



SOFT SKILL IMPROVEMENT OF COLLEGE LIBRARIANS THROUGH CEP

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Abstract

Soft skill play an important role in developing the personality of an individual. They are required in day-to-day work for carrying out routine work more effectively. The paper aims to bring out the problems and prospects of the professional development opportunities of academic library professionals; the study recommends methods for improving the skills of library professionals. The aim of the study is to evaluate the professional development activities of Library professionals and their attitude towards continuing education programmes. Majority of the professionals' nave-pursued higher degrees in library science or It allied courses after entering the profession, and that they have a positive attitude towards participation in training programmes and workshops. The results show that developments in ICT have a positive influence on majority of library professionals' attitude towards continuing education programmes.

Introduction:- Librarians' especially academic librarians have been facing challenges in the profession due to the rapid technological changes with the development of information technologies particularly the Internet. Now Librarians have to play the role of mediator between the vast network of resources and its users. To meet the ever-changing demands of the users, library professional require continuously updated knowledge and skills tor effective performance. Continuing education is necessary for every professional, not only in library profession but also in all service sectors and it is fundamentally a responsibility of the individual professional. A librarian's motivation for continued learning involves a mixture of social responsibility, desire for advancement, professional pride, a concern for future libraries the need to keep abreast of new knowledge and Technology, as well as an interest in

supplementing professional training (ALA, 1980). Maintaining professional competence is the process by which professionals keep current the knowledge skills, and abilities needed to function effectively in their profession (Chan & Auster, 2003). Competence of a library depends largely on the competence of its staff hence, it is important to assess the library professionals' needs for continuing education and professional development in the changing electronic environment of an academic library. The humankind is ruling the planet earth only because of his skills that other living and non-living things hardly possess. This statement is self-explanatory how important the soft skills are to survive and grow. Today academic excellence is increased, but its salutary effect in human behavior is decreasing the need of hour is to adopt the soft skills in such a manner to bring out the 'ART' there by becoming 'smart' so what are soft skills and which soft skills are essential for librarians to prepare themselves to be seated as 'SMART'.

Definition of soft skill:-

- 1) Soft skills is a sociological term relating to a person's Emotional intelligence Quotient, the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that characterize relationship with other people.
- 2) Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects.
- 3) Soft skills are personal attributes that describe an individual's ability to interact with others (Source : <http://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/soft-skills>) soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions career prospects and job performance. Unlike hard skills, which tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are broadly applicable across job titles. Soft skills is a catchall term referring to various behaviors that help people work and socialize well with others. In short, they are the good manners and personality traits needed to get along with others and build positive relationship.

Need of soft skill on librarianship : - Which working in 21st century it is need for the hour to go with time for library profession. The librarian has to communicate to all stay members of college it is said that he could able to provide information to two entities be that is principal to peon.

List of Soft Skills necessary for Librarians:- Leadership qualities require the soft skills as fundamentals. Following are some of the significant soft skills that are required to become a successful library professional and successful leader

I. Listening skills: - The library professionals must have good listening skills as lie/she has

to interact with different types of users all the time. By carefully listening to users he/she can identify the exact requirement and then provide the service accordingly.

II. Communications skills: - Command on language especially English and regional will improve the communication. A good communication skill also requires understanding people, self-confidence that enables to solve the problem with ease.

III. Interpersonal skills :- Library professionals have to deal with all levels of people like Management, users, colleagues in library, vendors etc. to deal with each in rightful manner requires interpersonal skills.

IV. Writing skills :- The librarians are asked to help in writing research proposal/ business proposal/ project report, which requires good writing skills,

V. Project management skills: - In corporate libraries many times, library professionals are part of project teams and are assigned with specialized jobs such as knowledge management.

VI. Presentation skills:- The presentation skills are required in. report writing, library committee meetings and even in daily work which represents the overall library management

VII. Public relations: - One needs to use Public Relations very effectively to attract users in libraries through various ways

VIII. User service: - To satisfy the information needs of the users in (lie utmost priority for any library

IX. Leadership skills & Teamwork: - Library management especially in a bigger library set up is about team work/exercise. Hence, it is required to have leadership skills to manage and guide the team from time to time.

X. Negotiating skills: - These skills are required on such occasions specially handling bulk purchases, while subscribing online journal/databases through vendors/publishers. The sound negotiation skills will always help in handling various tasks and situations in the library.

XI. Teaching skills: - Libraries spend huge amount to procure resources both print as well as electronic, therefore, it is essential to possess teaching skills, which helps to conduct to information literacy classes effectively and teach how to access the resources available within the library and outside the library.

XII. Ability to see the bigger picture :- an understanding of the broad context of the organization and the fit between KM and IM strategies/ Projects, other critical success factors and academic research value.

XIII. Awareness of technology:- an understanding of the range of information and communication technologies available and realization of its role in information and knowledge

management.

Importance of the continuing education for improvement of soft skill :-

Continuing Professional Education: - The need for updating, refreshing, re-orientation and for the development of new skills and attitudes is more pervasive. It affects professions seeking to cope not only with technological advance but also to understand and adapt to their changing social and economic environment. Therefore, continuing professional education must change in tune with new circumstances.

Continuing education for librarians is one of the chief means of making libraries effective since it seeks to enhance development of the human resources and ensures that trained personnel remain productive throughout their working lives. In the present age of information, continuing education assures a culture in which the solutions of man's problems are information based.

With the changing situations of Library & Information service, professionals not only think how to keep up with such changes, but how to incorporate new learning's to deal with the changes, but how to incorporate new learning's to deal with the changes. Some of the these changes are a tremendous acceleration of new knowledge amounting to an actual information explosion, an increasing involvement of government with libraries, a rapid explosion of new technology, and an increasing demand for new library services as well as greater participation of librarians in the decisions affecting their professional life and career.

The objectives of continuing educational programs for the library professionals are :

- to keep abreast and up-to-date with new development.
- to develop and maintain competence.
- to widen experience and practical knowledge.
- to promote personal job satisfaction and to enhance existing qualifications.
- to continue his study of the basic disciplines which support his profession,
- to help them improve their career prospects.
- to meet the challenges of changing needs.
- to learn to implement new ideas, methods and techniques.
- to improve effectiveness of teaching programs.
- to grow person as well as a professional . Areas of Continuing education programmes

Various studies in identifying the areas of continuing professional programmes in past as well as the present trends reveal that information storage and retrieval, Library automation and user satisfaction are now getting more importance than traditional subjects such as

classification and cataloguing. The areas which are also beneficial for the professionals are Reprography, Bibliometrics, Bibliographical control. Information analysis and consolidation, marketing of information, Documentation/Indexing and abstracting, periodical management, US education. User education/User study. Resource sharing/Library co-operation, preservation and conservation of Library materials etc.

All these above mentioned continuing education activities help the professionals to learn new ideas and research, update skills/knowledge, obtain specialist knowledge, prepare for new responsibilities, enhance promotion prospects, general professional development, widened horizons, increased motivation job satisfaction, enhancement of Library Information Service and its image.

Conclusion:- From the analysis of professional development activities like enrolment in higher education. Publication pattern, membership in professional associations and participation in continuing education programmes, it is evident that some of the personal characteristics like age, qualification, experience, category etc. influence library professional in their professional activities. The analysis found that majority of the library professional have positive approach to continuing education programmes and that they participate in these programmes to get trained in the latest technology and acquire new skills. The continuing education programmes prove that participation in such programmes has helped to update their skills to some extent programme of professional development must be compulsory for all library professionals. The training programmes and orientation programmes to develop skills of library professionals are to be organized by the institution in a regular manner and equal opportunities are to be provided to all library professionals irrespective of experience and library associations.

The Library science departments and the professional associations have to take the initiatives to organize on a regular basis, continuing education programmes to ensure that the working professionals are competent to face the challenges of the profession. Library professionals on their part, have to continuously update their skills to maintain and support use centered applications and face the challenges of ever increasing demands for wide-ranging IT oriented services from the academic community. The university administrators have to encourage and sponsor the professionals for participating in continuing education programmes, for which most of the professionals have a positive attitude.

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