Development (HRD) is a process of raising productive potentialities of manpower resources in terms of knowledge, skills and capabilities through appropriate mechanisms such as education & training, counseling, career planning, performance or self appraisals, awards or rewards etc. among all these, education and training play a vital role in strengthening both academic and professional capabilities of human resource to meet the goals of an organization. This is also true in case of Library and information profession to develop appropriate human resources to work in different types of libraries / information and documentation centers and in different environment as well. Therefore, library and information science education is the strong motivator behind not only to improve professional knowledge and understanding different concepts but also to up skill the abilities, capabilities and competencies in a complex working environment (9).

It comprises the number of activities. They are as under;

- Equal employment opportunity programs;
- Task analysis;
- Human Resource Planning (HRP)
- Employee Retirement, selection and orientation;
- Career development & counseling, performance evaluation and training & development;
- Compensation and benefit;
- Safety and health;
- Employee relation;
- Discipline and control;
- Work scheduling;
- Quality of work etc.

There are three aspects of personal / HRM are usually stressed as being fundamental to this thinking. They are as; i) Action oriented, ii) Individual oriented and iii) Future oriented (5).

Any discussion of library personnel needs must be concerned with an analysis and forecast of the field's need as well as summation of the economic situation and an assessment and inventory of the skills and abilities of existing staffs. Manpower needs an employment forecast for the right

number and right kinds of people at the right places and the right times to perform activities that will benefit both the profession and the individuals also.

3. Information Technology (IT)

The term 'Information Technology' in English, 'Informatique' in French, 'Informatika' in Russian encompasses the notion of Information handling in other words, Electronic Technologies for collecting, storing, processing and communicating information. There are two main categories: those that process information, such as computer system and those that disseminate information such as telecommunication system. The term can generally be understood to describe system that combines both, but nowadays the more accurate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is more commonly used (3).

3.1. Properties of Information Technology

IT has three unique properties, they are;

- The growth of Information (and technology) is irreversible. It is possible for us to forget something and ignore others. But once something becomes known, it is almost impossible to make it unknown. Similarly, once something has been invented one can't uninvent it.
- The growth of information and technology is exponential; the more is known the more is invented, the easier it is to know still more, and invent still more.
- There is no faceable upper limit to the growth of knowledge or inventions. (1)

4. Universities and Library

We would all accept the statement that a University Library exists primarily to serve the needs of the members of its own institution. If the library is to fulfill that prime function, however two condition follow: *firstly*, it must provide possible to the academic pattern of the university, within the financial limits, which are geared as closely as possible to the academic pattern of the university, within the financial limit which have been set; *secondly*, it must operate within the political structure of the university. The user community of University Library include undergraduate and postgraduate students of different subjects; faculty members, technical and non-teaching staff; research students working for M. Phil. or Ph.D. degree; post-doctoral research scholar working under different schemes.

The five major functions of university are: learning and teaching; research and generation of new knowledge; dissemination and publication of research results; conservation of knowledge and ideas; and extension service. The collection in university library system will have to cater to the needs of teaching and learning, research, generation of new ideas, new knowledge and publications. The reading materials, which are acquired by the university library, shall also require its proper organization

and management both in terms of their physical location and their representation in catalogue and indexes in order to provide quick retrieval and dissemination of information (7) .

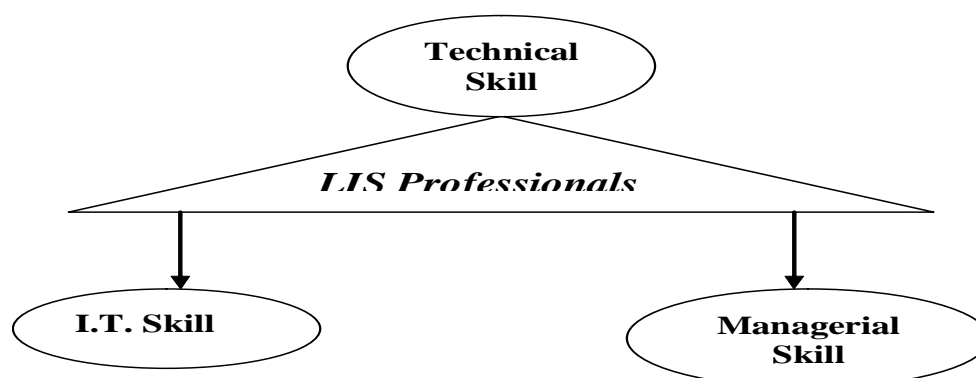
5. Library and New Technologies

New systems of information storage and communication have supplemented what previously existed. The information revolution has had a tremendous impact on our traditional libraries. The right of access to information is the basic right of a democratic society. This right is provided by the all kinds of the libraries in a society. Within an academic institution/university, providing and supporting information and technology usually falls to a variety of groups. All these functions are termed as Information Resources and Technology (IRT) . By providing these, the libraries are able to afford most effectively and efficiently for the academic, curricular, research and business support to the entire campus requires. There was a shift from the 'libraries' to 'information centers', from 'readers' to 'users', from 'books' to 'e-books' /e-journals', from 'librarian' to 'information manager' / 'cybrarian' etc. All the basic functions of the libraries have taken a new turn with the help of the following modern technologies and or terminologies:

Hardware, Software (System & application), Integrated Library Management Software (ILMS), Digital Library Software, Archive Services, CDs, DVDs, E-mail, Gopher, HML, HTTP, Hyper text, Internet Relay Chat, Hub, Router, Intranets, ISDN (Integrated Service Digital Network), DOI, LAN, SGML, Teletext, Video text, TCP/IP, WAIS, WAN, Word processor, WWW etc. (2) .

6 HRD and Skill Requirement in the Modern Library Services

The rapid growth & demand of information and frequent changes of IT sector the library profession or academic institutions are not exception in implementation of information technology in a consistent manner. All The libraries have to take lead role not only in adoption and use of IT for their effective functions but also disseminate such IT devices to the entire community of the academic institution.



Again, in reality it is seen that a portion of the senior / aged library personnel has no knowledge / capabilities to work equally with the modern technological environment in compare with the traditional environment. Therefore, the Human Resource at library has to be developed as real knowledge resources. With the help of knowledge human resource, libraries must grasp the pertinent aspects of both user and technology issues to create an effective library services.

The electronic environment of 21st century will encompass a wide range of technologies including computer, communication, storage, recognition and other technologies. As such it is easy to say that, future LIS professionals require knowledge and operating skills in all these areas. In other words, LIS professionals must have LIS technical skill, IT skill and managerial skill.

6.1. Technical Skill

As part of professional skills the LIS professionals need to develop extraordinary access skills. In other words, gaining access to source of information and managing a knowledge base likely to become very fundamental activity in future. The other technical skills, which are likely to be, emphasized in future skills required to sift, analyze, synthesis, assimilate, interpret, and reformulate the information accessed and delivered by the new technology by applying a large number of filters and repeaters are necessary.

6.2. IT Skills

Like basic literacy, information literacy and computer literacy have become a necessity in every walk of life. A computer literate is a person who has acquired the skills needed to use the computer effectively. Such a person has to be 'comfortable' in his work in the 'computer age'. This 'comfort' is the out come of his familiarity, experience and understanding with computer. He must be able to use computer, understand what it can do or can't do and capable of assessing its impact on his work, profession and society at large. They also need support some other component of IT like communication, recognition, and compact storage etc. This is the 1st level of skill expected of all professionals of 21st century electronic world and undoubtedly most basic for LIS professionals.

6.3. Managerial Skills

The managerial skills expected of new LIS professionals are quieting vast. What is attempting to explain here is the managerial skills required for working in the e-world 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 technology and those who are able to do lobbying and advocacy

and play organization politics. Moreover, LIS professionals need to have managerial skills required for information management in teams with the help and co-operation from both Library personnel and modern technologies. In other words, this may be stated as, this skill is prerequisite factor on the way of ensuring of optimum utilization of available resources of both human and technologies of the concerned libraries. Again, this will help to achieve pre-stated objectives of the libraries by offerings better library services to it target users. (11)

7. HRD in Libraries and Information Centers

As L/ICs are growing, particularly with reference to collection and services and sophistication in terms of computerization and networking, it is necessary to give full attention to personnel development. Some of the aspects, among others that might help L/ICs to contribute substantially their share in supporting efforts towards socio economic activities, may include:

Personnel planning.

- Orientation, introduction to L/IC's goals objectives, targets and activities.
- Productivity; users satisfaction.
- Quality of collections and services.
- Acquisition of new knowledge and skills.
- Task analysis for proper deployment of personnel.
- Performance review and appraisal.
- Motivational aspects.
- Developmental supervision.
- Counseling and monitoring.

Professional education and training institutions also should share responsibilities to induct research in HRD. Initiate efforts for plans and program to study the diversified requirements of personnel in both Digital Libraries and Traditional Libraries. Studies are necessary to assess the manpower needs for the present and future activities and regulate the supply of the different categories of the personnel required. Quality and value added information systems and services and achievements of excellence are to be inculcated in to the profession through appropriate motivation programs by professional associations and societies (4).

8 Importance of Training and Development

Etymologically, the verb to train' is derived from the French word 'trainer' which means 'to drag'. Training and Development is the most essential instrument of Library Human Resource Development (LHRD). To acquire the above noted skill and knowledge about the modern technologies Training & Orientation programmer is the only and only one-way. In fact Training and development begins with specific learning activities that shall best assist in the learning process, ultimately resulting in

relatively permanent change in behavioral potentiality. Training now encompasses activities ranging from the learning of a simple motor skill to the acquisition of complex technical skills. Thus the training and development is an important tool to provide desired level of LHRD for successful application of IT in the libraries. In addition with the training and orientation program participation in Refresher course, Workshop, Seminar/ Conference / Convention and visit of the ideal modern library should also act as helpful tool for the skill development of the library personnel.

9 Information Technology Competency

Information technology competencies (ITC) are one of the major prerequisite factors of application of IT. Regardless of nature of the IT infrastructure at least few of the staff or all (if possible) have to gather some knowledge or experiences to run the library smoothly. Without electronic expertise the IT is meaningless. There are three levels of ITC, e.g. Basic Electronic Competencies, Electronic Competencies by Function, Electronic Expertise.

9.1. Basic Electronic Competencies

This stage can be regarded as primary stage of electronic competencies. Actually, in this stage mission is taken to equip and inform the library personnel about the primary knowledge of electronics. Training in the basics, such as workshops on file handling, email and the electronic calendar. The competencies like general awareness of computer systems and applications used throughout the libraries to perform staff functions as well as services to library users. Library authority should encourage the staff members to acquire such knowledge as well as they should have to offer such type of scopes for the betterment of the library services and employees performance.

9.2. Electronic Competencies by Function

With this level authority try to develop the personnel on the basis of function he/she has to perform. In this level, the competencies are: workstation skill: use of software applications and familiarity with file transfer protocols, and ability to design web pages.

9.3. Electronic Expertise

Through this stage library authority intend to be self-dependent. The third level of competency goes beyond a mastery of one's job in acquiring expertise, sharing expert knowledge and participating in teaching. As staff may be expected to perform at an expert level in one or more level two competencies, i.e. serving as a resource for the staff and providing training and/or assistance. From the management point of view the basic competency is necessary for the primary level staff members, the competency by function is necessary for the middle level staff and the expertise competency is confined for the upper level staff or authority of the library.

10. Training and Development for Collaborative Workplace

To offer a congenial and teamwork environment in the library some strategy is to be introducing in the library. In an airy climate everyone is able to cooperate, share ideas, and work together for a common purpose. The following are some of the media for skill & performance development of the library personnel to achieve the target objective of the library in a qualitative way:

- 11.1. **The Basic Principles of Teamwork:** The most of the library function is of teamwork basis instead of individual. Teams are constantly faced with new situations that require quick and decisive action. So, some guidelines are to be given to maintain integrity and standard of the library work, as the degree of success of any organization depends upon the values, which its members share.
- 11.2. **Recognition:** As positive reinforcement inspires people to think beyond their immediate well-being and to focus on the concerns of the group and the library as a whole instead of punishment to any staff for any adverse performance, award & reward is also to be given to the staff members on the basis of their average performance, which will help to achieve standard group performance.
- 11.3. **Conducting Performance Review, Constructive Feedback and correcting problems:** Periodic performance report of the staff members as an individual, as a team, as a section and as a particular job is to be made. Again, periodic feedback is also to be collect from the entire staff for identify the problems and performance of the library work. On the basis of performance & problems corrective measurement are to be taken by the authority to eradicate the existing problems. This will help the library authority to assign the right people in the right place at the right time.
- 11.4. **Coaching:** This strategy helps to bring out the best performance of each and every staff. It can indirectly motivate, guide and support one another in working towards achieving top performance.
- 11.5. **Managing our Priorities:** Organizational (library's) performance should be given top priorities. Immediate after joining of any personnel in the library the authority should be explain the objectives and present state of the organization in brief to the new entrants. This training helps participants build strong, supportive work relationships that increase overall productivity.
- 11.6. **Recreational activities:** To motivate the staff members some activities are to be enunciate as a part of recreation. Annual sports, indoor game competition, debate, extempore on the LIS field based or general theme based and picnic is to be organize in any holidays. This will able to eradicate the formal official relation, diminish the misunderstanding arises out of day to days official work and may be creates congenial environment inside the library.

- 11.7. Managing Change:** The rate of changes in the entire library field is incalculable. The changes in IT industry and rapid growth & demand rate of information make some complexities on the way of catering library services smoothly. The activities in this module provide the awareness and skill participants need to make better decisions about their daily work. All concerned should be of enough attentive regarding the change and they have to know the strategy for tackle or control such kind of changes.
- 11.8. Excursion / visit to the nearest modern library:** This provision is able to visualize directly the present scenario to the staff members. As a result of which, staff can easily and simply solve the little problem by themselves. In addition with this, it is the common nature of human to understand any thing quickly and easily if he or she has get the opportunity to observe the fact directly instead of theoretical discussion (8).

12. Conclusion

The training and development programme is to be offer to the professionals in a continuing and need based way so that they can easily adjust themselves with the frequent changes of technology. The skills needed to be effective in the new environment are likely to be found in an aggregation of professional talent. There is another human component of the library i.e. end users. Without the orientation of the end users the ultimate objectives of the library cannot be a successful one. Because, everything is meant for the end users, if they fails to utilize the available resources of their respective libraries then all missions relating to application of IT in the libraries will be nothing but the wastage of man, money, time and resources. Thus when libraries address clear roles, organizational structure, education, and training for IHR, IT application in libraries can be successfully achieved.

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