CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the above-mentioned emerging scenario, the Library & Information Science Professional's role will undergo drastic changes. Today the word "Library" itself is being replaced by the term "information center" and the world 'Librarian' is replaced by different terms.

UNESCO guidelines identifies these professionals as

- Information Educator
- Information Researcher
- Information Manager
- Information Analyst
- Information Distributor.
- Information Scientist

It is interesting to note that all these terms associate librarians with "Information." This is to stress that in the years to come, documents or published volumes will no longer be interested in searching a document or to locate information but will expect it to be available across the desk or ready or in the electronic form. Library and information science is a kind of professional education where students get both theoretical as well as practical training of techniques of library organization, management and processes of information retrieval.

A professional education should be allowed to run with proper assessment of its quality, reliability, and efficiency of the trained personnel and most important as per the job opportunities in the subject. In the meanwhile information technology (IT) has brought a challenge to the job avenues of this course. There is no doubt that IT has brought the increasing efficiency and quality of library services which

has attracted still more people to use library/ information center, however the importance of skills required in traditional librarianship can not be neglected.

In recent years, as it is already pointed out that, the library and Information Science education in India has developed in a haphazard way because of autonomy to the universities to construct curriculum. There are disparities among the schools as regards the levels of education, duration of the courses, contents of the syllabus, admission and evaluation criteria, nomenclature of the degrees/ schools. Amongst all, the most important is the course content. It is an observation of the researcher that in most of the teaching programmes on Library and Information Science although the course curriculum has been changed to introduce IT in libraries but still it looks somewhat ornamental. Most of the teaching departments in Library and Information Science are not able to provide advanced knowledge in the subject. As a result the library professionals find difficulties to manage IT oriented services in the libraries even after completion of the professional education.

The Library & Information Science (LIS) has the attributes of being a discipline of disciplines. The subject commenced its advent with a clinical approach and gradually attained the status of a scientific field, emerged subsequently as one of the subjects of highly interdisciplinary approach, with a blend of theories, philosophies and practices incorporated from a host of other subjects. The subject area under discourse in its fold has the imbibed applications from diverse subjects like, Psychology, Statistics, Linguistics, Management Science, Computer and Communication Technology and also from many others.

Ever Changing Profile of the Discipline:

All these factors have contributed to the emergence of new areas termed as; Information Science, Information Society and Information Technology, all emphasizing on the common denominator "Information" which has the reckoning of an economic power. Genesis of all these manifested transformation would be attributed to library science and Information Science, which has traditionally carried out the task of collection, and distribution of information held in by the printed documents. The time has changed and the emergences of electronic media have opened up new avenues, and have also made to rethink on manpower development programmes in this and other selected fields.

The schools of LIS education named so in their early infancy have attained the status of independent Departments, incidentally this has not only enhanced their status in the Universities, but has also given them the responsibilities to prepare human resources for manning libraries in changing environments.

Library and Information professionals have to be educated and trained with a view to the

required expectations of the information users. Application of computer and communication technologies to library and information work have opened up new vistas and it is essential to equip the teachers and the taught to the new environment, hence the responsibility of the independent department is very significant. The curriculum that is to be framed has to reflect these aspects in its content. Apart from enriching its content, it is also necessary to keep it flexible to match with the varying infrastructure facilities possessed by the departments. The present work is an attempt to evaluate the course content from this direction.

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