Competence and Skill Development for Library and Informational Science Professionals

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Abstract:
The concept of competence is evolved with increasing importance of human resource management during last six decades. It inevitable consider an important aspect of any professional working in ICT environment. The paper highlight its importance in library particularly in college library with its meaning and different types of competences required by LIS professionals. It also emphasizes on efforts made by various organizations in Gujarat for competences development among LIS professionals.

Keywords: *Competence; Skill College Library*

1. Introduction

The advent of technology particularly Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in post industrial era has brought many changes in the everyday living of all communities worldwide. The impact of ICT is found not only living standards but it has changed the work culture, communication and manages the activities they perform. The business houses, bank sectors, railway, post and telephone depart, government department etc all are influenced by ICT. The education sector is not exceptional by its impact, influencing on teaching and learning, general administrative and managerial taskforce. ICT have also embarked a new environment in LIS profession and pushed frontier of LIS knowledge with calculated risk and opportunities. In this changing environment library has to pace with the changing demand of its clientele. The changes are being introduced collecting, processing, storing, accessing and disseminating the information to offer customer centric automated information services, generated by using online/offline databases, e-resources, networks, consortia, institutional repository etc. LIS professionals working libraries and information centres cannot adopt new changes and meet the requirement their future looks bleak. According to Tanloet, & Tuamsuk, (2010) it has become necessary for those in this profession to learn and adjust them to the new environment, and catch up with the technological advances, in order to adopt these developments to the library work. As a result, LIS professionals must learn and relearn to acquire various roles, knowledge, competencies, and skills; and the emphasis of their role now is on management, services, and cooperation. The changing roles result in their awareness of the importance of developing information personnel, so that they become a knowledgeable asset to their organization in the present, and are able to respond to any future changes. This paper examine the meaning and definitions, need, types of competences and skills in details and efforts made by different associations and organizations/institutes for developing skills and competences among LIS professionals in Gujarat.

2. What are Competences and skills?

Competence and skill are twin words used to denote the same meaning that relates capability of individual to work efficiently, effectively to execute the particular operation. Some experts observe

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minutes difference between two words and have different usage. For details study let us check its origin, and scientific definitions.
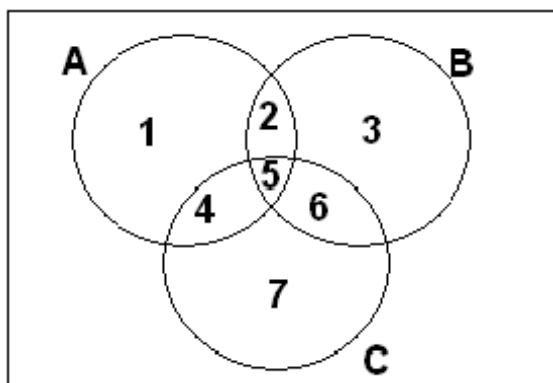
2.1 Skill
The word skill developed from Middle English skil, from Old Norse, distinction, knowledge; probably akin to Old English scylian to separate, sciell shell — more at shell First Known Use: 13th century. The Webster dictionary gives meaning of it as **a:** the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance and **b**: dexterity or coordination especially in the execution of learned physical tasks.

2.2 Competence
The word competence is recently more used in management particularly in human resource management than its origin discipline psychology. The According to Leonardo Evangelista term competence was created in 1973 by the American psychologist and consultant David McClelland (1973) to indicate the human factors by which competence depends. Initially competencies were related to effective performance and task and organisation specific. Nowadays in education, vocational training and career guidance the term competency indicates each personal characteristic generally utilizable in the workplace, in school or in ordinary life, regardless of the nature of the work or level of performance achievable through its use. The dictionary meaning and origin of both concepts seem same but both differ from each other in the modern management literature.

Adam (2004) comments that "some take a narrow view and associate competence just with skills acquired by training". This point is echoed by Brown and Knight (1995) who state that "competence probably replaces, albeit at a more sophisticated level, the concept of skills. That doesn't necessarily make it easier to understand what competencies are, let alone how they are to be recognised". The UK Training Agency (1989) defines competence as: Standards development should be based on the notion of competence which is defined as the ability to perform the activities within an occupation. Competence is a wide concept which embodies the ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations within the occupational area. It encompasses organisation and planning of work, innovation and coping with non-routine activities. It includes those qualities of personal effectiveness that are required in the workplace to deal with co-workers, managers and customers. (Training Agency UK, 1989). Thus competence is more useful in modern ICT profession.

Griffihs and King (1955) provided an operational definition for competences a generic knowledge, skills, or attitude of a person that is related to effective behavior as demonstrated through the performance. Knowledge here means having information about knowing, understanding, being familiar with being aware of, having experience of or being acquainted with something someone or how to do something. Skill refers to ability to use one's knowledge effectively. Attitude is mental or emotional approach to something or someone. Competence is directly related to performance, effectiveness to performance and value of performed work. The capacity to develop competence is derived from education, training and experience. The above definition can be explained using Venn Diagram of Set Theory as under.

Fig. 1 Venn diagram of Competence Development
In above Venn diagram
A= Knowledge Set   B = Skills Set   C = Personal Attitude Set

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1 = Knowledge Area
2 = Knowledge & Skills Area
3 = Skill Area
4 = Knowledge & Personal Attitude area
5 = Competences Area i.e. Knowledge + Skills + Personal Attitude
6= Skills & Personal Attitude Area
7 = Personal Attitude Area

3. Skills and Competences for librarianship

Librarianship refers to the field of working in a library in various ways like librarian position or as an administrator; there are numerous positions within the field numerous types of libraries that one may find employment. However, while anyone can earn a degree and enter this field, there are certain people who are well-suited to the job based on their overall personality and their natural skill set. There are also numerous skills and competencies that make up the knowledge base of a good librarian. These are usually taught within school of library and information that lead to library science degrees. In all cases, understanding the competencies of librarianship is a good first step towards success in the field. The personal quality is the basic thing that every LIS professional must have in his/her culture these are:

- Love for lifelong learning
- Desire for teamwork
- Love for information sources
- Devotee to mission oriented library services
- Worldwide knowledge
- Strong organizational skills
- Friendly, Ethical and Personable

Besides personal there are some basic competences that must require by library professionals. They are:

- Incorporating ICT for the enhancement of overall effectiveness of a library.
- Ability to adapt to new tools, techniques, systems, and situations as when arise in using ICT.
- Archiving and filing information as well as maintaining databases and reference information.
- Capability of evaluating different information resources and finding the best ones for addressing different questions or issues.
- Ability to quickly and professionally search databases, internet resources, and catalogs to find needed information or information resources.
- Communication skills in popular languages used by readers and community.
- Event management and public speaking on different occasions.
- Ability to develop human relationship particularly with library users and staff.
- Reading habits that guide readers in selecting their suitable reading material that also promote reading habit among readers.
- Ability to present information clearly and in an interesting manner.
- Ability to work together with people in the library and outside the library.
- Ability to help overcome issues by focusing on solutions instead of on the problems

Several countries have developed policies for the country's librarianship that includes following aspects.

1. Core Knowledge Statement
2. Library and Information Sector Objectives
3. Statement of Intent
4. Knowledge of the broad context of the information environment
5. Information seeking
6. Information architecture
7. Information organisation and access
8. Information services, sources and products

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9. Information Management
10. Generation of knowledge
11. Employability skills and attributes

4. Why Competences for College Library Professionals

Thamhain (2005), the modern management thinker has given characteristics as shown under of today's technology based on business environment, which are equally applicable in college library environment.

1. Complex library system and cross functional linkage.
2. Resource constraint, tough performance requirement.
3. High task complexities risks and uncertainty.
4. Fast changing multidimensional user needs.
5. Intense competitions in open global market.
6. Collaboration in need of dealing with different organisations cultures and values.
7. Need of continues improvement upgrades and enhancements.
8. Need of multidimensional skills, ability to deal with changing virtual learning environment.
9. Increasing impact of IT on services delivery (Use of new means such as instant messaging, virtual reference desk, ask a librarian, wiki's, blog, podcasting etc.)

Contemporary development is directly affecting the knowledge, competences and skills requirement of LIS working at college library to do their job effectively. These changes are occurring at such a fast pace that each day new skills and approaches are required to handle the information and unfurl the new ideas. The changing perception of users and technological advancement has forced the LIS professionals to enhance their knowledge and develop themselves in accordance to new environment to avoid becoming obsolete and outdated. The changing expectations of management and higher level authorities also forced LIS professionals to integrate new technology in library and information centres that lead to not only to have knowledge but abilities/competence and skills development of an individual to achieve goal of parent organisation. The teaching learning and research system in academic institutions is also changing fast LIS professionals have to pace with modern changes. Under the National Mission of Education through ICT of Govt. of India, college libraries will have to play vital role to make mission a grand success and for that purpose librarian's role become apparent important. The assessment and accreditation agencies like NAAC. NBA, AB, AAA etc have developed several standards of performance of college library that should meet by college library.

5. Skills and Competences Development among LIS Professionals in Gujarat.

LIS professionals in Gujarat are lagging behind the skills and competences development. Of course there are some government and nongovernment organizations and institutions taking interest for the competence development among LIS professionals. Ahmedabad Library Network (ADINET) is nongovernmental organization aiming to develop LIS activities in Gujarat. It organizes several seminars, training programmes, workshops, lectures and talks for the skills and competence development of LIS professionals. In last 20 years it has organized 53+ training programmes to incorporate ICT in the library, 47+ lectures and 26 seminars on various topics of LIS interest and centric ICT applications in the library and information centres.

INFLIBNET is an autonomous Inter-University Centre (IUC) of University Grant Commission (UGC) of India. INFLIBNET is involved in modernizing university libraries in India and connecting them as well as information centres in the country through a nation-wide high speed data network using the state-of-art technologies for the optimum utilization of information. INFLIBNET is set out to be a major player in promoting scholarly communication among academicians and researchers in India. One of the aims and objectives is to train and develop human resources in the field of computerized library operations and networking to establish, manage and sustain INFLIBNET. To suit this aim it organizes numbers of training programmes, workshops, Integrated Training Programme on Library Automation

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(IRTPLA) programmes, Users Awareness Programme, specialized training on various topics like Creation and Management of Digital Collections (IR) Using Open Source Software, use of various open source software like KOHA, DSpace, Greenstone, Jumla, etc besides 195+ In-House Training Programme on SOUL 2.0 Installation and Operations. Of course these programmes are organized at national level but many programmes are also organized for Gujarat.

Gujarat Granthalaya Seva Sangh is also active for the competence and skills development for LIS professionals working in Gujarat. It has organized more than 25 training and workshop on various occasions on concerned topics of contemporary need bridging the gap. Different state universities in Gujarat also take interest. Hemchandracharya North Gujarat Uni, Patan has organized 3 days workshop on Research Methodology and Use of SPSS in research last year, Saurashtra University, Rajkot has also organized 3 days training programme on Using SPSS in research this year. Many colleges have also organized one or two days UGC sponsored seminar for college librarians. Thus Gujarat is active in this direction.

6. Conclusion

As the library profession as changing very fast to pace with societal development a modern librarian must possess skill and competence of collection development and management, digital archiving and preservation, content management system and other functions like that using ICT to work efficiently and effectively. The library professional has to perform his/her duties as facilitator or mentor to help the users to find required information and to evaluate it. The 21st century library professional must be skilled and enough competent to handle all the queries arise from providing day to day services.

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