Role Of College Librarian In Digital Era

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Abstract :-

IT has impact on every aspects of human life. IT has also great impact on library operations & services. Due to IT & other factors many challenges are created before Librarianships. Due to which the role of librarian is changed from traditional role. This paper described in detail the changing role of Librarian in Digital Era. This paper also mention need to change the role of Librarian, goals & challenges of LIS professionals, challenges facing by the Librarian in 21st century, Library environment & changes in it. This paper also describe the role of future information professional & other interesting possible roles.

Keyword :- Library, IT, Librarianship, Librarians, Information professionals.

Introduction :-

Information and communication technology (ICT) has now become an integral part of our day to day activities and in the working environment. Change in one reality with which individuals, groups & organizations must constantly cope with order to survive. The needs for progressive changes in peoples attitudes & behaviours are essential for global acceptance. Nevertheless for Library & Information Science (LIS) Professional, a change is often linked with modern information technologies & management issues. The new technology has not only created and developed some modern libraries, but also transformed many existing libraries in to modern society.

Modern Society is based on information resources. The traditional concept of libraries, which was completely based on print media, is changing to digital form with the help of IT. A digital library is highly organized collection of electronic learning resources. The changing environment has changed the role of librarian from being a custodian of book to a provider of information. It is therefore a pertinent on the part of the librarian to acquire new skills required for developing & managing the modern library. The empowerment of library and information profession with IT driven skills is aimed at providing services as the users expectations.

Need to Change the Role of Librarians :-

A survey published by Special Libraries Association (SLA) in 1998 found that, although our roles are indeed changing, Librarians foresee their role evolving to that of a
consultant and planner, where they facilitate the delivery of end user information through corporate network."

As we saw earlier that traditional libraries were store house of knowledge and Librarians were acting as care taker of that knowledge. But due to technological changes and growing information and increasing user demands role of Librarians need to the changed.3

Following are some reasons to change the role of Librarians.3

1) Fast changing and multi dimensional user demands.
2) Information Explosion.
3) Computer and telecommunication technology invention.
4) Internet and mobile technology advancement.
5) Increased awareness among users of library.
6) Technology available of fingertips.
7) Expectations of apex bodies like NAAC, AICTE, NBA etc.
8) Thrust for the ‘BEST’
9) Competition in local and global market.
10) Changing virtual environment.

Following are also some challenges of LIS & challenges facing by Librarians due to the role of Librarians has changed.4

Goals and Challenges of LIS:--

In Library & Information Science as in any other sector, the professional have to face change. The libraries are increasingly viewed as outdated & under rated with the use of modern web-based services. The use of expectations on libraries to deliver high quality, comprehensive, user-friendly new generation services have grown tremendously in recent years. The survival demand change, updating & modernization of the resources & services offered by the libraries. The prime goal of library & information center is users satisfaction. Any change ultimately results in these getting the maximum benefit. A properly planned changes can definitely lead achievements of the institutional goals.4

New Challenges for LIS Professionals. :-

In fast changing, expanding diverse global digital information environment libraries are facing a variety of complex challenges from multiple sectors of the knowledge society in the 21st century.

The major challenges are.4

- Information Explosion
- ICT revolution
- Explosive growth & usage of web resources
- Diwinding Library budgets.
- Escalating cost of printed documents.
- Intensive use of digital resources.
- Interactive virtual learning environment.
- Online Bookshops & Information services.
• Evolution of Virtual Educational Institution.
• Heightened level of user expectations.
• New pattern of Scholarly publishing and communication.
• Development of Digital, Virtual & Hybrid libraries.

**Challenges facing by the Librarians in the Twenty First Century. :-**

To cope with the changing environment, Librarians are facing tremendous challenges in twenty first century. The major challenges are.  

• Translation from print to digital content.
• Information explosion & ICT.
• Technological – trauma & infrastructure.
• Preservation of material on digital scale.
• Growth & - usages of web resources.
• User expectations.
• Virtual Learning Environment.
• Virtual Education Institutions (e-learning).
• Development of digital, virtual & hybrid libraries.
• On line book shops & information services.
• Making services engaging to researcher and students.
• Handling research and diverse spectrum of customers.
• Staff resistance to change.
• Multi-format data creation.
• Adopting Just-in-case to Just-in-time approach.

These challenges have called for Refresher courses, Orientation, re-engineering and great changes in the environment, library functions, role of LIS professionals and learn new-skills and competencies to serve their users with dedications and prove your value to your parent organization. In order to play new roles in present era it is necessary that LIS professionals must equipped with skills & competencies.

**Library Environment and Changes :-**

Change is the rule of life. In Library and Information Science as in any other sector, the professionals have to face changes. LIS profession have changed in dynamic way.

The development in information technology has a great impact on every aspect of library operation and information services.

**A. Print to Electronic Media :-**

Electronic books & electronic journals are gradually occupying their position in a libraries collection. These are physically stored in some remote external devices Standards, reports, patent and many other grey literature are now available in the online format.

**B. Changes in Access :-**
Over the years information retrieval tools have evolved from printed library catalogues, card catalogues, indexing & abstracting journals to OPAC, WEBOPAC citations with full text linking and RSS Feeds etc.

C. Changes in Library Services :-

With the changes in library collection, their organization & expectation of the use, the library services have also changed.

a. Change in information seeking behaviour of the user.
b. Computerized circulation of documents using various software.
c. OPAC & WEBOPAC.
d. Resource sharing through Internet.
e. Resource sharing through Consortia.
f. Link to Web resources through library portals & electronic resources.
g. Digital archiving, institutional repositories.

Now a days change in the technology, the day to day activities performed by a Librarian have undergone a change. Some select changes can be seen at a glance as listed below.

2. Collection Manuscripts, Print collection E-books, E-journals.
3. Acquisition As per Selection and Content Access.
4. Classification Organization of Contents.
5. Cataloguing Database / Metadata Description
6. Abstracting Content creation
7. Organization Website Management
10. Administration Negotiations.
11. Librarians Information Officer, Cybrarian.

Changing Role of College Librarian :-

Today old roles of librarian still exist. In addition to the traditional roles they have to play different roles in their work due to challenges faced by the LIS Professionals & Librarians & Users demands / needs.

The Librarian should have knowledge and experience regarding Library Automation, Software, Networking and Digital Library. The best use of any library depends upon managerial capability of the librarian because he is the leader & role model for library staff. He is not only to set an example for others to work but also to make significant contribution to adapting the technology. The librarian should adopt new skills & competencies to perform better role in the IT environment.

In short, we can describe changing role of Librarian in IT environment.

1. Leadership Role & Managerial Skills :-

One primary role of Librarians is to provide leadership and expertise in the design, development & ethical management of knowledge Based information systems in
order to meet the information needs & obligations of the patrons. He should enrich his management skills for organizing, managing & disseminating e-literacy to use.

2. IT Skill as Digital Information Provider :-

Providing information resources to patrons regardless of format, it is most necessary to have quality of Virtual Librarian. He should be able to satisfy all types of users especially research scholars & young generation who uses internet frequently for the latest up gradation of information. He should be able to create his own website as an easier way to share with others what they know. He should gather electronic information & create electronic pathfinders and front-end search tools to help users for accessing the required information.

3. An Evaluator of Digital Resources :-

Evaluating the right information at the right time is the most important factor in digital library. Evaluating electronic sources of information there is also a distinction to be made between those sources of data which have been digitized for the speed & ease of transportation, and data which is of limited usefulness, volatile & fluid in nature. It provide links to websites on specific topics & lead patrons to those evaluated sites as starting point for retrieving related & relevant information.

4. Staff Development Programmes :-

Information retrieval is the most obvious skill a Librarian demonstrates to the public. Adequately skilled staff should be recruited to meet the increased demands of the knowledge society. With a rapid changing environment both within & outside the library, staff development programme are essential to the continued success of organization.

5 Proactive Information Professional Role :-

The modern trend is for the role of the Librarian to move from that of a passive intermediary role responsible for guiding patrons to appropriate information resources towards that of a much more proactive professional role which includes analyzing & repackaging of information, context information management & institutional dignitary repository management.

6. Information Literacy Programme :-

Librarians have to change their role in the e-learning environment by participating in e-learning experiments and becoming involved in universities e-learning centers. A well learned must teach information literacy to educate future knowledge workers, in traditional ways or via-Internet based instruction modules.

7. E-Resource Managers :-

Academic and Research Libraries have a major role in ensuring that they & their home institutions remain vital players in the changing terrain of information & education.

Suraywanshi also described the role of librarian in following ways.
8. **Information Broker** :-

Today information has become a major economics commodity. Therefore, a librarian has to be a middleman or a broker between information seller and buyer or information creator and consumer. The work of Librarians is increasingly varied as it expands to keep up with the flow of information. A librarian is responsible for locating, acquiring, disseminating & tracking information resources of many types for efficient retrieval by the users. In such a scenario, it is imperative for the traditional librarian to acquire necessary skills in negotiating & obtain the information. In addition, the effective use of modern gadgets, associated software to locate & retrieve the widely spread information is necessary before functioning as a broker.

9. **Educator** :-

Librarians skills in the area of technology, educational design and teaching technique are crucial in their new educational role. Creating awareness of information has been the prime role of librarian in the present day. The librarian is an organization trains the user to perform their searches more effectively. However, no matter how sophisticated interfaces & search engines are, the user still requires training or guidance in their usage. Thus Librarian plays an important role as trainer or an educator.

10. **Researcher** :-

Librarians are highly skilled in research processes. They posses unique knowledge of the necessary breadth & depth of information resources in various specialties. Librarians study to keep themselves uptodate on the expanding trends & paradigms in not only library profession but also in any discipline. They need to understand the changes in the technology and different sources of information, by facilitating access to information finding it, delivering, summarizing it. Librarian will move to the beginning of the information production cycle, playing a more substantial role in the information creation process.

**Role of Future Information Professionals** :-

Optimistically speaking, Becker predicts that Librarians & Information Scientists are destined to play increasing roles in establishing connections between information resources & people in the coming information society. In a similar way, Foskett comments that. “At such a historic moment, when new technologies offers Librarians the chance to make a real contribution to enhancing the cultural heritage by active exploitation of all its records, it would be a tragic irony if the median becomes the message technology becomes the master & not the servant and librarians found themselves once more cast in the role of keepers not of books but of machines…..!!!.

Librarians must not neglect their role as repositories but become all mediators and promoters of communication….”

The key role of Librarian will be still filtering or sifting information, due to information overload, and we should contribute to two user categories…. “do it for me group.” And “let me do it myself group.” In addition, he has the role of an educator through conducting of
information literacy programmes of the library. Of course this would require excellent communication & interpersonal skills.

New roles suggested by Pedley, includes such role as intranet manger, web master, content manager, knowledge manager and competitive intelligent analysis.

Other Interesting Possible Roles: -

- Agents of social transformation by offering to users, resources for developing their own abilities and provide information relevant to daily life as well as opportunities for communication with others.
- Experts on the needs of users & how these needs can be met.
- Activists, by asserting their power to regulate the flow of information & establish the frontiers of access to knowledge
- “Humane” role by accentuating, in future, service of a personalized nature to users.
- Assume a commitment to continuing education, which is destined to play such an important role in the future society.
- Advisory role, as the end-users will interact directly with information through online facilities / services.
- As gatekeeper who control the flow of communication.
- Generalist with a linking function & would imply the development of horizontalists (as opposed to verticalists) who would carry out two kinds of synthesis….synthesis within one discipline and interdisciplinary synthesis.
- Pop design (Profile of Public Designer) who could profile the different kind of ideas coming from the public so that the decision makers could see what the needs & desires and needs of the public are.
- Sniffer for information.
- Mixer or Modellor of information, this would facilitate creation of models which would enable us to develop more complete concepts.
- Gate-opener, who will have to work diligently, strongly & even dangerously against the growing tendency to close up information, to own information, and not let other people have it.

CONCLUSION:-

In Digital Era, Librarians has to play important role to satisfy the multidimensional needs of users. Modern Librarianship has become highly specialized job which requires positive attitude towards change and technological upgradation.

For facing up new challenges of today & tomorrow, Librarian not only need to acquire wide range of skills & knowledge but also need to keep themselves up to date to provide responsive library & information service to the users.

In Digital Era, the role of Librarian changed from the tradition role. Librarians need to be aware of the implications of the changes. The role of Librarian is evolving as a network specialists, information broker, system designer and knowledge manager, web master, intrant manager, content manager, E-resource manager etc.
REFERENCES:


3) Ibid


5) Ibid, pp.204-205.


7) Ibid, p.200


