



## Library and Information Science as a Profession

\* Jigar L. Dave

\* 4.PPW.NEAR RLW STATION, AT-DHRANGADHRA-363310 DIST.SURENDRANA-GAR-GUJARAT

### Keywords :

Library and Information Science as a Profession: In modern usage, professions tend to have certain qualities in common. A profession is always held by a person, and it is generally that person's way of generating income. Dalton E. Mc Farmland in "Management Functions and Practices" mentions some characteristics of a profession. Along with the characteristics, necessary arguments are given below to justify whether librarianship is a profession or not.

- a) Entrance is Competitive: All professions maintain rigid rules and high standard of qualification for the new entrants into the profession. As entrance into professions is highly competitive an entrant typically has to have above-average mental skills.

When we consider the employment aspect in libraries, at junior professional level, the entry is direct, but even before that proper orientation into the system, service and professional ethics is provided in many organizations. At the senior professional level the entry is by selection among the experienced professionals.

- b) Body of Specialized Knowledge and Technical Skill: A specialized knowledge of the concerned field is needed by the professional. Those persons who are engaged in a library should have the required academic background although; some of them may not possess a LIS degree. To practice librarianship also requires extensive knowledge and technical skill such as an extensive knowledge of classification or cataloguing without which one may find it difficult to run a library.
- c) Formal Training and Experience: Professions also require rigorous training and schooling beyond a basic college degree for acquiring the needed skill and methods to put the knowledge into work. Nowadays there is a large body of growing literature on library and information science for training and educating the professionals to acquire specialized knowledge and skill in the field of library science. Specialized journals have also started coming out in recent years. It has also its own indexing and abstracting services.
- d) An Ethical Code or Standard of Conduct: A set of principles, a social code or ethics is needed for the professional. Many organizations have codified their conduct, often designated "code of ethics", and what they require for entry into their organization and how to remain in good standing. Some of these codes are quite detailed and make strong emphasis on their particular area or expertise; for example, journalists emphasize the use of credible sources and protecting their identities, psychologists emphasize privacy of the patient and communications with other psychologists, anthropologists emphasize rules on intrusions into a culture being studied. Most of the codes do show an overlap in such concepts as, "do no harm", "be honest", "do not use your position for private

gain", etc. In different parts of the world different professional bodies of Library and Information Science codified such rules. In India also Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centre (IASLIC) has evolved a code of conduct and ethics for special librarians in India.

- e) A Commitment to Public Service: A professional needs to work with the prime purpose of rendering a public service rather than for monetary gain. It has also been suggested that some professionals feel an obligation to society, beyond their client relationship. Doctors may not merely sell their service if a procedure is medically inappropriate, however much the client may want it undertaken; architects may refuse to work on a project that would be detrimental to its surroundings, and lawyers may refuse to take cases which are merely exploitative. The obligation to educate the client is often seen as a key part of the definition. Librarianship is a service oriented job and the user of a library is regarded as a king.
- f) Guarantees of the Service Rendered: The concepts of professionalism may be inferred from guarantees. But these are inferences only. The idea behind a guarantee is that the person offering the guarantee is accountable to the extent of damages that will be compensated. One thing these sources hold in common, implicit or explicit, is the idea of accountability. Those who are members of these organizations or professions are held accountable for what they do.
- g) Formal Organization: An organization generally binds all the members of a group, calling or vocation together for concerted opinion, to achieve high standard in performance, and to act as a force to achieve common goal.

The formal organization of librarianship started with the establishment of the American Library Association in 1876. At modern times library association are there at different levels i.e. international, regional, national, state and local. Many associations covering specialized interest have also come into being. For example, Indian Association of Special Library and Information Centre (IASLIC), Medical Library Association of India (MLI), Indian Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science (IATLIS), etc.

- h) Licensing of Practitioners: Membership in the profession is usually restricted and regulated by a professional association. For example, lawyers regulate themselves through a bar association and restrict membership through licensing and accreditation of law schools. Hence, professions also typically have a great deal of autonomy, setting rules and enforcing discipline themselves. Professions are also generally exclusive, which means that laymen are legally prohibited from practicing the profession. For example, people are generally prohibited by law from practicing medicine without a license and would be likely to practice well without acquiring the skills of a physician.

Generally, professional library jobs require an academic LIS degree as certification. In the United States, the certification usually comes from a Master's degree granted by an ALA-accredited institution. In the United Kingdom, however, there have been moves to broaden the entry requirements to professional library posts, so that qualifications in, or experience of, a number of other disciplines have become more acceptable.

Library Association (LA), UK maintain the professional register of chartered librarians (professionally qualified members are known as chartered librarians and are of two categories

i) Associates who are fully trained and professionally edu-

cated librarians and  
ii) Fellow (FLA) who have successfully completed additional work at an advanced level to prove their ability in special areas of librarians.

Librarianship is as old as the book itself. However, librarianship started assuming some of the characteristics of a profession from 1876 onwards. This was the year when American Library Association was established, the American Library Journals was launched, and the first edition of the DDC and the C. A. Cutter's Rules for making a dictionary catalogue were published.