Professional Development for Library Professionals Need of the Era

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ABSTRACT

Technology has altered the traditional academic library beyond recognition. These dramatic changes have impacted significantly on the knowledge and skills requirements for LIS professionals practicing in this environment. While there have been studies in other parts of the world which have investigated the knowledge and skills requirements for the digital era academic library environment. This paper reports on a preliminary study which is part of a wider study aimed at developing a comprehensive skills statement which would provide an objective framework against which professional LIS practitioners in the modern academic library environment in South Africa may both measure their existing competencies and also identify the need for further skills acquisition. Professionals develop skills and knowledge through training for providing better service to the user to meet their requirements. The library training should be provided to all library professionals and it should be practical oriented library training using new technologies.

Keywords: Training, professional development, Continuing professional development, library professionals and University Library

I. INTRODUCTION

Professional development is a process in which a professional improves his competencies and skills. TALIS adopts a broad definition of professional development as "process of activities that develop individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics." The background qualification, motivation, commitment to the profession are the most significant qualities of a good professional. Professional development process enhances the skills and abilities to face the challenges due to paradigm shift. It is not time bound activity or series of events but a continuous process. It supports lifelong learning. Development is a continuous process. Each new development brings new opportunity to every profession. The field of Library and Information Science is no exception to this. Due to revolution of information technology, information can be accessed without any boundary. ICT is the most powerful tool which facilitates the organizational changes and new skills.

II. NEED OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG LIS PROFESSIONALS

Library and Information Science is one of the most challenging profession in the knowledge society. LIS professionals face complex challenges posed by recent trends in information communication technology. The role of library professionals has become more dynamic and challenging in the modern world due to organizational changes such as :

- Libraries to Network
- Printed publication to Digital publication
- Ownership to access
- 9 to 5 to 24/7
- User education to information literacy
- Traditional users to active users
- Scholarly communication

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To satisfy their users and to fulfil their expectations, LIS professional must have knowledge of digital environment. Digital archiving and preservation, collection development and content management system are the areas of essential knowledge in which the new generation LIS professionals should be qualified. A LIS professional must be professionally expert, techno literate, web usability expert, knowledge manager, educator, service provider and much more. They have to increase their professional competencies by developing following skills:

- Managerial skills
- Technical and IT skills
- Communication skills
- Information literacy skills
- Preservation skills

In order to face the technological changes and to enhance the skills of digital environment, continuous professional development is an essential part of library professionals and it is the most important way to carrier planning and prospects.

III. MODES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LIS professional can make them professionally developed by various modes:

1) By writing research articles in National and International Journals
2) Through Book publication
3) By attending and presenting papers in National and International Conferences
4) By attending some training courses such as
   - Workshops
   - Short term Courses
   - Orientation Courses
   - Refresher Courses

These training courses are most important modes which help to enhance the knowledge and skill of LIS professionals. These training programmes covers the following key areas:

1) Basic computer knowledge and networking knowledge

LIS professionals who have no knowledge of computers and their networking can join these training programmes and update themselves about role of computers, application software and networks like LAN, MAN and WAN etc.

2) Library Automation

These training programmes provide knowledge of different automation packages such as Libsys, Alice, Libsoft, Soul and KOHA (Open source software). Trainings are also helpful to select suitable library management software according to the needs of their libraries.

3) Digitization and retrospective conversion

Now in digital era, every library tries to convert printed texts, manuscripts into digital form. Training programmes help the *LIS professionals* to have knowledge of conversion of documents into digital form with the help of different equipments. These training programmes also help to acquaint with open source software for the procurement of digital material.

4) Institutional Repositories

For online access of resources libraries establish institutional repositories. Training programmes

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give training to LIS professionals how to establish institutional repositories by providing IP authentication to its users**.**

IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMERS FOR LIS PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA

Besides the Departments of library and information science of different universities and institutions following organizations and centres are working for the professional development of LIS professionals in India:

- UGC play an effective role by conducting orientation/ refresher course and short term courses in every field including Library and Information Science.
- Workshops, seminars and conferences are organized by different associations such as ILA, IASLIC. etc and by universities and colleges sponsored by UGC, DGHE, ICSSR to update LIS professionals in their field.
- INFLIBNET organizes SOUL Training Programme for the working library professionals for making them technologically skilled.
- NISCAIR organizes different IT related short term courses for LIS professionals.
- IASLIC is also working for improving the technical efficiency of the library professionals.
- NISSAT supports variety of skill development programmes for the LIS professionals like TQM in digital era, internet and web designing etc.

  Above practical oriented programmes for professional development are very necessary for LIS professionals, which can help them with advance technology and refresh and retrained them with various technological skills. Professional development programmes for LIS professionals help to do more 'Value adding' work instead of just identify the source of information and providing documents, they will increasingly be evaluating , filtering , extracting , analyzing, summarizing and packaging information into a form that is ready for immediate use by their clienteles for decision making and other purposes. In this way, LIS professionals will move from information work to knowledge work and will have direct impact on their users' work and on the effectiveness and competitiveness of their parent organization.

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