

Librarianship in Digital Environment

(A Collection of Essays in Honour of Dr. A. P. Gakhar)

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Chapter 15

Global Space for Librarianship

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Abstract

In present society, recognition of librarianship at global level especially in India is declining which is a matter of great concern, however it is still relevant. In such circumstances, librarianship and LIS professionals, whether teachers or practicing librarians need to develop more skills to serve the society to justify their existence. The paper discusses about the global space for librarianship and how librarianship can get the attention and concern of society at global level. And furthermore paper also present some of the points to catch attention at global level.

Keywords: Librarianship; Global Librarianship; and Librarianship Recognition etc.

1. Introduction

Librarianship is the profession plays vital role in the information society with commitment to render the quality information services. But, now days, as the society passing through the several changes, mode of demand and requirement of the information have led the librarianship to think about their existence in the society and to adjust accordingly. Also there is a debate has started whether librarianship is going to exist in future or not. Several scholars have expressed their opinions regarding existence of librarianship in the society which reflect that librarianship profession and professionals have to justify the existence.

In 21st century multifarious demands of diversified audience have led the librarianship to change their mode of providing quality services and identity of library professionals. In abroad the librarianship has already adjusted according to the environment and using ICTs for providing quality services. In India the changes in librarianship have also started taking

place although not up to that optimum level but going very fast and hopefully will be able to justify its existence in near future.

2. Global Space for Librarianship: Librarians' Perspectives

The increasing effects of globalization on societies and institutions everywhere and the increasingly interconnected and interdependent world mean that librarians need to have a global perspective in order to best serve their audience with quality information. Librarianship encourages global collaboration because they can serve as repositories for reliable information (Ford 8). To have the global attention and acceptance there are some points for libraries and LIS professionals to think about:

- ◆ How do you capture and organize the information;
- ◆ Library professionals should be aware about the expectations of the diversified audience;
- ◆ How do you solve the problems occurring in libraries;
- ◆ How do you adjust with the changes;
- ◆ Observe your patrons and try to find out their requirements;
- ◆ Create self service portal;
- ◆ Concern about context not content;
- ◆ Understand the goals of the audience;
- ◆ Discovery of new ideas to provide the quality information;
- ◆ Leadership;
- ◆ Don't wait for everyone to change at once;
- ◆ Develop relations with patrons and national and international levels;
- ◆ Don't limit yourself, always keep doors open to implement new innovations
- ◆ Comfort of your staff and patrons;
- ◆ User Friendliness;
- ◆ Develop information literacy and life-long learning among professionals; and
- ◆ Vision for future;

3. Global Space for Librarianship: Teaching Perspectives

In every discipline/subject teaching always affect the next generation. The way students are taught and developed as a professional affects the profession. So it can also play a crucial for recognition of librarianship at global level. Some points may be listed as follows:

Syllabus should be updated continuously so that new things can be incorporated and obsolete things can be removed; The Curriculum should be need based and according the changes taking place due to the rapid advancement and developments in ICT;

- ♦ Students and teachers should be imparted with more practical knowledge as well as theory;
- ♦ Communication skills should be developed so that the professionals can express themselves at every platform;
- ♦ All the academicians and professionals must interact and share their experience and knowledge with each other;

4. Recognition of Library Professionals at Global Level

Advancement and implementation of ICT in library services not only alters the face value of library but also bring identity in recognition to quality services. In such a scenario, the library professionals make efforts to retain the value of services through development of infrastructures, content creation, and user centric collection development etc. The expectations of the patrons from the library have equally touched the peak. The library professionals in such changing environment whole heartedly requires providing quality information services and have to come up with new identities for global recognition. (Soundararajan, Jayakumar and Somasekharan, 2007); (Kumar, 2011). The new identities of the library professionals for their global recognition can be identified as:

- ♦ **Information Manager:** The work of library and information professionals is increasingly varied as it expands to keep up with the flow of information. LIS

professionals work with the computer experts to create and manage websites and intranets for the library. Library and information professionals have to analyse, describe and organize the digital electronic resources such as e-books, scanned images etc for efficient retrieval by the patrons. The library and information professionals are responsible for managing the information resources, the infrastructure and staff to meet the information needs of the users.

- ♦ **Facilitator/Trainer:** Librarian also plays the role of information facilitator/trainer. Their main business is to enhance the information literacy among the users of an organization. In addition to training, other activities (e.g. the development of support tools and services) would be incorporated to help facilitate the ease with which users can access information more efficiently and effectively.

♦ **Network Manager:** The library and information professionals must often be network specialists. This includes not only the physical networking technology to connect computers, workstations and peripherals with the central institutional computer, with CD-ROM and other physical information servers at the institutional network. It also includes the networking technology of the Internet Protocol (TCP-IP) and various other aspects of virtual connections with the worldwide network of information sources. In smaller institutions, the librarian may be required to set-up or maintain the web server, produce HTML pages both for the library and the institution itself, and set Internet services like training sessions, trouble-shooting, and specialized information services like RSS and Blogs. A close interaction with organizational network administrators will help to enhance the knowledge and ensures sustained information services to the user.

- ♦ **Frontier of Latest Technology:** Information resources from the Internet influence the content of the library's collection policy and require inclusion of electronic journals, current awareness services, document delivery

and even ephemeral information resources from the Internet. Library and information professionals have to be familiar with key Internet resources and even provide their own content. Library 2.0 has become the buzzword. Library and information professionals have to start migrate to become librarian 2.0, this require them to know several web 2.0 technologies such RSS (Really Simple Syndication), Wikis, blogs, Web tools, Technology standards and protocols.

- ♦ **Knowledge manager:** Identification, verification, acquisition, organization and dissemination – these are the traditional services provided by library and information professionals since the emergence of the library services. In the last few years' library and information professionals had to expand their area of expertise to include digital information, including areas of the World Wide Web. And they are expected to redefine themselves again. This time, as knowledge managers they have to manage the knowledge of the organization. Knowledge is people, content, practices or processes and intellectual capital. The librarian will be the ideal person to manage the knowledge of the support organization. He/she can be the knowledge manager for training organization who can take the complete responsibility for training content, delivery model and so on. Being the Knowledge Manager means that creating value to the firm by facilitating access to high quality information and by networking people and their ideas together using the technological infrastructure. The emphasis will shift from technical skills in the library to communication, facilitation, training and management skills (e.g. strategic and marketing management)
- ♦ **Cybrarian:** A Cybrarian is a library and information professional that specializes in using the Internet as a resource tool. The term gained currency among many librarian who use the Internet (WhatIs.com). In other words cybrarian is the person who is having the skills

of handling of the information available on the Internet or in electronic form.

- ♦ **Information Scientist:** An information scientist is the person work in the information environment. Activities of the information scientist can be identifies as: developing and managing electronic resources; using electronic and printed resources to respond to enquiries; creating and developing we content and doing all types of activities of handling the information (Information Scientist).
- ♦ **Library and Information Officer:** The library and information officer is the executive officer in charge of information processing in an organization. All systems design, development and data center operations fall under LIO jurisdiction. LIOs have demanding jobs as information systems in an organization are often taken for granted until something breaks down. The LIO is responsible for explaining to executive management in the organization (Answers.com).
- ♦ **Content Developer:** LIS professionals are also identified as content developers who analyse and organize the content and make available for use. Information analysis, consolidation, repackaging and distribution are some of the prime responsibilities of the content developer. His responsibility is very crucial and requires proficiency in information systems. The role of a content developer has become pragmatic especially in digital environment where the information is generated, stored and disseminated by using ICT and make amenable to the end users with seamless access both in the library and web.

5 Reasons for Recognition of Librarianship at Global Level

In present society librarianship owe much greater responsibility to feed the information hunger of the society in more efficient and effective way. For this closer look at the existing recognition of the profession and professionals facing

the challenges for today and tomorrow need not only need to acquire wider range of skills and provide quality information but also to keep them up-to-date. Now, it needs to retain their flexible working skills, their openness to new ideas and their personal attention and caring approach to user needs. Thus, getting attention and recognition at global level several reasons are as (i) Emergence of Internet (ii) Fast incoming technological changes; (iii) Emerging structural changes; (iv) Expectations and requirements of the society are changing; (v) For professional development; (vi) For recognition at national and international level etc.

6. Conclusion

The present society is posing major challenges to librarianship and to satisfy the complex and increasing information demands for varied information products and sources from diversified audience. Due to technological invasion the expectations from libraries are increasing day by day and libraries now have to equip themselves with the capabilities to link with global trends for the ultimate benefit of information seekers. And the need of the hour is to keep ready in anticipation rather than waiting for the requests and library collection must be prudently selected, processed, organized, disseminated and preserved and digital services must be well planned, implemented and supported. To keep pace with the global trends both teaching and practicing librarians' must have to keep themselves abreast with the latest trends if they desire to survive in the present and future world. And furthermore, it can be concluded that the library professionals must have a vision for future as the librarianship has changed drastically. And for the survival and to retain the face value of librarianship, recognition is very much required at global level with quality information services. For global recognition and survival of librarianship the role of library professionals is going to be crucial where the quality of services are provided by them and their vision will matter and will also be decided that world is going to change with

you or without you.

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