

# **Library Organization Skills and Competencies for Library Professionals in the ICT Environment**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This article aims to help library professionals in library Science to face the challenges occurred due to the changing environment of ICT. To face these challenges they have to trained themselves for many skills and competencies. Now libraries are known as Knowledge Resource Centers performing electronic activities like cataloguing, acquisition, circulation, serial control etc. This article shows how librarianship has changed from traditional aspect to technological aspect. It also puts forth the competencies and skills required by the library professionals to manage the changes.*

**Keywords:** Librarianship, ICT competencies, Skill, Library Professionals.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Library is an important instrument of education. In the changing educational environment in India, the role of libraries in education, especially in higher education is very significant. The traditional concept of libraries which was completely based on print media is changing towards digital /electronic form with the help of information technology. In today's Online learning environment, libraries are playing vital role for the learners in the society. The primary function of the library is to create awareness & initiate the students to feel library is an integral part of their career. The core objective of the library may evolve its collection & services mainly to reflect the curriculum requirements of its users. The technological development has made lot of impact on all the professions including librarianship. Hence the library professionals of library have to manage with the proliferation of information as well as high expectations of users. The new innovations and innovative ideas including artificial intelligence, robotics, CD/DVD-ROM, Networking, Barcode systems, RFID, Cloud computing all this comes under the Word Information Communication Technology i.e. ICT. There has been tremendous change in the librarianship due to revolution in

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ICT. “Librarianship is the professional activity of selecting, procuring, organizing preserving and making available data, information and creative and scholarly words and providing services that assist and instruct people in the most efficient ways to identify, locate, access and use information and resources [1]. The increasing role of technology in libraries has a significant impact on the changing roles of the librarians.

### **Traditional V/S Technological Librarianship**

		<b>Traditional Librarianship</b>	<b>Technological Librarianship</b>
1	Regarding Collection	Storehouse of documents. Only Accessioning, Organizing retrieving & disseminating information in print form.	Change from paper to electronic resources because of ICT. Apart from regular processing of print form, Non book material should be processed for dissemination
2	Collection Development	1] Only books & journals collection to be developed	1] Not Only books & journals but they have to deal with all the new formats of e-resources. Collection development of e-databases in the form of full text e-journal or bibliographical databases
		2] The print media is synonymous with common user & the same is valuable heritage also	2] While dealing with electronic media librarians have to deal with “access without ownership ”issues involving E-product license agreements.
3]	Circulation	Simple Issue Return	On line service & as well as offline service. All the e-resources should make available where & when they are needed.
4]	Reference Service	Serving users to give traditional reference services in the library	Librarian has to serve through internet or online facilities along with traditional reference services. But providing online reference service is time consuming
5]	Referral Service	Traditional services like CAS, SDI.	Readers can be guided to refer another library through web OPAC
6]	Marketing Of Library	Through sign boards, Guide boards, Information Brochure etc.	Web portal is a standard tool for marketing of services. Digital library services, electronic services can be provided through Web portal
7]	Role of Librarian	Custodian of reading material	Not only custodian but also collector & evaluator of information. So he acts as a information manager/information scientist

From all the above points it is seen that the traditional role of librarians as the custodians of their physical holdings is changing into one being responsible for the security of their electronic information as well as along with the system administrators.[2] So library professionals have to be dynamic and well equipped with new technology. Librarians have to prepare their libraries in such a way to offer 24/7 anytime, anywhere access to the libraries. The librarians also have to redefine their roles and responsibilities according to the need of the hour i.e. from merely book keeping role of librarian to the information scientists who are managing the knowledge.

As technology progressed, the library transitioned from a book storage facility to an electronic data exchange complete with Internet, digital libraries and other information technology and resources. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) points out that because of the changing nature of the library itself, the role of the traditional librarian has also evolved. Librarians are now referred to by various titles to signify either general or technically specific job functions. General librarians are often referred to as information specialists as they help visitors track information and find useful resources through a variety of channels.

## **SKILLS REQUIRED BY THE LIBRARIANS IN ICT ENVIRONMENT**

To meet the changing needs of library users, librarians are expected to continuously enhance their competencies and skills in the use of technologies in order to improve productivity, efficiency and competitiveness. [ 3] To day we see that IT professionals who do not change with the technology always lag behind. Similar danger is observed over the shoulders of library professionals & Librarians must keep pace in developing their own competencies.

### **What are the competencies?**

Competencies have been defined as the interplay of knowledge, understanding skills and attitudes required for doing a job effectively from the point of view of both the performer and the observer. The unique competencies of the librarian include in depth knowledge of print & electronic information resources in management of information services that meet the strategic information needs of the individual or group being served [4]

### **WHAT ARE THE SKILLS?**

In order to complete tasks successfully, you should have knowledge, ability and competence. These qualities, known as skills can be developed to help you gain expertise in a specific area.

Skill is a term that encompasses the knowledge, competencies and abilities to perform operational tasks. Skills are developed through life and work experiences and they can also be learned through study.

### **“Difference between Skills and Competencies.**

- The term skill and competencies are often used interchangeably, however they are not synonymous.
- Skills tend to be more specific and more easily defined and described. Skills are specific learned physical tasks or activities.
- Competencies are much broader as they include not only set of skills, but also knowledge and abilities.
- A major difference between skill and competencies is one of scope. Competencies are much broader than skills.

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- Learning a new skill is typically quicker than learning a competency.
- You can learn a new skill in a relatively short training class. However, a person develops competencies over time through practice and experience.
- Skills are specific learned activities or tasks requiring proficiency or dexterity that are acquired or developed through training or experience. They can range widely in terms of complexity. e.g. using a computer, Typing a letter, creating a PowerPoint presentation, changing a car oil etc.” [5]

A competency is a broad collection of related skills, abilities and knowledge that enables a person to perform effectively in a job or situation. e.g. Staff development, communication, Decision making, solving problems etc.

So Competencies are combination of three factors-Skills+ Knowledge+ Ability

Getting post of a Teacher by acquiring proper skills through university degree is different than to be famous as a best Teacher. Because for best teacher you have to enhance your competencies with the help of Knowledge and ability. Creating web page is a simple task but creating a best web page and getting award for that needs competency.

Therefore, every librarian working in this ICT environment should have the following competencies or skills-

### **❖ Communication Skills -**

The librarian is required to acquire communication skill for correspondence as well as oral communication. He should acquire competencies to function as a manager, organizer, leader, supervisors & Communication with different groups of people. Various sales agents for marketing of their products related to automation & Services of libraries approach to librarians from all over India. Therefore, librarian must have competency to talk with them in English or Hindi.

### **❖ User-Oriented Skill -**

Orientation for user is the prime need of the libraries for smooth working of library. It helps users with the needed skills to enable them to make use of libraries & their resources in a user friendly manner. Librarian must be competent for using wide variety of methods to help users in information skills through lectures, practical sessions, printed guides, PPT presentations etc.

### **❖ ICT Skills -**

Information technology is developing day by day in all libraries & Information centers. Therefore, library professionals must have enough skills to handle these new technological developments. He must have basic knowledge of handling computer along with LAN, WAN Networking and internet use. He should have enough skill to acquire knowledge of benefits & various schemes provided by library networks and consortia such as INFLIBNET, INDEST and DELNET.

### **❖ Technology Acquisition Skills -**

Librarians should have enough technical knowledge about how to use any machinery like computer, photo copier, scanner, printer etc. however technology is developing day by day, new IT applications are coming in market. So

librarians should have skills and competencies in locating information about the latest technologies. They should have enough technical knowledge to discuss and bargain with the vender and take decision for suitable technology.

❖ **Information Retrieval Skills -**

For providing various online services library professionals should be competent in using online database. He should have an ability to think in a logical and analytical manner to be effective in searching the databases. He should help users with comprehensive retrieval, bibliographic verification & SDI.

❖ **Information Repackaging Skills -**

Because of information explosion lot of information is available in the various forms of resources. But these resources are just tools which have little significance. Unless and otherwise we apply them to create & improve products & services they do not become meaningful. Librarians are expected to provide value added services by carrying out searches across range of information resources, download the results, analyze and again repackage to suit the user need. Now a day librarians are also expected to develop specialized information products like databases of in-house products, searchable full text document files, create web page of library, develop institutional repositories etc.

**Other than all the above technological competencies Librarians should have following basic skills –**

❖ **Collection Development Skill -**

Development of collection in this IT era is very challenging activity for library professionals. The selection of resources must fulfill the current needs of their users but also be capable of catering to the future ones. Hence librarians should have thorough knowledge of full range of current resources, both print as well as non print. They must keep them up date regarding the best textbooks, reference books, journals, electronic resources in specific areas while purchasing. They should know what is relevant & usable for the users.

❖ **Collection processing skills -**

Librarianship attempts to relieve the users from literature search activity by understanding the intellectual activity of evaluating, integrating, condensing & making available the latest required information. This requires a logical and analytical approach on the part of librarian, so that information needs of the users obtained could be analyzed & needed information be provided.

❖ **Managerial Skills -**

Managerial Skills like planning, designing, developing and implementing are essential for efficient workflow and production. Technological librarianship needs knowledge of total quality management as well as human resource management.

❖ **Interpersonal Skills-**

For effective librarianship librarians have to enhance their leadership ability. A leader should have identity, authenticity, open mindness, independence, responsibility, communicating, reasoning and problem solving abilities,

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maturity, clarity of mind and expression etc. He must encourage & inspire his colleagues to give their best to achieve a desired result. Leadership is one of the most effective tools of management and organization effectiveness depends on the quality of leadership.

### **❖ Career Guidance Skill -**

Because of tremendous competition in the job opportunity every student wants to select the best field for achieving great success in their career. But getting proper guidance for this at proper time may not be possible for him because of his surroundings. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the librarian to give proper help in this matter whenever it is needed. Librarian should be well aware with all the career options and the courses related to them. All the advertisements in this regard should be displayed on the notice board in time.

### **❖ “Customer Service Skills -**

Librarians should be courteous, patient and always willing to help library visitors. They may instruct people on how to find books or other physical resources, and they may teach about using library databases. Some librarians are also responsible for administrative tasks including directing staff, fundraising and promoting the library. They should be comfortable being the person in charge of a library and with handling problems such as unruly visitors. Another way they serve the users of public libraries is to raise funds to run the library, including persuading local government officials give their support.

### **❖ Organization Skills -**

Librarians organize materials and equipment to make it easier for people to find information. They also supervise support staff to handle these tasks at larger libraries. Librarians also organize programs and events for the public such as lectures, book discussion groups and children's programs. They are responsible for providing a safe and neat environment for visitors and staff.” [6]

## **Some essential competencies in ICT environment**

### **• Functional competencies**

#### **• Copyright and IPR**

For professional librarianship it is essential that you must have thoroughly well acquainted with the knowledge of Copyright and Intellectual property right. For weeding out procedure you can take right decision regarding weeding books.

#### **• Searching techniques**

As per the second and third laws of Dr S R Rangnathan library professionals have to be very well trained in all the searching techniques.

- **Content analysis, aggregation & packaging**

The collection of library resources in the form of print or online should be well managed and marketed by the librarians. For this analysis of contents and aggregation and packaging of information resources while providing services like SDI or DDS has to be done by the librarian.

- **Subject classification, metadata and taxonomy**

Knowledge of universe for right subject classification is most important competency of a library professional. He must enhance his skill of classification by using related tools.

- **Knowledge of Databases**

While working in this ICT environment he must capture thorough information regarding the online subscribed and free databases available in the market so that he can take proper decision while spending given budget.

### **Essential Technical Competencies for ICT Environment.**

- **Knowledge of basics in computer technology.**

You should have basic knowledge of handling the computer. Training of MS Windows, MSOffice, Digital library technologies like Dspace, Eprints, Green Stone etc. Should be taken by library professionals.

- **Knowledge of advanced technology in Library Automation**

- **Knowledge of advanced management tools** like Zotero, Mendeley, Endnote, Moodle etc.

- **Library Web Page design**, development and updating technologies.

- **Knowledge of advanced software and Hardware**, network architecture, Barcoding, RFID & other tools

### **How to Manage Competencies?**

- Identify Our Competencies and Its Level
- Assessment of Competencies and Certification.
- Self Assessment • Peers Assessment • Experts Assessment
- Identify various Roles and Competencies Required for the same
- Identify and Create Learning Paths
- Training Programs by NISCAIR & DRTC, • MDP / FDP by Universities, IIMs etc.
- Certificate Courses (IPR / PGDLAN), MDP, FDP etc.
- MOOCS / Swayam / Coursera / SLA Programs
- Acquired Certification / Higher Competencies

### **CONCLUSION**

Twenty first century is an age of digital functions. Information technology has made drastic change in every field. Universities & other higher education institutions are undergoing rapid change on the teaching and the learning process mainly because of e-learning. Library and information services can not lag behind and also require changing to the tune of the progress of the civilization, keeping in view the requirements of time, technological developments and global change. The competencies & Skills form the basis for the continued survival and growth of librarianship in the information age. Libraries must recognize the expanding nature of the challenge that confront them and the range of competencies that are required to ensure that the librarians have a viable tomorrow.

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