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Professional Skills Of Library Professionals Working In University Libraries In Tirupati: A Study

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the professional skills of library professionals working in university libraries in Tirupati. Survey method of research has been conducted using questionnaire tool prepared containing question on different aspects of professional skills. 50 questionnaires were distributed to library professionals working in university libraries located in Tirupati by using convenient sampling method. This study reveals that (62%) are published articles in journals/magazines/books, (78%) are updating their professional skills, (79.5%) are updating their professional skills by publishing articles, (90%) are updating their professional skills by Searching Internet for professional information, (62%) attended to workshop/training programs, (64%) have familiarity in using digital library software's, (28.1%) are familiar with D-space library software, (42%) opined that there are very good at classification of books and (60%) are excellent in using search engines followed by web space (28%), E-resources (30%), library network (38%).

Keywords: Professional Skills, Library Professionals, University Libraries, Tirupati.

Introduction

Librarians are playing important role in all round development of society. There are many changes have been brought in the field of library and information centers. Libraries are the integral part of the information society. The role of librarian also changing in all aspects of the services and provision of sources to the users in the present IT environment. Library professionals are to be equipped with different types of skills applied in the libraries to cater the information needs of the users in the ICT era.

Library professional working in the academic library especially in university libraries should have professional efficiency to provide advances services to the users. At the same time library professionals are facing many challenges in acquiring technological and professional skills. The professionals not only ICT skills but also should be proficiency in communication skills, library skills, information retrieval skills etc. if the library professionals are well versed with the latest skills in the library, it will be very easy to run the library in the speedy age of information. The study has been chosen in order to know to what extent the library professionals working in university library are equipping the professional skills and the challenges faced by them.

Review of Literature

Susan Mathew, Baby and Sreerekha (2011) bring out the problems and prospects of the professional development opportunities of academic library professionals in the Universities in Kerala. The study is a part of research undertaken to survey the professional development activities and educational needs of library professionals in the major Universities of Kerala in the context of developments in information communication technology. The study recommends methods to improve the knowledge and skills of library professionals. The aim of the study is to evaluate the professional development activities of Library professionals and their attitude towards continuing education programmes. In order to achieve the objectives of the study a survey was conducted with the help of structured questionnaires distributed to 203 library professionals in seven major universities in Kerala, (South India) of which 185 questionnaires were returned. Results of the analysis show that majority of the professionals have pursued higher degrees in library science or IT allied courses after entering the profession, and that they have a positive attitude towards participation in training programmes and workshops. The results show that developments in ICT have a positive influence on majority of library professionals' attitude towards continuing education programmes.

Sajjad Ahmad, Kanwal Ameen and Midrar Ullah (2016) have conducted a study on “Needed Soft Skills and their Status: Self-perceptions of University Information Professionals”. the self-perceptions of university information professionals regarding the status of their soft skills. The survey method, using a questionnaire as data collection instrument, was employed to achieve the objectives of this study. The population was information professionals working in all the central libraries of the public sector general universities in Pakistan. The findings, based on 372 responses, revealed that information professional perceived themselves ‘competent’ in overall soft skills. The values of mean score further revealed that they considered themselves ‘competent’ enough in performance management skills, interpersonal skills, and political/cultural skills, while ‘moderately competent’ in communication/persuasion skills and self-management skills. The findings established need for training in this regard. To improve various soft skills, Library and Information Management education at Master level should include courses on soft skills. Moreover, training on soft skills is also required for in-service information professionals.

Sadanand Y. Bansode and Rahul R. Viswe (2017) carried out a study on “ICT Literacy among Library Professionals Working in the University Libraries in Maharashtra, India : A Study”. The information communication technology (ICT) literacy of the library professionals working in university libraries in Maharashtra. The study gives an overview of the present level of ICT literacy among library professionals and it helps to know the need for training and orientation in the areas such as ICT-based resources, services and tools to the library professionals working in university libraries in Maharashtra. A structured questionnaire based survey was conducted to analyse the ICT literacy among library professionals. The findings of the study reveal that, the ICT literacy level of the library professionals working in university libraries in Maharashtra is satisfactory. Majority of library professionals have acquired the basic ICT literacy skills which is required to handle day to day library operations, but still few library professionals need to enhance their literacy level in the area of open source library automation software, digital library software and institutional repository software etc. The study suggests that, university libraries should organise in-house training and orientation programs on ICT-based resources and services or depute their library professionals to attend the training and orientation programs on regular intervals, in order to enhance the ICT Literacy level of library professionals.

Objectivities of the study

The objectives have been framed as follows:

1. To know the ICT skills among the library professionals.
2. To examine the proficiency in library automation software among the library professionals
3. To ascertain the knowledge in digital library and library networks
4. To know the problems faced by the library professionals in updating the professional skills.

Methodology of the study

In the study, survey method of research has been conducted. A questionnaire was prepared containing question on different aspects of professional skills. 50 questionnaires were distributed to library professionals working in university libraries located in Tirupati by using convenient sampling method. The researcher personally visited the entire library and distributed questions to respond. After collecting the data, the data was analyzed and interpreted in the form of tables.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Designation

A question has been asked to the respondents to know their designation in the library. The replies given by them are shown in table -1

Table-1: Designation

Designation	No.	Percentage
Librarian	1	2%
Deputy Librarian	1	2%
Assistant Librarian	2	4%
Library/Professional Assistant	25	50%
Semi professional Assistant	21	42%
Total	50	100%

Table-1 clearly shows that among five universities in Tirupati, one university is headed by the librarian (2%) followed by Deputy Librarian (2%), Assistant Librarian (4%), Library/Professional Assistant (50%) and remaining of them are Semi professional Assistant (42%).

Experience

A question has been put to the respondents to know their experience. The replies given by them are shown in Table-2

Table-2: Experience in years

Experience	No.	Percentage
0-5 years	4	8%
6-10 years	4	8%
11-15 years	5	10%
16-21years	16	32%
More than 21 years	21	45.6%
Total	50	100%

It is evident from the Table-2 that majority of the professionals have experience more than 21 years (45.6%) followed by 16-21years (32%), 11-15 years (10%), and remaining (8%) each of them belong to less than 5 years and 6-10m years each.

Nature of work

A question has been put to the respondents to know their nature of work in the library. The replies given by them are shown in Table-3.

Table-3: Nature of work

Nature of work	No.	Percentage
Administration	19	38%
Acquisition	27	54%
Circulation management	35	70%
Document delivery	30	60%
Data entry	34	68%
Technical processing	39	78%
Periodical control	36	72%
Serials control	33	66%
Other	22	44%

(Note: Respondents are permitted given more one answer)

Table-3 shows that majority of library professionals are working in Technical processing (78%) followed by Periodical control (72%), Circulation management (70%), Data entry (68%), Serials control (66%), Acquisition (54%), other nature of work (44%) and remaining of them (38%) are in Administration.

Computer knowledge

A question has been asked to the respondents to know their computer knowledge. The replies given by them are shown in Table-4

Table-4: Computer knowledge

Response	No.	Percentage
Yes	43	86%
No	7	14%
Total	50	100%

It is evident from the Table-4 that majority of the respondents (86%) have computer knowledge and remaining of them (14%) have no computer knowledge.

Articles published

A question has been asked to the respondents to know whether they published articles. The replies given by them are shown in Table-5

Table-5: Articles Published

Response	No.	Percentage
Yes	31	62%
No	19	38%
Total	50	100%

It is evident from the Table-5 that majority of the respondents (62%) are published articles in journals/magazines/books and remaining of them (38%) have not published articles.

Number of articles published

Those who had replied positively to the previous question, again they were asked a question to know to the number of articles they have published. The replies given by them are shown in Table-6.

Table-6: Number of articles published

Articles published	No.	Percentage
Less than 5	4	12.9%
5-10	15	48.3%
More than 10	12	38.7%
Total	31	100

It is evident from the Table-6 that majority of the respondents (48.3%) have published 5-10 articles followed by more than 10 articles (38.7%) and remaining of them (12.9%) are not published articles in journals/magazines/books.

Updating professional skills

A question has been asked to the respondents to know whether they update their professional skills. The replies given by them are shown in Table-7

Table-7: Updating professional skills

Response	No.	Percentage
Yes	39	78%
No	11	22%
Total	50	100%

It is evident from the Table-7 that majority of the professionals (78%) are updating their professional skills and remaining of them (22%) are not updating their professional skills.

Areas updating the professional skills

Those who had replied positively to the previous question, again they were asked a question to mention areas they updated. The replies given by them are shown in Table-8.

Table-8: Areas updating professional skills

Response	No.	Percentage
Publications	31	79.5%
Attended seminar/conference/workshop	29	74.3%
Training in ICT	24	61.5%
Attended RC/OP	19	48.7%

It is portrays from the Table-8 that majority of the respondents (79.5%) are updating their professional skills by publishing followed by Attended seminar/conference/workshop (74.3%), Training in ICT (61.5%) and remaining of them (48.7 %) are Attended RC/OP classes.

Methods of updating Professional skills

A question has been asked to the respondents to know methods of the update their professional skills. The replies given by them are shown in Table-9

Table-9: Methods of updating Professional skills

Response	No.	Percentage
Regular attendance of relevant conferences/workshops	42	84%
Undertaking individual research work/publication	20	40%
Discussion of professional matters with colleagues	32	64%
Attending professional association meetings	34	68%
Involvement in teaching	15	30%
Regularly reading relevant professional literature	39	78%
By Searching Internet for relevant professional information	45	90%
Learning from web resources	28	56%
Any other (please specify)	15	30%

(Note: Respondents are permitted given more one answer)

Table-9 shows that majority of the library professionals (90%) are update their professional skills by Searching Internet for professional information followed by Regular attendance of relevant conferences/workshops (84%), Regularly reading relevant professional literature (78%), Attending

professional association meetings (68%), Discussion of professional matters with colleagues (64%), Learning from web resources (56%), Undertaking individual research work/publication (40%) and remaining of them (38%) replied that their other and Involvement in teaching each.

Workshop/ training programmes attend

A question has been posed to the respondents to know whether they attended workshop/training programs. The replies given by them are shown in Table-10

Table-10: Workshop/ training programmes attend

Response	No.	Percentage
Yes	30	60%
No	20	40%
Total	50	100%

It is evident from the Table-10 that majority of the professionals (62%) have attended workshop/training programmes and remaining of them (40%) didn't attend to any workshop/training programme.

Familiarity with library software

A question has been put to the respondents to know the familiarity with the library software. The replies given by them are shown in Table-11.

Table-11: Familiarity with library software

Response	No.	Percentage
Yes	41	82%
No	9	18%
Total	50	100%

It is evident from the Table-11 that majority of the professionals (82%) are familiar with the library software and remaining of them (18%) are not familiar with the library software.

Familiar in using library software

Those who replied positively to the previous question, again they were asked to mention the software in which they are familiar. With The replies given by them are shown in Table-12.

Table-12: Familiar in using library software

Library software	No.	Percentage
Koha	7	17%
SOUL	28	68%
NewGenLib	2	4.8%
LIBSYS	3	7.3%
Other	1	2.4%
Total	41	100%

The Table-12 depicts that majority of the respondents (68%) are familiar with SOUL followed by Koha (17%), LIBSYS (7.3%), NewGenLib (4.8%) and remaining of them (2.4%) are familiar with the other library software's.

Familiarity in using digital software

A question has been put to the respondents to know the familiarity with the digital software. The replies given by them are shown in Table-13.

Table-13: Familiarity in using with digital software

Response	No.	Percentage
Yes	32	64%
No	18	36%
Total	50	100%

Table-13 shows that majority of the professional (64%) have familiarity in using digital library software's and remaining of them (36%) are not.

Digital library software

Those who replied positively to the previous question, again they were asked to know which library software they familiar with. The replies given by them are shown in Table-14.

Table-14: Digital library software

Digital software	No.	Percentage
Greenstone	8	25%
D-space	9	28.1%
E-prints	5	15.6%
Fedora	7	21.8%
Other	3	9.3%
Total	32	100%

It is evident from the Table-14 that majority of the professionals (28.1%) are familiar with D-space library software followed by Greenstone (25%), Fedora (21.8%), E-prints (15.6%) and remaining of them (9.3%) are familiar with the other digital library software.

Proficiency in library skills

A question has been posed to the library professionals to know their proficiency on the following professional skills .The replies given by them are shown in Table-15.

Table-15: Proficiency in following skills

Skill	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Poor
Cataloging	19(38%)	12(24%)	8(16%)	6(12%)	5(10%)
Indexing	8(16%)	12(24%)	5(10%)	14(28%)	11(22%)
Abstracting	6(12%)	8(16%)	16(32%)	12(24%)	8(16%)
Classification	8(16%)	21(42%)	9(18%)	4(8%)	8(16%)
Circulation	15(30%)	16(32%)	6(12%)	7(14%)	6(12%)
Acquisition policy	8(16%)	17(34%)	10(20%)	8(16%)	7(14%)

(Note: Respondents are permitted given more one answer)

It is evident from table 15 that, majority of the professionals (42%) opined that there are very good at classification of books followed by excellent in cataloging (38%), very good in acquisition policy (34%), very good at circulation (32%), good at abstracting (32%) and remaining of them (28%) are average in indexing.

Proficiency in the ICT skills

A question has been posed to the library professionals to know their proficiency in ICT skills. The replies given by them are shown in Table-16.

Table-16: Proficiency ICT skills

Skill	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Poor
Search Engines	30 (60%)	19 (18%)	11 (22%)	0	0
Web Opacs	8 (16%)	10(20%)	11(22%)	14(28%)	7(14%)
E resources	6(12%)	9(18%)	15(30%)	13(26%)	7(14%)
Library Networks	7 (14%)	19 (38%)	5 (10%)	10 (20%)	9 (18%)
Metadata tools	5(10%)	7(14%)	10(20%)	11(22%)	17(34%)

(Note: Respondents are permitted given more one answer)

It is obvious from Table-16 that majority of the professionals (60%) are excellent in using search engines followed by web space (28%), E-resources(30%), library network (38%), digitalization (26%) and remaining of them (34%) have poor proficiency in metadata tools.

Findings of the study

The major findings of the study are:

- Majority of the professionals (45.6%) have experience more than 21 years followed by 16-21years (32%), 11-15 years (10%), and reaming (8%) each of them belong to less than 5 years and 6-10m years each.
- Most of the library professionals are working in Technical processing (78%) followed by (72%) Periodical control, (70%) Circulation management, (68%) Data entry (66%), Serials control (54%) Acquisition (44%) and remaining of them (38%) are in Administration.
- A high percentage of the professionals (86%) have computer knowledge and remaining of them (14%) didn't have computer knowledge.
- Majority of the respondents (62%) are published articles in journals/magazines/books and remaining of them (38%) are not published articles.
- Majority of the professionals (48.3%) have published 5-10 articles followed by more than 10 articles (38.7%) and remaining of them (12.9%) have not published articles in journals/magazines/books.
- Most of the professionals (78%) are updating their professional skills and remaining of them (22%) are not updating their professional skills.
- A high percentage of the professionals (79.5%) are updating their professional skills by publishing articles followed by Attended seminar/conference/workshop (74.3%), Training in ICT (61.5%) and remaining of them (48.7 %) are Attended RC/OP classes.
- A high percentage of the professionals (90%) are updating their professional skills by Searching Internet for professional information.

- Majority of the professionals (62%) attended to workshop/training programmes and remaining of them (40%) didn't attend to workshop/training programme.
- Most of the library professionals (82%) are familiar with the library software and remaining of them (18%) didn't familiar with the library software.
- Majority of the professionals (68%) are familiar with SOUL followed by Koha (17%), LIBSYS (7.3%), NewGenLib (4.8%) and remaining of them (2.4%) are familiar with the other library software's.
- Majority of the professionals (64%) have familiarity in using digital library software's and remaining of them (36%) are not.
- Above one third of the library professionals (28.1%) are familiar with D-space library software followed by Greenstone (25%), Fedora (21.8%), E-prints (15.6%) and remaining of them (9.3%) are familiar with the other digital software.
- Majority of the professionals (42%) opined that there are very good at classification of books followed by excellent in cataloguing (38%), very good in acquisition policy (34%), very good at circulation (32%), good at abstracting (32%) and remaining of them (28%) are average in indexing.
- Majority of the professionals (60%) are excellent in using search engines followed by web space (28%), E-resources (30%), library network (38%), digitalization (26%) and remaining of them (34%) have poor proficiency in metadata tools.

Suggestions

- It is essential to have computer knowledge for the library professionals to serve the information requirements in the ICT era. It is found from the study 14% of the library professionals are lagging behind the computer knowledge. Hence, it can personal training programme on the computer knowledge should be conducted library professionals.
- This is also found that 22% of the library professionals are not updating the professional skills. Hence, the entire library professionals should equipped with professional skills along with soft skills, ICT skills for serving better services to users.
- A regular training programme should be conducted among the library professionals on library automation and digital library software's.
- State level training programmes among the university library professionals should be conducted by the university library associations for updating professional skills.

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