

Need of Training for Continuing Professional Development of Professional Staff Working in University Libraries

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Abstract

With the advances and changing application of ICT in libraries the professional staffs working in university libraries are facing new challenges every now and then. It has become imperative on the part of the professional to undergo training programmes on the application of various ICT tools in the library services conducted by different organizations, institutions etc. Thus, training enables the professional to continuing professional development within or outside the organization.

Keywords: Training, Professional, Skill, Staff, Competencies, Organization

1. Introduction

The efficiency of an organisation largely depends directly on the capability and talent of its personnel. Again the capability of a person depends on the ability to work and the type of training he receives. While his personal capability is evaluated through proper selection procedure, his training is taken care of by the organisation after he has been employed by the organisation.

The term training is concerned with imparting specific skills for a particular purpose. Training is of utmost importance in the library field, although each library organization must decide for itself whom to select or depute from senior management to the newest junior so as to provide a good library service to the user community. It is essential to remember that in a good library system, training of one kind or another will never stop. Rather, it should be a continuous process so as to keep the staff up to date and aware of innovations and changes in the

library world. Library systems do not remain static, new ideas and policy changes are mooted and adopted. Therefore, the training should be aimed at keeping all staff aware of whatever is happening in the library.

2. Continuing professional development and Library and Information Professionals

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sometimes referred to as Continuing Professional Education (CPE) in a library/ information context, is the process by which library and information specialists maintain a professional competence throughout their careers. It has been defined as 'career- long process of improving and updating the skills, abilities and competencies of staff by regular in-service training and education, supported by external courses'.

The success of any organisation directly depends on its staff. Training of the staffs directly reflects the efficiency of the organisation and therefore, every kind of organisation has the sole responsibility of training those who have the potential to contribute their full measure to the management of enterprise.



Thus training of professional staff occupies a significant place in the study of professional development.

Continued in- service training increases the employee's knowledge of the job, promotes high morale, aids them to perform effectively, and also demonstrates ability for future professional growth- the sum total of which results in an increment in both quantity and quality of library service. The more is an employee able to do, the more can be motivated enhancing his value to the library and satisfying his need for personal growth and development and increasing in him the spirit of cooperation.

Thus, the LIS Professional must be trained adequately in handling techno oriented methods which is in very much demand today.

The university library serves users from across all fields of studies and research by providing information support services to all levels of information users be it student, teacher, research scholar, outsider etc. The library plays significant role in smooth functioning of the activities in the university provided, the library has adequate financial resources, judicious collections & tools, proper work environment and above all the right kind of personnel for carrying out the different services & operations within the four walls of the library system. Again only having efficient staff is not enough in today's ever increasing demands of the user community in a totally digitized environment, but they have to be trained from time to time with the latest tools and techniques of information processing and its dissemination.

3. Competencies needed by of LIS professionals working in university libraries

Competencies can be both professional as well as personal. Professional competencies relate to knowledge on information resources, its access and utilization in providing better services to the user community. Personal competencies represent the skills, attitudes and values that enable them to work efficiently as a good communicator, focuses on continuing learning throughout their careers to provide value – added services to the user community

The LIS professionals have to play a key role in providing access to and preserving knowledge in digital form ensuring continued learning process in order to do their jobs efficiently and to meet the ever increasing demands of a techno-savvy population. Now a day many employers seek applicants in LIS profession to be acquainted with various technical skills and experience. Some of the technological requirements of a LIS professional in the digital age are as follows –

- ❖ Adequate knowledge on computer programming, web development skills, course management software such as Web CT
- ❖ Must possess the ability to adapt to rapidly changing technologies and use them into the delivery of information services.
- ❖ Must play an active role in the development of institutional repositories programs and digital collections.
- ❖ Must be able to work with integrated library systems.

3.1 Need of training for professionals working in university libraries

Training is one of the most critical ingredient in providing quality services. Quality training leads to staff who perform at optimal levels and staff who deliver quality service leads to satisfied users. Training initiates an increase in knowledge, acquisition of a skill or the development of a new perspective. Training is not successful unless the trained staff is able to do something new or different or show a change in behavior. At present, training is no more a choice but a necessity.

There are three kinds of approaches that exist to build competency levels of library staff, and these are (i) pre – service training which prepares the individual to enter the profession, (ii) in – service training or staff development which offers learning within the workplace and (iii) continuing education which includes supplementary learning activities related to but apart from the work setting.

In case of university libraries, we can't consider the task to be over by recruiting the qualified staff, but they have to be given adequate training so as to make the organization survive in today's digital environment. And one of the most important advantage of staff training is that it improves job performance which in turn promotes management efficiency

3.2 Training avenues for LIS professionals in university libraries

The LIS professional must attend the various workshops and seminars and other short term training courses conducted by some renowned organizations such as NISCAIR, DRTC, DELNET, INFLIBNET, IASLIC, ILA etc, from time to time to

keep themselves up to date on different aspects of librarianships.

Some of the training avenues for LIS professional working in university libraries are :

- ❖ Refresher/ orientation courses
- ❖ Workshops/conference/ seminar
- ❖ Courses at universities/institutes through distance mode
- ❖ Online training courses
- ❖ On the job/ off the job training
- ❖ Self learning

3.3. Role of LIS schools in enhancing competencies of LIS professionals

The Library and Information Science (LIS) schools must prepare their outputs by making them techno-savvy and understand the application of technology to traditional library services such as –

- ❖ Integrating technology into their core curriculum.
- ❖ Developing courses that offer skills for integrating technologies into libraries
- ❖ Imparting practical knowledge about information technologies to succeed in this profession.
- ❖ Providing courses on short time basis or distance mode for working professionals on latest technologies in the field of library and information science.

The LIS schools should at least teach the basic foundation of information technology. The course, should give the students the opportunity to practice

their technological skills in the same way that they will use the technologies in their professional lives. They can be given practicum which will help the students to see the realities of the profession they are about to enter and the ways in which technology permeates everything librarians do, so that the ideal librarian of the future will be comfortable with technology and see how the technologies can be applied in their environment to provide better services to their patrons. The LIS schools thus have to nurture these skills in the leaders of tomorrow.

Again education and training are life long processes. In LIS education, basic theory and practical techniques are two inseparable entities. One's professional competence needs to be sharpened in order to meet the present demands of information needs of the user community. Competence can be developed by going through books and journals, attending conferences/workshops, discussing with the colleagues, by constantly updating one's practical skills so that they are able to adopt new approaches in information handling and its dissemination.

3.4 INFLIBNET and NISCAIR

In India the two most important organizations such as, INFLIBNET and NISCAIR provide various training programmes to the Library professionals working in university and college libraries to develop their competencies in the use of various IT tools and application of ICT into the library services.

INFLIBNET has organized about 640 training programmes, workshops and seminars focusing on library automation and networking till 31st December, 2015 and about 51107 participants have been benefitted from it. It also conducts Regional Training Programme for Library Automation (IRTPLA) and

user awareness training programmes across the country in collaboration with different universities. INFLIBNET also organizes national and international conventions called PLANNER specifically in Northeast regions and CALIBER in various states across India in alternate year. About 123 training programmes on SOUL installation and operations for libraries have also been conducted by the centre. As a part of human resource development activities the centre organizes attachment training programme for practicing library professionals.

NISCAIR which came into existence in 2002 also conducts human resource development activities for the library professionals. It conducts short term training programmes and onsite training programmes as a part of human resource development programmes. The short term courses are offered to R and D personnel, science communicators, library science professionals / students and both middle and senior level managers etc. The organization conducts onsite training programmes as per requirement of the client's premises subject to minimum and maximum of 10 and 25 participants respectively.

4. Recommendations and Suggestions

- i) A sound policy of technical training and skill enhancement programmes are to be framed to continuously induct the staff to the newly emerging technologies and methods.
- ii) Encourage professionals to participate in refresher courses, seminars, symposia, workshops etc which will offer wide exposure and which in turn will enhance the technical competency and efficiency of the professionals.

- iii) Every university must allocate a separate fund adequately for the library professionals to attend the training programmes from time to time. In order to fully utilize the talents of the staff and to explore their potentialities, it is necessary that the staff is provided facilities for development.
- iv) All the professionals should be given responsibilities and recognition as well as a say in their work in order to motivate them.
- v) The library schools should organize short term courses or courses through distance mode for working professionals.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, the role of the librarian has gone a tremendous change. The LIS professional is now vested with the prime responsibility of managing and organizing the e-library where he has to handle some specialized tasks of digitization of the information resources, data mining, data warehousing, metadata creation etc. The LIS professional working in university libraries have to be equipped with strong competencies so as to survive in their profession. To provide value added services in today's IT environment the LIS professional have to enhance their skills in different aspects of Information technology and make themselves techno- savvy to meet the present information demands of the user community. They have to continue professional development by undergoing training from time to time which will open up great opportunities and bright future in today's modern libraries. So it is very important part of the university, to provide continuous staff training to the library professionals working in university libraries which will make them to learn, improve and develop various kinds of professional skills, knowledge and competencies.

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