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## NEW DIMENSION & COMPETENCY BASED APPROACH BY LIS PROFESSIONALS: CHALLENGES AND REQUIREMENTS

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### Abstract:

*Due to technological development and skill-based approaches by every industry and educational institutes are increasing day by day, therefore it needs to identify the concept of competency. This article discusses and explains types of competencies required by LIS Professionals, the difference between skills and competencies, and why the competencies are essential in daily library activities. As good administrators or LIS professionals need some required competencies. The authors express their views on LIS professionals' required competencies while working in a library environment. That covers collection development policy, enabling competencies, knowledge management, etc. The authors also discuss the challenges of implementing the knowledge-based competencies in Libraries and information centres.*

**Keyword:** LIS Skills, Competency, Ethical Values, Knowledge Management

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### Introduction:

The libraries have been transformed drastically from the storehouses of books to the powerhouses of knowledge since the middle of 21<sup>st</sup> century. The information and communication technology (ICT), which is responsible for this revolution has changed the organization, management and functioning of modern libraries. As the traditional custodians of Information, librarians need to be aware of the implications of these changes and develop Technological and managerial skills, which will enable them to make effective use of information and to meet their organizational needs involve to the changes. Many librarians lack confidence to face increasingly ICT oriented

environments. (S, 2012). This article has identified what competencies are required by LIS professionals and while implementing or adopting the competencies what types of challenges are being faced by the professionals. To be a competent person in every field like industry, corporate or education all are required minimum skills or competencies for accomplishing the job perfectly. There are mainly two types of competencies

1. Professional competencies
2. Personal competencies.

Stern (2009) indicated that professional competencies elements include such as time management, critical thinking, evidence-based decision making, service quality improvement, interest based problem solving, communication

skills, maintaining teamwork orientation, and understanding of organization's mission and priorities. Similarly, Libby (2009) described, that professional competencies elements must possess such as building relationship, assessing needs and service measurement. Cheetam and Chiver (1998) in their model of professional competence highlight four key elements of competence:

- a) Knowledge / cognitive competence which relates to "the profession of appropriate work-related knowledge and the ability to put this to effective use;
- b) Functional competence which describes the ability to perform a range of work based tasks effectively to produce specific outcomes;
- c) Personal/behavioral competence which they define as the ability to adopt appropriate, observable behaviours in work-related situations; and
- d) Value/ethics, which they define as the possession of appropriate personal and professional values and the ability to make sound judgement based upon work related situations.
- e) This article has help to other LIS professionals whom they want to provide a quality services to their stockholders and survive as a eligible person in this technological era.

### **Competency Vs. Skills:**

Generally we are much confused the generally we fail to understand that skill precede competencies. While thinking about the job responsibility, we need to be clear that these two concepts are slightly different. From professional's point of view, we will frequently come across the terms "skills" and "competencies." Even though it may seem that these two terms

are equivalent, it is incorrect to merely use the word "competency" as a synonym for "skill." Skill means a learned and applied abilities that use one's knowledge effectively in execution or performance. Using the same example of making professional decisions, in order to do so, you would have to acquire certain skills to perform well: adopting new technologies, quality research and competitive strategy. Mainly there are two types of skills one is soft skills and second one is Hard Skills. The Soft skills there are some examples for e.g: adoptability, problem solving, critical thinking, team work, time management etc. and about the hard skills database management, acceptance and adopting of new technologies, statistical analysis, graphic design etc. Competency means Knowledge, behaviors, attitudes and even skills that lead to the ability to do something successfully or efficiently. The ability to make professional decisions would be a competency. Generally competencies are not transferable. They're mostly mappings to individual functions or behaviors, making it hard to transfer them across an organization. Because of this, it's difficult to imagine how one competency can perform in another role. (Torres, 2021). There are generally four types of competencies 1. Functional, behavioral, professional and personal competencies. If the professionals are having these four, he becomes a successful achievers professional in his carrier. Therefore in professional carrer skill is must but if we don't have competency there will be no professional growth.

### **Why Competencies?**

The basic purpose of competency is to enable the employer or professionals to know their job responsibility and opportunities, so that they can evaluate

themselves and strive for improvement while they are working in the industry as well institutes.

- Understand the competencies expected in their job, the key behaviors they should demonstrate, and the steps needed to increase their proficiency levels
- Discuss with their supervisors the employee's strengths, areas for growth, and suggested training, and developmental activities
- Focus on specific training and development opportunities that will help them grow and strive for excellence
- Understand the competencies they would be expected to have to move into a new job, particularly for employees who are interested in becoming supervisors and managers or in changing careers (Office of Human Resource, National Institutes of Health, 2022)

#### **Required & Essential Competencies:**

There are two main types of competency 1. Personal 2. Professional. From the LIS professional point of view in the present era they need both competencies and skills while presenting the knowledge before society. If persons are professionally competent but they don't have personal skills then we can't say that the person is competent or versatile. Therefore there are some competencies which are required for LIS professionals for surviving the job sector and improving the quality services.

- 1) **Collection development:** It is an important aspect for every LIS professionals. If they have strong policies for collection development and its implications then the libraries would grow considerably in the right way. If the professionals are identify

the user information needs and behavior, their choices and interests accordingly are they can prepare accordingly, the collection development policy. It is an important competency for the LIS professionals. Library staff can identify some criterias and systems for e.g development and use of relevant library collection development policies and strategic plans. As a criteria for reviewing and selecting the library documents, understand and work within the budgeting process and system for collection development in the library, updates and applies knowledge of assigned subject areas on continual basis, assesses and evaluates existing and potential collections to guide collection development and management decision (University of South Florida, Tempa Library, 2003)

- 2) **Organizing Library Resources:** It means to classify the books using different schemes, Cataloguing of library resources, do the Professionals have the knowledge of metadata, knowledge of automation packages and ability to use the software packages etc. To manage or organize library resources it is a key function of the LIS professionals. If the professionals are manage or maintain the library resources systematic manner then it can be said that he is a competent person.
- 3) **Library Services:** It is an integral part of LIS professionals. If the professionals provide the quality services to the users then users can be automatically attracted and the percentage of utilization of library resources would be increase. In this digital era libraries provide the quality services to the users using different technologies. Library

professionals use different software packages for circulation record, CAS and SDI, Ready reference Service, M-Application, Facility of QR Code for different Library sections, conducting reference interview, facility to information search service, providing information consolidation products, conduction user education, library literacy and orientation programmes, provide access to online database facility remotely, then internet based IR etc.

- 4) **Administrative Section Managerial Abilities:** LIS professional not only literate from technological point of view but they also play a significant role in management of administration. If the Librarians are good administrators then they can handle the job fruitfully. Most of the librarians are implementing the PPBS (Planning Programming Budgeting System), they can prepare their budget as per the requirement and utilize accordingly. They should have the basic knowledge of accountancy, Knowledge of rules regarding all types of leaves, Supervisory skills, formulating procedure for library function for e.g. Library Calendar, to Arrange or Planning of yearly function organized by library department, most important time management, arrange library meeting yearly in regular intervals (maximum four in a year) and Prepare minutes of the library committee meeting, Mentoring capacity, Teaching ability, marketing decision for outsourcing of services, MOU with other reputed institutes, Letter drafting skills, knowledge preservation technology, ability to implement preservation programme in the library, use of reference

management tools (ZOTERO, Mendeley) etc.

- 5) **Technological Awareness:** Awareness of technological aspects and skills in utilization of technical instruments and S/H tools in the library is a success factor for every LIS professionals. Now days due to Covid 19 situation the drastic changes have taken place in the use of library resources. Due to these changes in the this situation, users have become highly skilled and friendly with the technology, so it is a need of time for every professional to be literate and aware to be aware of technology for e.g. general computing skills like awareness and be friendly with MS Office, Study about library automation packages, competency for selection appropriate database packages and selection of library software packages, use of highly developed security system in the library (RFID, CCTV Cameras etc), ready for digitization projects, awareness in the development of hardware technology, maximum use of social networking application for providing quality services (Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Blog, YouTube Channels etc), Services through E-Content Platform, Awareness about Swayam e learning platform, and search engine optimization.
- 6) **Ethical Content:** This is a new and main role of the LIS professionals i.e. they should be competent and aware about the ethical contents. While the stakeholders or users visit the library they ask about the ethical values of books or they want to seek guidance from research perspective that time the librarians or LIS profession should know about the same tactics and about the ethics which is followed by every

researcher and student. Professional should know about the copyright and patent law, knowledge about the book piracy and plagiarism software and also should have the ability to use plagiarism software. LIS professional should prepare the perfect booklet to provide the information about ethical values which is follow or used by users while they are doing research.

- 7) **Knowledge Management:** It is an important task for library professionals to manage or arrange the knowledgeable content and convert information into knowledge. As per the statement by Dr. Rajendra kumbhar he stated that it is impossible to manage the knowledge because every second knowledge in the universe increases with tremendous speed. But the LIS professionals try to compete with knowledge management. For e.g. they should have to clear the concept and perspectives of knowledge management, and to create the knowledge from the information, capturing the knowledge, to know the knowledge specialization of faculty members and share the knowledge within the organization as well as outside the organization.
- 8) **Enabling Competencies:** There are some extra competencies required by LIS professionals. It is similar to skill based competencies. If the professionals implement these skills or competencies then they can provide the quality services to the users. In order to find out the knowledge of principles of librarianship, they should develop some extra skills like oral and written communication, interpersonal, problem solving, leadership, critical thinking and so on, and to build relations and

networking with college staff, students and professionals. To follow the professional ethics and equates, to participate in various activities for their own professional growth, keeping abreast with development in technology.

- 9) **Challenges:** To become a competent authority, the professionals have to accept the change i.e. changes management and to accept the challenges, and work on them solve issues as a good administrator as well as good manager. LIS Professionals have to face many challenges to meet the present and future generations and prospects of Library and Information Science to bring the quality education and practice. The ultimate aim and purpose of doing the professional courses is to obtain an excellent job, but nowadays most of the open universities have limitless intake of students; As a consequence, quality students are not coming out from these universities. In addition, notwithstanding having higher degrees with good percentage, they are ineffective and unproductive in the field of profession. (C V. , 2010). There are some challenges in implementing the competency based approach in the work environment. They are as follows:
1. To prepare a perfect and structured financial policy so the burden of library budget will equally distribute.
  2. Inadequate infrastructure
  3. To learn new technologies i.e. Lack of knowledge about new technologies, professionals can adopt or learn or R&D on new concepts and technologies in information centers.
  4. Inadequate knowledge and training about implementing the

managerial functions in the libraries

5. Be aware and be competent about supporting policy for growing the library services timely.
6. LIS professionals can keep in touch and be vigilant about the happening in the world in this regard.
7. LIS professional cannot follow the PERT system; they should try to evaluate themselves for using different evaluation systems.
8. TO convincing the management for the developing of libraries
9. Need to identify the key stakeholders and their expectations and Provide skill based approach towards the stakeholders.
10. To maintain proper collection development policy.
11. To identify the desired outcomes and lacunas for implementing the innovative ideas in the libraries.

### Conclusion:

Due to significant development in technologies and at the same time the library and information services are dealing with several requirements and challenges in the field of information and communication technology for implementing the innovative ideas in information centers. Information professionals working in libraries must understand the technological advancements, the professional's obstacles. They must overcome the obstacles in the present era and to better understand the variety of professional and personal competencies needed to adapt and

manage the effective technology change. In the crucial time the user expectations are rising and there is a lot of competition from other areas. The LIS professionals want to survive the solution the professionals keep constant in the change management procedure. They must embrace technology because other institutes are pushing them to do so. It is crucial to admit that two main imperatives have always guided librarians and they are understand of the users they serve and their familiarity with the cited fields of knowledge.

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