



Rayat Shikshan Sanstha's

**Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil Mahavidyalaya,
Pandharpur, Dist. - Solapur.- 413304**

(Accredited By NAAC with "A" Grade with CGPA of 3.43)



SOUVENIR

UGC SPONSORED

State Level Seminar On

"Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats for Today's Librarianship"

Organised by : Department of Library & Information Science

(23rd December, 2013)

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(H.O.D., Library)

Prof. M. G. Patil

(Librarian, D.P.)

Prof. M. K. Patil

(Librarian, D.P.)

Prof. Y. S. Patil

(Librarian, D.P.)

Prof. B. S. Patil

(Librarian, D.P.)

Prof. Dr. M. S. Patil

(Coordinator, D.P.)

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(Librarian, U.P.)

Prof. Dr. M. S. Patil

(Coordinator, U.P.)

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND BEST PRACTICES IN LIBRARIANSHIP

Mr. Mahesh M. Kamble,

Mr. Dattatray S. Patil

Mr. Shivaji P. Kamble,

P.V.P. College K.Mahankal Shankarrao Mohite College, Akluj

Kisanveer College, Wai

mahesh_librarian@rediffmail.com

bbr_patil@yahoo.co.in

kshivajilib@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper defines the concept and describes Professional Skills and best practices of Librarian also put light on what should do in the libraries to give the better and new services to the users. The global changes particularly in the information and communication technologies (ICT) have impact on the functioning of libraries. The development in ICT has changed the user's expectations from the libraries in different ways. In the user centered library quality service and user satisfaction are libraries primary goals. The strategy for application of professional skills and best practices in the library. It discusses importance of both in a modern library and information centre (LIC) to enable it to improve its processes and activities, optimize resource utilization, and deliver high quality, value added services to its users.

Key Words: LIS Professional, professional Skills, Best Practices, ICT, NAAC

Introduction:

The profession is also called occupation and meaning of the profession is to do those operations which are executed either in at office or at home with the help of other Staff. In which the occupations concerned with production, business, commerce, operations and services. are included. The service occupations are those in which a man earns the money by serving the people or by selling his services to them. For example, the professions of lawyers, doctors, teachers and librarians are counted in this category. These people earn money by selling their services. In this way the profession concerned with librarianship falls under the category of Service (Sector) profession.

Whether the librarianship is a profession?

Librarians are treated as the heart of educational set up and system, it play a vital and important role in the development of a country. The libraries of today are not only the store house of the books but also the analysis centers of information, hence their responsibility towards users increase form the point of view the utility and application of the information. Today in the libraries various functions related with information providing for the users are executed for which libraries need an experienced, skillful, and technically expert person, which is called a librarian. But the librarianship must have the high ideal personal abilities and qualities along with educational, technical professional and other general qualifications.

The Librarian serves the different types of the users by his different abilities and efficiencies, and satisfies their information needs. His all the services are only for users of the libraries, and

he gets salary for these services. In this way indirectly the librarian earns the money by selling his services to the users of the library. Hence in my opinion the librarianship is also a profession like the other professions it is not ordinary but a challenging profession. To serve the users librarian must possess the following skills and qualities.

Sound education qualification:

A good librarian must possess good qualification like master's degree in library and information science plus at list PG diploma in computer science & applications, PG diploma in management. Higher qualification definitely leads to long survival in the profession.

Computer Skill:

The librarian must be aware of latest developments in the computer field both in the hardware as well as in software side. This will help him to plan the future automation process. Computer knowledge is essential to meet the future challenges in the library field.

Research Skill:

The librarian must always be seeking new knowledge. This quality will be enable him to update modern facilities and latest developments in his library. Also he must implements new concepts in the day-to -day library operations.

Readiness to adopt the modern technology:

The librarian must be ready to adopt the development in the field of library and information center and to apply the concept into the library services and infrastructure area. Technical advancement is to fast that the survival of the librarian is purely based on the adoption of new technology.

Administrative Skill:

The librarian is the information scientist and administrator. He must be capable to run the department of library an information center successfully. So he must have all administrative skills like supervising, decision-making, marketing, recruiting etc.

Teaching Skill:

As per the UGC guidelines the librarian is at par with the teacher so he must possess all teaching skills like conducting user education programmes such as library orientation programme, career orientated programme in the library field etc

Marketing Skill:

For the purpose of the promoting library services librarian must possess requisite marketing skills. Applications of good marketing skill by the librarian into his library will definitely create a good exposure among the users about the library and information centre.

Learning new concepts in the library and higher education:

The librarian must be aware of all new concepts in the library field and apply these new concepts in his library. It is not enough to learn new concepts in the field of library only, but also in the field of higher education. This will enable him to serve the user community in the better way.

Service Skill:

He must be capable of providing good service to the user community and try to get his name in the users' good book. Extension of working hours of the library, providing reprography and internet services, audio-visual services, to access users' needs and to serve them better would be great value adds.

Good quality like honesty, sympathy strictness and Flexibility:

Must provide quality like honesty to users' and management. He should possess qualities like sympathy, strictness and flexibility. He must be a teacher as well as a learner.

Information Skill:

The librarian is the information scientist or information officer. He must be aware of latest information and be capable of collecting all types of information like education, politics, General knowledge, sports, business etc., by reading newspapers, browsing internet, chatting with teachers and community people, using social networking sites. Then only users' will give respect and record the name of the librarian in their good books.

Best Practices in Librarianship:

Definition of Best Practices

ODLIS (Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science) describes best practices as follows:

"In the application of theory to real-life situations, procedures that, when properly, applied consistently yield superior results and therefore used as reference points in evaluation of the effectiveness of alternative methods of accomplishing the same task. Best practices are identified by examining empirical evidence of success."

Libraries are in the service business. The most important product they have is service. Without service, libraries are just store house of books. Service is backbone of the profession of librarianship. What is best practice? It is a user's satisfaction through services. In an academic library students and teachers are the customers who are the main part of the academic community. This is National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) which strives for quality and excellence in higher education and advocates for enhancing the role of library and Information services in improving academic environment. Document prepared by NAAC for "Best Practices in Academic Libraries says : "Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solves a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations. "NAAC developed a set of best practices followed in academic libraries and presented under the following four broad areas:

1. Management and Administration of Library.
2. Collection and Services.
3. Extent of User Services.
4. Use of Technology.

A database of documented practices is available on NAAC website and they assure that

Regular updating will be made with consultations on contributing institutions. For college libraries NAAC has developed the following set of best practices for college libraries:

- 1 Computerization of library with standard software.
- 1 Inclusion of sufficient information about the library in the college prospectus.
- 1 Compiling student / teacher statistics
- 1 Displaying newspaper clippings and a clipping file Maintained periodically.
- 1 Career/ employment information services
- 1 Internet facility to different user groups
- 1 Information literacy programmes
- 1 Suggestion Box
- 1 Displaying New Arrivals
- 1 Conduct book exhibition on different occasions
- 1 Organizing book talks
- 1 Instituting Annual Best Use Award for students
- 1 Organizing competitions annually
- 1 Conduct user survey periodically

However the above set of best practices for college libraries prepared by NAAC cannot be termed as the last word. The following set of practices too should have been included in it.

- 1 Making of a Path Finder to the library
- 1 Keeping the library premises neat and clean
- 1 Compiling a list of Current Serials/ catalogue of journals.
- 1 Updating and maintaining library website
- 1 Maintaining useful statistics regarding the use of the library and displaying them on the Library walls
- 1 Compiling checklists on different subject/topics as a part of documentation service
- 1 Library Committee formation
- 1 Distribution of useful handouts

NAAC in its publication Library and Information Services: Case Presentation (2006) explained its efforts towards quality.

Conclusion:

What is best today may not be the best tomorrow. Therefore, In the process of achieving best practices in libraries, Blind imitation, false competition and status symbolism do not work well. we keep moving our targets and setting new goalposts. The 'Best Practice' is an attitude, an approach or a philosophy based on the desire for continuous learning and improvement. It helps discover and close performance gaps, solve a problem, create new opportunities, and positively impact our organization. Institutional excellence is the aggregate of the best practices followed in different areas of institutional activities.

It is suggested to UGC /NAAC that the best practices followed in British Libraries and American Center Libraries operating in India should have been taken into account. Best practices do not have one template or form for everyone to follow. Librarians need to take a first leap forward, and keep in mind learn from experience of others is a key to serve better.

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