Role of Librarians in the Present Scenario: An Assessment

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ANNOTATION

The library technology landscape is changing rapidly. For managing the mandated missions and services, libraries are showing growing dependence on internet and networks, library management systems and many kinds of technologies. The article intends to study the evolution of Library and Information Science profession, to study the roles and responsibilities of the librarians in the present context. The study also discusses the skills and knowledge needed for library profession. Required information for the study purpose has been gathered from the secondary sources of information. The study also recommends some suggestions for the professionals. It has been concluded that as the roles of library professionals change, their responsibilities also change.

KEYWORDS: Library, library profession, roles, responsibility, skills, knowledge.

Introduction: The 21st century has brought about a revolution of traditional models of information and documenting, a broad spectrum of changes in a short period of time, changes that compel libraries to continuously adapt to the challenges of a changing society where information plays a determining role. The library is in a relationship with the internet, one that may be seen as either complimentary or competing.

Libraries are not stand-alone entities; rather, they are embedded in a larger subsystem that reflects societal, educational, administrative, and cultural changes. Therefore, one must consider the environment in which libraries function in order to conduct any kind of study or review. Social, administrative, cultural, economic, or purely Information Communication Technology (ICT)-based contexts are all valid options. The field of librarianship and information science has evolved as a result of the advent of new information and communication technologies *(D'Angelo, 2006)*.

Historical Background:

The role of libraries in society, the means in which knowledge is disseminated, and the education of the general public have all taken on diverse forms throughout time. It was a sign of a civilization's grandeur to have a library in ancient times, and these libraries were often located in places of worship or royal palaces. Historically, books and librarians were revered for its knowledge and a document's hallowed status *(Kumar, 2016)*.

Monasteries played a crucial role in the preservation and development of intellectual traditions and libraries throughout the middle ages, serving not only as repositories of archives but also as sites for the famed scriptoria that copied manuscripts and preserved a portion of the ancient world's knowledge. Librarians are seen as equivalent to researchers and scientists.

Libraries were major community gathering places and mirrors of renaissance and contemporary culture. The press made a crucial contribution to book availability, leading to an increase in libraries of various types (national libraries, public libraries) and the range of services. As a result, more people are gaining access to museums and universities. College libraries have a special place in the hearts of academics. In order to organise and manage documentary funds and guarantee access to these funds, librarians become document experts *(Ansari, 2003).*

Statement of the Problem: The library is a service business that places a premium on the happiness of its patrons. Librarians often take on a wide range of responsibilities in order to fulfil this mandate, including managing and resourcing a library, supervising and leading personnel, designing, directing, formulating policies, and applying them to services in order to fulfil the information demands of users. Consultancy and advising services on strategic library management are offered. How equip librarians are and how they fulfill the tasks and responsibilities at various management levels and how delegation of duties among various categories of library personnel is crucial to the library's success in achieving its purpose. In this regard the study has been undertaken.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the roles and responsibilities of the librarians in the present context.
2. To study the factors impacting the roles of librarians.
3. To discuss the skills and knowledge needed for librarians.

EVOLUTION OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSION:

Scholarly Period: Before the middle of the nineteenth century, libraries were the property of monarchs, aristocrats, and religious institutions. Monasteries were the only institutions that showed any interest in the shared use of scholar-run libraries. The libraries at Nalanda and Taxila were established at this time in India's history. During this time period, libraries were private collections only available to a select few. Because of the wealth of information it contained and the effort put into creating it, books were highly sought after for time of vocation A new profession, librarianship, emerged in the next century. Public libraries, run by passionate individuals, were established in the United Kingdom and the United States in the 19th century. As a result, the field of librarianship emerged to focus on the skillful curation of library collections and provision of information resources. Programmes to educate future librarians were developed later. The increased specialized knowledge led to librarianship being recognized as a 'skilled occupation'.

Professional Period: Librarianship is currently recognized as a profession with its own body of knowledge, regulations, principles, and procedures for handling information and assisting patrons. Librarianship became a recognized profession when the scientific method was applied to the field. The question of whether or not librarianship is a profession has been hotly contested for the better part of the last sixty years. As a profession, librarianship first appeared as a profession during the period of the ancient Mesopotamian and Babylonian civilizations. Librarians oversaw the collections in libraries at Alexandria, Taxila, Nalanda, and Rome. Kings

and monasteries often engaged librarians to care after the library. As a result, the profession developed into a distinct field of work *(Gashaw, 2002).*

Librarianship as a Vocation: There was a proliferation of scholarly libraries throughout the middle ages. Early on, they developed expertise in information structuring and retrieval based on user needs. There was no systematic approach to the application of many of these abilities. In those days, becoming a librarian was more of a calling than a career.

Librarianship as a Profession: Knowledge creation has risen in tandem with industrialization and the spread of education. Libraries were seen as hubs of intellectual life by the universities. The British Museum in London, the Bibliotheca Rationale in Paris, and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC all played crucial roles in spurring the growth of public libraries and other kinds of libraries. The issue was helped along by the Public Library Act, implemented by new library laws in the United Kingdom. Since the number of libraries and librarians has grown, professional organizations in the United States (the American Library Association) and the United Kingdom (the Library Association) have emerged to serve the field. Universities often provided library science degrees at the master's and doctoral levels. In an effort to standardize the technical parts of librarianship, codes such as Cutter's rules for a dictionary catalogue and Dewey decimal classification were produced, giving library science its own body of knowledge. As a result, librarianship developed from an occupation to a vocation and profession *(Forster & Bell, 2006)*

Factors Impacting the Roles of Librarians: The professional librarian's traditional duties are shifting as a result of the new information landscape, which has repercussions for library administration, user experience, and service provision. The transition from physical to digital access to information resources is being spearheaded by professional librarians. The functions of a librarian have expanded to include that of educator, guide, and teacher as the volume of digital material has exploded. Librarians now teach patrons how to effectively utilize the internet and search engines to scour e-journals, online databases, and catalogues. Programmes to teach people how to utilise computers and information effectively are now available. Librarians now create library aids like websites and online courses to increase accessibility, analyze information resources before linking to them, and even run the websites of the institutions in certain situations. Many are so dedicated to improving the online search experience that they even construct bibliographic and citation databases, institutional repositories, discovery layers, and whole new user interfaces when necessary. In the modern roles as business managers, they bargain with publishers for consortium pricing for online journal subscriptions, as well as arrangements for ongoing online access to journals that have been cancelled. More than that, librarians perform the function of image builder to improve the library's public perception and get more funding from upper management. Many different forces seem to have contributed to expanding the responsibilities of librarians and other information specialists. Here is a quick rundown of the most crucial ones:

1. Because of information explosion
2. The emerging digital information environment
3. Searching problems in traditional libraries
4. Emerging low cost information technologies
5. Changing social needs
6. Changing customer behavior.

7. Emerging technology needs

8. The changing role and the changing public image of libraries and librarians

ROLES OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS:

Managerial Roles and Responsibilities: Hierarchies in libraries are quite well developed. There is a wide range of job titles and responsibilities within the library industry. Management levels describe the organizational structure of these jobs. The employee's chains of command, as well as his or her degree of power and standing within the organization, are all contingent on the employee's position within the organizational hierarchy. Management structures in libraries may include a wide range of tiers. Various factors, including collection quantity, library technology, user population density, and staffing needs, determine the hierarchy of a given library. There are three tiers of administration in a university library system: top, medium, and bottom. Professional librarians at these tiers act in dual capacities as specialists and managers *(Sewa, 2015)*.

Specialist Roles and Responsibilities: Managers in libraries may be categorized according to the responsibilities and the degree of management they hold. There are specialized works done by librarians outside of management. Professional librarians have specialized tasks and responsibilities in the management of library automation, electronic access, local to worldwide resources, and cooperation with other libraries.

The basic purpose of librarians is being carried out in a drastically altered library environment. Delivering library services now requires the use of electronic information and associated technology. Users are adjusting to the dynamic nature of the digital information landscape. New areas of expertise are emerging to deliver novel, value-added services and to keep up with the ever-changing demands. Given these factors, it's evident that professional librarians need to acquire the necessary skills and expertise to thrive in the ever-evolving information landscape. Information technology, librarianship, and organizational management are three areas where they need to hone their skills if they are to effectively perform their roles and meet the needs of their user clientele. For the purposes of organizational success, individual performance, and professional advancement, core competencies are best understood as a set of shared skills and knowledge. In addition, professional librarians require certain soft skills in order to do their jobs well and make meaningful contributions to their institutions, their clients, and the library field as a whole. Personal competences include things like the ability to effectively communicate, provide evidence of the value added by one's work, and maintain an upbeat attitude in the face of change *(Ohio Council Library, 2013)*.

COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR LIBRARY STAFF

Competency Area	Competency definition and skills required
Collection Development and Management	Expertise in selecting, acquiring, and managing resources in any format, including a comprehension of current and developing ideas, concerns, and solutions. Capable of taking the reins and setting the tone for collaborative projects and the shift from paper to digital acquisition techniques. **Demonstrable skills and knowledge:** Knowledge of Information sources life-cycle management of electronic resources User's needs Purchasing models, methods

	To analyze pricing patterns Licensing and agreements such as liabilities, warranties, perpetual access, embargos, permitted uses, cancellations User and usage statistics and analysis User access authentication technologies user interfaces for easy access Consortia agreements and negotiations.
Information Organization and Retrieval	Expertise in information systems, specifically those concerned with data storage, organization, retrieval, description, open access academic indexing, individual data management protocols, and social tagging. **Demonstrable skills and knowledge :**Principles of Information organization classification, taxonomies, and ontologism, Cataloguing, bibliographic descriptions, metadata Indexing Information systems workflows.
Information and user services	Knowledge and understanding of user service principles and techniques to provide users access to information, analytical and packaged information services. Design and organize online reference service. **Demonstrable skills and knowledge** Database searching Federated searching Online search aids Assistive and adaptive technology services Online reference/ enquiries Information literacy, computer literacy, and statistical literacy. User services promotion skills.

Some Suggestions:

1. Library professionals/ librarians need to hone their basic competences in order to keep up with the ever-evolving information landscape and live up to the users' high expectations.

2. A library's paraprofessional staff is responsible for providing ancillary customer service, acquisition and technical services, secretarial support, and reference assistance to patrons.

3. Library employees should treat students and other employees with respect and collaborate with authorities in a professional manner

4. Using the most recent developments in Library Science and Information Technology, librarians must plan for the library usage by students and teachers and then construct and arrange its different system accordingly.

5. The librarian should explore the knowledge needs of the people. They should capture and manage the new emerging knowledge.

6. Librarians should learn the skills for using online resources and use of search engines in selecting the best online content. They should possess basic knowledge of web resources.

7. Librarians help users to satisfy their requirements and in this process may use information technology. They should also encourage the use of reliable information sources.

8. Librarians should be technology friendly, support digital database development and take initiative in digital archiving and preservation

9. Librarians should equip themselves with the new trends that are developing in the field of library and information

Conclusion: The duties and responsibilities of a librarian provide a useful framework for understanding what they do. Because roles dictate and clarify work obligations, librarians' duties will shift as their positions evolve. For instance, as libraries have witnessed a shift in library acquisitions from ownership to access and control, librarians' roles and responsibilities in the management of collection development have shifted. Whereas libraries once placed more emphasis on purchasing resources on an ownership basis, they now place more emphasis on licensing remote access to electronic resources.

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