Empowerment of Library and Information Science Professionals : A Transition process in Digital Era .

Babita rani

Librarian

Mata Gujri college Fatehgarh sahib

ABSTRACT

Ideally LIS educators play a significant role in the initial empowerment of librarians as professionals. Development and empowerment of LIS professionals as international processes allow librarians not only to question and resist means of regulation and control, but also to take command of their own lives in a way that enables them to develop their professional skills. This article examine that the empowered LIS professionals can bring qualitative changes in the ongoing Library services. No one can predict the future. The future will have lot of changes. Changes are the real challenges that the knowledge economy librarians are going to face with. In recent years technology has made tremendous impact on every profession including Librarianship. Library professionals, as intermediaries have to cope with the "knowledge explosion" which is the result of the information technology and high expectations of the users. New skills and knowledge will have to be acquired and the existing skills have to be enhanced to survive

Keywords: Empowerment, Professional Development, LIS professional, Education Development.

INTRODUCTION

The Library & Information Science education is an integral component of the educational system. It is intimately connected with society and is conditioned by the ethos, culture and character of a nation. The constitutional goals, the directive principles of the state policy, the socio-economics problems and the growth of knowledge, the emerging expectations and the changes operating in education, etc. call for an appropriate response from a futuristic education system and provide the perspective within which Library & Information Science education programmes need to be viewed.

The educational expansion, universalization of professional education and overall quality of education are major challenges before the country. Evidently the quality of education is a direct consequence and outcome of the quality of library professionals and Library & Information Science education system. The last ten years have witnessed several attempts to change, modify and indigenize the inherited system of Library & Information Science education.

Enlightened emancipated and empowered library professionals lead communities and nations in their march towards better and higher quality of life. Library professionals are the torch bearers in creating social cohesion, national integration and a learning society. They not only disseminate knowledge but also create and generate new knowledge. They are responsible for acculturating role of education. No nation can even marginally relax its efforts in giving necessary professional inputs to its library professionals and along with that due status to their stature and profession.

When India attained freedom, the then existing educational system was accepted as such because it was thought that a sudden departure from the same would be disturbing and destabilizing. Thus a tendency to retain the system acquired prevalence and all that was envisaged by way of changed was its rearrangement. Consequently, education including Library & Information Science education largely remained isolated from the needs and aspirations of the people. During the last five decades certain efforts have been made to indigenize the system. The gaps, however, are still wide and visible.

It is well recognized that the overall quality in education mainly depends on the quality of librarians and a sound programme of professional preparation of library professionals is essential for imparting quality education. However, Library & Information Science educators' own education leaves much to be desired. Teaching is an art which can be inculcated through a series of well-designed activities in respect of education and training of library professionals and is equally valid for professional preparation of Library & Information Science educators.

It is generally believed that the quality of library professionals depends on the quality of the Library & Information Science education programme. And obviously the quality of LIS education programme depends in the quality of the LIS educators. As LIS education is a continuous process, LIS educators too need to update their knowledge, sharpen their pedagogical skills and enhance their research aptitude. In this era of Globalization, Liberalization and privatization and with the new opportunities offered by ICT, it is essential that LIS educators be suitably empowered in terms of handling content and process of LIS education in new ways.

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS)PROFESSIONALS EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment has become part of today's rhetoric of educational discourse and exchange, as it aids in the understanding and visualization of the human ability within organizations to improve and increase opportunities for autonomy, responsibility, choice and authority, It is considered to be a basic element of library reform. LIS has historically been a profession which granted practitioners some degree of autonomy in their library, but large institutional decisions affecting their work were still controlled by administrators and policymakers. Everything from hiring, budgeting, scheduling, text-book and technology selection to professional development and curriculum is often in the hands of others.

The importance of library professionals empowerment in key education areas cannot be underestimated. A belief by library professionals that their knowledge of LIS matters and is considered a valuable factors in decision making. The connection can help improve the retention of those library professionals in their libraries. Library professionals empowerment is a concept used to describe the process by which a professional educator can increase his enthusiasm, effectiveness and skill when it comes to transmitting information to students. An empowered library professionals appreciates his role and feels that the job he has does has real values. An empowered library professionals will be confident in his subject matter because of the work he has done to learn it himself, thereby ensuring a higher degree of accuracy in library users work. An empowered library professionals will also exude an aura of enthusiasm and love for the subject, which will rub off on students and inspire them to enjoy the learning process.

The idea of library professionals empowerment can be broken down into certain core concepts, such as knowledge of subject, comfort with public speaking, accountability for student success and failure, ability to have input in curriculum, ability to recognize and solve problems in professional growth. In essence, anything that makes a library professionals more confident and capable is an aspect of library professionals empowerment. Here are some points through which library professionals can be empowered.

1 Librarians help individuals gain new knowledge, answer questions, access expensive resources, use computer networks, and so many other things that help them to realize more of their personal potential.

2 Librarians make organizations more effective by providing the information services they need to use their human and physical resources to their fullest potential.

3 Librarians create and manage community resources that make communities more powerful and resilient. In these days due to impact of social sites on communities the LIs professionals are required to share professional experience, create a library homepage, and create homepage to show their identity.

4 Librarians collect, manage, preserve, and provide access to the resources required for individuals to contribute to society as informed citizens regardless of their financial resources or social status within the community.

5 Increasing knowledge – This is perhaps what we are best known for — providing the books and articles and o ther resources that our users need to increase their knowledge. First LIS professionals educate there selves, then they can give/ provide service to others.

6 Libraries have frequently branched out to providing access to tools, whether it be a popular tool lending library or more recently in-house access to expensive 3D printers.

7 Since shortly after the Internet came into the collective consciousness; libraries have been front-and-center in providing access to this network to those who couldn't afford access to it at home. And we still are.

8 With the economic crash in recent years libraries have been the "go to" place to reskill and find a new job. This role will likely only increase in the future, and we've even seen a public library recently offer a way for high school dropouts to earn their diploma. Where there's a gap in services to help people to get ahead, you often see librarians stepping in to fill the void.

9 In these day due to IT impact, library consortia, E-Resources the graph of LIS professionals image is up. ICT has thrown open the doors to the LIS professionals to many opportunities, so the LIS professionals should increase their managerial skill in printing as well as online documents.LIS professionals are required to work as leaders, managers and facilitators.

10 Society evolves, and librarians evolve with it. Due to involvement the accountability and responsibility of LIS professional has increased. The LIS professionals should be involved in decision making committee, so that the Govt. policies initiatives focusing on the LIS professionals requirements to the fulfillment of user based library services.

Given all of the above you would think that society would reward librarians very well. But we all know that isn't the case. The reason we are still here is that we do it out of love. We love that every day we get to get out of bed and make the lives of others richer and more fulfilling. We love that we are focused not on making more widgets or making them cheaper, but on helping individuals live more fulfilling lives and helping our communities and society at large to prosper. We love our jobs because there is much to love, and none of it has anything to do with money.

The development of one's personality and sharpening of communication skills and commitment to a code of conduct. For all this to be a reality, it is very necessary to empower LIS professionals as they have the huge responsibility of developing creative, humanistic, innovative, responsible and passionate librarians.

A true professional is capable of perceiving complexities and uncertainties in the society, has a thorough grasp of the subject, possesses skills to make critical diagnosis, takes decisions and has courage and conviction to implement such decisions. All these characteristics make a LIS professional empowered which is the need of the today's library services.

CONCLUSION

Thus it can be concluded from the discussion that education and training of LIS professionals need to focus its attention on the new role of LIS professionals on the problems which reflect the emerging global trends in education and the overall needs and aspirations of the people in India. It also has to encourage LIS professionals continuing professional growth. Various committees, commissions and other academic bodies in the past have discussed these issues. However, our

pedagogical endeavors continue to be lacking both in spirit and energy. There is an urgent need for a synergy in this context. The future library professionals need to be equipped to meet the emerging challenges. Obviously LIS professionals needs to be oriented towards new requirement library services as well as towards new techniques and strategies. Thus empowerment of LIS professionals is the need of the hour. Future is would also help them assume new responsibilities for their own professional development and also provide support to other streams of education.

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