
ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONALS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: A STUDY ON UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES OF ANDHRA PRADESH (INDIA)

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ABSTRACT

This paper discuss the need of assessment in libraries especially in University libraries. To understand the existing services, improvement of services and offer new services, a kind of assessment of library professional is necessary in the light of issues discussed. The present work is aimed to study the university library system and issue relating to professionals working in these libraries. The study has been limited to the state of Andhra Pradesh(India).

KEY WORDS: Assessment, University Libraries, Andhra Pradesh (India).

INTRODUCTION

The assessment of library services and programmes has become more necessary in recent time for several reasons. The respective management/funding agency is expressing its inability to provide the total budgetary requirements of the library. To seek required funds, the libraries have definable outcomes, which can be readily measured to increase the credibility and put pressure on educational institutions. Therefore, a kind of assessment on inputs and outputs in libraries attained importance. Input is defined as a resource, that goes into an organization and outputs are the services, sharing resources etc.,

Another reason that necessitated assessment is the impact of Information Technology on libraries. It is a fact that information services can be offered to the expectations of users by applying information technology efficiently and economically. Therefore, the professionals should be assessed by an appropriate method whether they are capable enough to understand the information technology facilities in processing and disseminating of information.

The self-motivation is another advantage of assessment. This situation will help the library professionals to be more creative at their work, take risks by initiating changes, and be more receptive to new ideas and concepts. Through this assessment plan, necessary changes and adjustments can be brought into libraries to meet the challenges appearing in libraries, particularly due to the Information Technology. The library staff should be given an opportunity to assess their services and contributions from time to time, which may help them to engage and accept influence of information technology in the libraries and their services.

A situation has reached that many of the traditional library services are to be withdrawn or modified greatly in which case the attitudes, opinions and adaptability of the employees need to be assessed. The funding agencies of libraries do not come forward to provide funds to meet any additional budgetary requirements. Therefore, the libraries should continue the library services and respond to changes appearing in information technology with the available resources. In such a case, proper use of skills and services of library professionals is inevitable.

The University libraries which are mostly run by public funds needs to be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively. In order to assess the quality of services in these libraries, some pre-set norms, guidelines or standards are necessary. Except the standards laid down in 1960, no systematic efforts have been made to develop standards for university libraries in India. This situation in western countries is a bit better. They often use assessment guide developed by professional experts. It is reported that these guides are of little value to assess the abilities and activities of library personnel. Therefore, these libraries develop their own assessment methods at local and regional level as reported in the study of "Academic libraries in Andalusia". There are some assessment guides developed by various agencies, which may be useful to develop own assessment methods. In this context, the first of these guides was compiled by the "Catalan Agency for quality" in 1999. In 2000, the Andalusian University's quality unit convened a technical committee to draft a new assessment guide for academic libraries.

To understand the existing services, improvement of services and offer new services, a kind of assessment of library professional is necessary in the light of issues discussed.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is more than just a 'grade'. Assessment means the process by which the grades are assigned to employees or library professionals in Library and Information Centers. Assessment is a mechanism for providing library professionals with data for improving their skills, and to achieve the goals and objectives of the library.

Definitions of Assessment

Evaluation (by self or peers) of functioning of an institution from aspects of efficiency and accountability as well as "quality way".

"The process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in decision making is called Assessment".

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND LIBRARIES

Hayel defines Performance Appraisal as a “process of evaluating the performance and qualifications of the employees in terms of the requirements of the job for which they are employed, for the purposes of administration including placement, selection for promotions, providing financial rewards and other actions which require differential treatment among the members of a group as distinguished from actions effecting all members equally”.

The performance appraisal concept is applied in American Libraries particularly in academic libraries in a more formalized way, employing annually or semi-annually. The supervisors would fill the forms to assess the In view of the above mentioned limitations in application of performance appraisal and the little value it had in Indian Libraries in order to understand the services and activities in libraries, the only and best alternative is to apply the “Assessment Method”.

performance of each staff member. However no data is available regarding the application of performance appraisal in public and school libraries. In fact, the performance appraisal is more of an administrative and supervisory activity in American Library system. The American Library Association and ARL have issued collections of performance appraisal forms and guidelines.

Performance appraisal method has certain limitations such as - lack of evaluation skills, technological changes, scarce resources, disregard for institutional goals and objectives, halo effect and personal bias & central Tendency.

ASSESSMENT METHODS AND LIBRARIES

The following are the some common and professionally accepted assessment methods:

- multiple choice;
- work simulation;
- key features/case study;
- portfolio;
- self-assessment;
- supervisor evaluation;
- structured Interviews.

Self- Assessment is a method used continuously in the area of choice. In this method the employees have to assess themselves with their peers in order to stand in the main stream and help the organization to meet the set goals and objecti Steps in Self-Assessment are - employee reviews current job plan and development plan, employee receives and reviews any applicable multi-source feedback from other employees, customers or other feedback providers. For each focus area, the employee describes: what strategies were accomplished compared to planned; the performance measures results versus planned; what supervisor responsibilities were accomplished compared to planned; improvement opportunities focus area; any additional comments including any perceived barriers or extenuating circumstances to accomplishing the focus areas, strategies, performance measures, and supervisor responsibilities. Also include any relevant feedback from others. Based on the performance assessment, the employee makes a recommendation on his/her overall performance rating deserved.

Self-Assessment methods are in many forms, writing conferences; Discussion (whole-class or small groups) Weekly self-evaluations; Self-assessment checklists and inventories; Employee-supervisor interviews.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of earlier related literature is presented under three headings viz. performance evaluation, performance appraisal and self-assessment. Under each group, the reviewed articles are discussed chronologically in ascending order. Various methods of performance evaluation suitable to libraries are mentioned along with their limitations. The impact of information technology, the role of performance indicators were discussed to evaluate the library services. For performance evaluation in libraries, a set standards or guidelines are necessary. Superiors usually conduct the performance appraisal. It is understood that established standards are necessary to conduct performance appraisal in any organization. In the absence of set standards, there is no meaning to go performance appraisal, where, the self-assessment method will be the alternative to understand the issues relating to library services. In self-assessment method, the employees are attempt to understand themselves - whether they fit for the job or not.

Barrionuevo (2002) stressed upon the quality and efficiency of library services of universities and their evaluation. In this context, a pilot scheme for the assessment of “University Libraries in Andalusia 1999 – 2002” was taken up. The importance of assessment guide and self-assessment process for the assessment of library services was mentioned. The assessment guide developed by various agencies was mentioned. A model to evaluate academic libraries of Andalusia was given. The assessment of traditional and non-traditional activities of libraries and relation between the two types of activities was mentioned. The self-assessment method was discussed in three stages:

1. Self-assessment, undertaken by the Self-assessment committee, in accordance with the internal assessment guide;
2. External assessment, undertaken by a committee of external experts, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the external assessment guide;
3. TA final report was prepared by the Self-Assessment Committee, based on the findings of two previous reports.

Drucker (2002) stated the importance of Self-Assessment tool and its purpose and the areas to be covered. The Drucker’s Self-Assessment tool is discussed to assess the services of libraries. The nature of Drucker’s Self-Assessment tool was also discussed. The requirements of library administrators before going for self-assessment were listed. The self-assessment process takes place in three phases; Phase-I: Preparing for self-assessment. Phase-II: conducting self-assessment process. Phase-III: Completing the plan. For comprehensive organizational self-assessment, two major options were given. Option A: two-group discussion, Option B: One group retreat. According to the author self-assessment tool can be adopted by any organization. The self-assessment process and its limitations should be thoroughly discussed before adapting by any organization.

Pors and Others (2004) conducted a survey on a “Sample of 411 employees to measure the quality of employment in libraries. The employment quality management tools are closely connected with accountability, effectiveness, value for money, empowerment, change, flexibility, incentives, motivation and evaluation”. They made a comparison between the sample of UK and Denmark libraries to elicit data by applying the ranking method. They concluded that assessment of staff is a necessary item to meet the ever-changing goals of libraries.

www.ifla.org/iv/ifla66/papers/112-1 (2004), the Self-Assessment for library and information sector is stated and a model named “The library and information sector improvement model”(LISIM) is discussed. To improve the quality of library information services, the self-assessment method is one of the best among several other methods. Three-year strategic plans for public libraries to assess the services offered by them were stated. The self-assessment methods for public library services applied by the British Library Research and Innovation Centre was stated. Three approaches of self-assessment to assess library services are mentioned. Other self-assessment methods are cited.

As a conclusion, to meet the ever-changing goals, training for professionals, improvement of existing library services and introduction of new library services, understanding of gender issues, etc., the Self-Assessment of professionals would provide suitable solutions to achieve the goals of libraries. The self-assessment would help the professionals to understand themselves whether they fit for the job or not and understanding the ability and interests of professionals on various aspects is also possible through self-assessment. The advantages of self-assessment or the other methods of assessment are stated.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. To find out the views of the library personnel on appraisal system in general and the appraisal procedure used in their libraries if any in particular.
2. To assess the professional activities and their areas of interest.
3. To understand the knowledge of the professionals on computer technology, printing and publishing technology and networking.
4. To understand the relations between professionals.
5. To understand strengths and weaknesses of professionals, and
6. To understand training needs of library professionals.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. In view of the time and budget constraints, the study has been limited to the state of Andhra Pradesh.
2. The Self-Assessment made in the study is purely the assessment made by the respondents himself, but not against the set standards are periodical progress expectations, etc.

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is designed to elicit the views of Library Professionals on performance appraisal along with other relevant information. Basing on the available information, it is to be mentioned here that, in the libraries situated in Andhra Pradesh and for that matter in the country, the system or scheme of performance appraisal is not implemented and no where it is in vogue. In fact, the concept of 'performance appraisal' itself is relatively new to this area, although most of the personnel working in this field are aware of it and its consequences.

It is in this context, proposed to take-up this study in the lines of performance appraisal survey. The study is designed more or less as a self-assessment survey if not performance appraisal as it is not possible in the present context. Edwards and Williams traced out certain issues in theoretical aspects of performance appraisal like supervisors unpre-paredness, lack of interviewing skills, supervisors bias, morality in conduct of performance appraisal, etc. The application of performance appraisal in libraries of USA is not promising, where the library system is developed considerably. Therefore, the application of performance appraisal in Indian libraries is not practicable for several reasons to improve the quality of services and to the introduction of new services, and a kind of assessment of staff is necessary. Therefore, self-assessment method is opted to draw data from library professionals in this research work. Jordon suggested in the first stage, staff would be given a chance to assess their own performance and survey was conducted in British academic library in 1992 on similar lines.

Barrionueo and Medana also suggested a self-regulated method (self-assessment and external assessment method) to assess the staff from time to time in libraries. Accordingly, all the questions were framed in such a way, that giving scope for the respondent to assess himself the extent of his knowledge or ability or use with regard to different aspects of study ranging from simple general procedures to latest computer applications along with their views and opinions at appropriate contexts.

A study of this nature is surmised to yield some relevant and useful feedback is taken up among the academic libraries and accordingly, decided to conduct the survey among the University Libraries in the state of Andhra Pradesh. It is also planned to cover all the professionals working in these libraries for eliciting the needed information.

In the present study 13 out of 17 university libraries in Andhra Pradesh (India) are covered. The four which were not covered are deemed universities and differ in some aspects with the other university libraries. The required information is gathered from a total of 215 professionals from the 13 university libraries using a carefully structured questionnaire. Out of the 215 professionals contacted only 172 have responded despite all efforts have been made for a complete coverage. The researcher visited all the universities personally to collect data from professionals. The reason for not able to get response from 43 professionals was their non-availability at the time of conducting survey or proceeded on leave. The data thus collected were analyzed by using software SPSS 12.0 version. The responses are analyzed and presented by university and also by selected background characteristics like age, sex, professional qualifications and cadre in which they are working. Suitable statistical methods are applied to draw conclusions.

Table-1: Details Of University Libraries And Coverage

Sl. No.	Name of the University	Year of Establishment	Number of Professionals	
			Contacted	Fully Responded
1	<i>Traditional</i>			
2	Osmania University (OU)	1918	13	10
3	Andhra University (AU)	1926	50	41
4	Sri Venkateswara University (SVU)	1954	26	20
5	Nagarjuna University (NU)	1967	13	10
6	Sri Krishnadevaraya University (SKDU)	1968	11	11
7	University of Hyderabad (UOH)	1974	41	31
8	Kakatiya University (KU)	1976	14	12
9	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BROU)	1982	7	5
10	Sri Padmavathi Mahila Viswa Vidyalayam (PMU)	1983	6	6
11	Potti Sriramulu Telugu University (PSTU)	1985	10	8
12	<i>Professional</i>			
13	Acharya N.G. Ranga University (ANGRU)	1963	17	13
14	Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU)	1972	5	4
15	N.T. Ramarao University of Health Sciences (NTRU)	1986	2	1

OBSERVATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is more in the form of self-appraisal to elicit information on extent of knowledge and extent of use etc., instead of whether the individual is having the knowledge or whether he is using a particular method. The information collected from respondents is recorded and presented in three-grade scale. The three grade responses were quantified by giving unit scores and the mean score computed for each of the aspect was study used to make comparison by selected background characteristics like type of university, sex, age, professional qualifications and cadre of employment.

Profile of the Respondents

Nearly 72 per cent of the respondents covered in the study are males and the remaining 28 per cent are females. Out of the 172 respondents, nearly 51 per cent are in the age group of 46 years or below. The younger age group is reported in 7 university libraries. It is interesting to note that a majority of library professionals(76 per cent) have post graduation in library and information science and higher level of educational back ground. About 53 per cent of the respondents are in cadre II which includes Library Assistants and Documentation Assistants and 26 per cent of the respondents are in cadre III which includes Technical Assistants and other professionals and 21

per cent are cadre I which includes Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Assistant Librarian and Documentation Officer.

Satisfaction of the respondents with the section they are currently working

It is obvious that 148 out of the 172 respondents are quite satisfied with the section in which they are working at present and the remaining 24 have expressed their dissatisfaction and desire to work in other sections.

It is observed that, most of the respondents want to remain in the same section forever or for a long time is not an acceptable situation. If the staff is not made exposed to all kinds of activities in the library, it leads to a lot of dislocation in library routines in-future. Therefore, the staff should be rotated among various sections of the library, considering their interest and ability in order to improve their performance in meeting the goals of the library. In the absence of such rotation, the library will be forced to depend on an individual or a group for a particular activity, which is not advisable.

Membership in professional associations and library committees

The study reveals that, a majority of the respondents are having membership in professional associations. The association with professional bodies helps them to update their areas of knowledge through news letters, personal communications, etc.,

Awareness of Performance Appraisal

The implementation of Performance Appraisal and to assess the performance of the employees is not in-practice in any of the libraries studied. It is interest to note that, most of the professionals have knowledge on performance appraisal and felt the need for performance appraisal for any award, reward, punishment, in-service training etc. Most of the respondents have expressed that, in the absence of performance appraisal, the talent and skills of the employees cannot be utilized effectively. Therefore, the respondents felt that, a kind of performance appraisal method should be used rather than depending merely on length of service for promotion, awards and rewards etc. Hence, it is suggested that, a suitable performance appraisal method should be evolved to assess the performance of the professionals to take appropriate decisions.

The professionals in higher cadres have expressed that, in the present situation, the appraisal by superior is not allowed due to administrative reasons. But majority of the employees, particularly in higher cadres felt the need for such assessment of staff at least by themselves in order to attend many of the problems that are not solved due to paucity of funds.

AWARENESS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

(Percentage Distribution of Respondents by selected Background Characters)

BACKGROUND CHARACTERS	N	HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL	REPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN THEIR LIBRARY	FEELING THE NEED FOR PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
a) UNIVERSITY:				
OU	10	50.0	-	50.0
AU	41	70.7	-	73.2
SVU	20	70.0	-	75.0
ANGRAU	13	61.5	-	61.5
NU	10	60.0	-	60.0
SKDU	11	18.2	-	18.2
JNTU	4	75.0	-	75.0
UOH	31	80.6	-	74.2
KU	12	75.0	-	83.3
BRAOU	5	80.0	-	80.0
PMU	6	83.3	-	83.3
PSRTU	8	87.5	-	75.0
NTRHU	1	100.0	-	100.0
b) SEX:				
MALE	123	66.7	-	64.2
FEMALE	49	73.5	-	79.6
c) AGE :				
46 Years or below	88	70.5	-	69.3
47 Years or more	84	66.7	-	67.9
d) PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION:				
BLISc or below	42	61.9	-	57.1
MLISc and above	130	70.8	-	72.3
e) CADRE:				
Cadre-1	37	83.8	-	81.1
Cadre-2	91	59.3	-	62.6
Cadre-3	44	75.0	-	70.5

Knowledge and views on objectives and goals of the library

The study reveals that all most all (98 percent) the respondents are aware of the goals and objectives of the library, which is a promising situation. If the professionals understand the goals and objectives of the library thoroughly, their commitment towards the library will be in a right direction.

It is reported that, 94 percent of the respondents gave positive opinion regarding the extent of meeting the goals and objectives in their libraries. Since the respondents have knowledge on goals and objectives of the library, it would be easy for the management to drive the professionals towards the objectives and goals of the library. Only 27 percent of the respondents have expressed that they have met the goals and objectives to a large extent. This situation indicate that a kind of assessment of employees is necessary in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the library by assigning right job to suitable persons in libraries, which in turn helps the improvement of information services qualitatively, and quantitatively.

Most of the respondents (83 percent) in general reported that, the goals and objectives of the library are fulfilled beyond the stipulated targets. It is also evident that, only 16 percent have felt that the targets as well as the goals and objectives of library are fulfilled beyond the stipulated target to a large extent. It indicates that the abilities and skills of the employees are not applied properly in the libraries studied. Therefore, suitable professionals should be placed at responsible positions considering their interest and abilities which is possible only through assessment of their performance.

A majority of the respondents (92 percent) opined that the goals set for them are challenging enough to prove their ability in the routine work. It is suggested that, a kind of provision should be made for updating their knowledge to offer information services and products economically and efficiently.

On the other hand, a majority (91 percent) of the respondents reported that the goals set for them are realistic and attainable. Among these, more than half (58 percent) have expressed that the goals are realistic and attainable only to some extent. It indicates that the professionals are satisfied with the goals set for them by and large. Hence, it is suggested that the goals set for employees are to be reviewed from time to time. In such case, the assessment of performance of professionals also becomes necessary.

When sex, age, professional qualifications and cadre analyze this aspect, it is noticed that, nearly 70 percent of the male and 65 percent of the female respondents have reported knowledge of the goals and objectives of the library. This level of knowledge is further promising among the respondents belonging to cadre-I and among those who had higher professional qualifications.

Knowledge and perception of the Nature of Job

It is reported that, more than 78 percent of the respondents have knowledge about their nature of work, which is a promising situation. If the staff have knowledge on their work, it would be easy to attain the stipulated targets and objectives of the library. Since most of them have knowledge

on their nature of work and responsibilities, there is a need to understand their satisfaction level with the work, commitment and further interest..

It is interesting to note that, nearly 75 percent of the respondents have expressed that they are doing an important job or activity in libraries. Since the professionals themselves felt that they are doing an important job, it would be easy to motivate them towards achievement of the goals at a reasonable speed successfully. While motivating them with the task of their own preference, assessment of the professional is again necessary. Nearly 60 percent of them have reported that there is a relation between their work and the work of other sections. It is necessary for all professionals to understand the relation between their work and that of other sections, in order to meet the goals set for the library. Most of the activities in the library are inter-related. Therefore, the staff should be aware of the relative importance of their work qualitatively and quantitatively. In this regard, the assessment method will definitely yield good results.

Nearly 96 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that the jobs assigned for them should encourage initiative and originality. This is definitely a promising feature that helps in meeting the goals of the library qualitatively.

More or less the same proportion of respondents (94 percent) expressed that the given job is clearly stated. Therefore, there is scope for the respondents to inculcate the attitude of attending the job with more commitment and dedication.

Relationship with Co-Workers

For achieving the goals and objectives of the library, a healthy relation among the professionals is one of the necessary factors. Nearly 97 percent of the respondents have reported that they are maintaining good relations with their superiors. In such state, the libraries can achieve the goals and objectives put forth for them with ease. This kind of situation should be prevailed in all the libraries. It is interesting to note that, more than 98 percent of the respondents have expressed that they are maintaining cordial relations with their sub-ordinates, while 97 percent have expressed that they are maintaining, good relationship with peers. Nearly 98 percent of the respondents felt that good teamwork and co-operation exists in their sections. Ninety eight percent of the respondents reported that they take freedom to discuss their grievances with administration.

Views on Administration/Management

It is understand that, about 85 percent of the respondents expressed that the library authority/management protect the individual's professional interest. Out of these, 33 percent expressed large extent and while 52 percent expressed it is only to some extent. Therefore, the management of libraries should give importance to this aspect in order to boost the morale of professionals.

More than 98 percent of the library professionals have reported that their immediate superiors have faith and confidence in their ability to do the work. It indicates that, the professionals have enough knowledge on the job assigned to them and they are meeting their stipulated

requirements successfully. Such feeling develops needed confidence among them. Regarding the application of rules, half of the respondents have stated that, such application is average. Therefore, the library administration should develop a kind of confidence among their staff that the rules will be applied to all staff equally with no discrimination. The extent of individual's discussions about the doubts and problems related to their jobs with superiors is not promising, as more than 60 per cent are not able to approach their superiors for their problems related to the assigned job.

In order to overcome this problem, the superiors should organize meetings frequently and provide the employees an opportunity to express their problems. Another way is to encourage the subordinates to discuss their problems with superiors personally. Every superior must supervise continuously and regularly to reinforce whole part of the organization to avoid any difficulties at individual level itself and while doing so, they should not forget that, some workers get offended when their work checked. The superior should give an impression to sub-ordinates that, the reason for observing the job of the employees is for the betterment of library activities rather than a check.

Knowledge and Initiative

Awareness of the latest trends in library and information science is one of the important factors to meet the goals of the library. Nearly 94 percent of the respondents have expressed positive in this regard. Forty five percent have expressed moderate opinion on these areas. Therefore, there is an urgent need to encourage the staff to know about the latest developments in Library and Information Science profession.

27 percent of the respondents have expressed that the available resources are enough to meet the targets given to the professionals while more than 67 percent gave a moderate response indicating that the available resources are not up to the mark.

Responses regarding the implementation of suggestions made to superiors are average. In fact it is difficult and not necessary to consider all the suggestions made by the sub-ordinate, but the superiors should give an impression that the suggestions given by the subordinates are actively considered. This encourages them to apply their mind and come out with valuable suggestions some time or the other.

Superiors should also listen and take into account the opinions of their sub-ordinates; superiors must not under-mine the authority of middle level employees in the eyes of their sub-ordinates.

Views on in-service training and performance

It is reported that nearly 95 percent of the library professionals felt that in-service training is necessary for updating their knowledge, which helps them to meet the objectives of the library successfully. It is further reported that, nearly 70 percent of the respondents were given such an opportunity through in-service training. The remaining 30 percent of the respondents did not receive any in-service training, although they are aware of the necessity of in-service training. It is suggested that, the in-service training should be offered to all the staff at regular intervals.

Nearly 54 percent of the respondents have reported that they are deputed for training programmes outside the workplace. If the professionals were deputed to update their knowledge through in-service training elsewhere, the professionals get an opportunity to learn many things comparatively and these would help the library system.

Nearly 67 percent of the respondents have expressed that they should be rewarded for their standard performance and punished for their sub-standard performance. It indicates the existence of a kind of competitive spirit among professionals. In such an environment, motivating the professionals towards meeting the library goals and adjusting to the latest changes becomes very easy.

There is a great change in Library and Information Science Profession after the advent of computers. The professionals are using technologies like computer technology, communication technology, storage of information and other technologies. The knowledge and operation skills in these areas are necessary to Library and Information Science Professionals. Hence, the LIS professionals should acquire technical skills, IT skills and managerial skills through in-service training programmes. The level of training programmes should be determined in accordance with the depth of the skills required in those libraries. Therefore, it is suggested that training should be a continual process in order to train the professionals with new ideas and practices through out their career.

Views on performance appraisal

Nearly 84 percent of the respondents have felt that, there is the necessity of post appraisal developmental activities. The results of an appraisal system are effectively used in analyzing and categorizing the existing professionals in different career plateaus. These plateaus help us in undertaking different action plans required for professional's growth and development. More than 90 percent of the respondents have felt that, potential appraisal has equal importance with Performance Appraisal. This suggests that, the professionals who are working with different nature of jobs have other potential skills which should be recorded and stored for further developmental use. This activity is known as potential appraisal. Post appraisal should be treated separately from the performance appraisal system and it's effectiveness will be determined by a number of factors, such as clarity of objectives, etc. Ninety three percent of the respondents have reported that the performance appraisal ensures job oriented discipline in the organization. The performance appraisal method helps in job analysis, job evaluation, job description, which are key factors to motivate and encourage the professionals and their abilities successfully. All the respondents have expressed that the qualities like sincerity, honesty, commitment, initiative, etc. should be considered in the performance appraisal method.

Awareness of information technology and views on automation

More than 80 percent of the respondents are aware of Information Technology and nearly 97 percent are aware of library automation and house keeping activities. A significant proportion of respondents (93 per cent) have expressed their interest in acquiring knowledge on library automation from time to time. It is evident that, all the respondents have realized the importance of computer technology and its use in library operations. Since the respondents have positive attitude towards library automation and willing to learn the latest developments, it is not difficult to adopt the information technologies and reach the goals of the library with the available manpower and resources.

The impact of computer technology on libraries is significant and therefore, the awareness, knowledge, skills etc., on computer technology is necessary for library professionals. This technology helps the professionals in creating database for their collections and makes them available to users within the library as well as outside the library through networks. This technology has to be applied in four ways in libraries: 1. Library Automation; 2. Information storage and retrieval ;3. Office automation; and 4. Resource sharing.

Ability to use computer and communication technologies

Regarding the use of computer and communication technologies, more than 71 percent of the respondents have reported that they know the library software and database management of the library. Nearly 47 percent of the respondents have reported that they have the ability to interact with library software packages for library housekeeping operations which means, they can attend to the problems of the software at least to a minimum extent instead of waiting for the system-administrator in the event of any problem. More than 70 percent of the respondents have reported that, they have sufficient ability and skills to use electronic resources.

Extent of use of computer printing technology

With regard to the use of computer and printing technology, 25 percent of the respondents have reported knowledge on computer and printing technology to a large extent and 46 percent had it to some extent. It indicates that, the professionals' knowledge and skills on computer and printing technology is not promising in University Libraries. In fact, the professionals in University Libraries should have a reasonable knowledge of these, to make use of the Printers, Desk Top Publishing, Page Makers, Electronic Publishing, LCD,VDU etc., Computers are also used for making reports and statements in libraries by the lower level staff.

Knowledge and abilities to use network facilities

A majority of the respondents (86 percent) have reported that their library is in a network. Out of these respondents, more than 66 percent have reported that they have the capacity to transfer and download information through networks. It is a fact that, for several reasons, libraries are moving towards network environment. Since the library professionals are reported to have the required skills such as storage of information, management of information, dissemination of information etc., the benefits of networks could be exploited to the maximum extent.

It is observed that, nearly 85 percent of the respondents are desirous of knowing the procedure for processing and supply of information through networks. In fact, it is an appealing feature which shows the interest of the professionals to go for latest technologies of networks for information handling and processing. Seventy six percent of the respondents have reported that they know about University Grants Commission (UGC) Infonet.

Knowledge on general procedure related to services

Almost all the respondents (99 percent) have knowledge of the procedures followed for acquisition.. Nearly 96 percent have reported that they have knowledge on accession register, which is an important record in libraries. The reason for lack of this knowledge among the remaining 4 percent is that, they are not getting an opportunity to work in the acquisition section. About 97 percent of respondents have enough knowledge on the procedures of circulation activities. In these days, most of the libraries are automating their circulation activities. The respondents have reported knowledge of traditional as well as modern methods of charging and discharging.

Knowledge on classification and cataloguing

All the respondents have excellent knowledge on classification schemes used and cataloguing procedures followed in their libraries. The proportion of respondents, having knowledge of the latest developments in classification and cataloguing is also significant.

Knowledge of computer applications

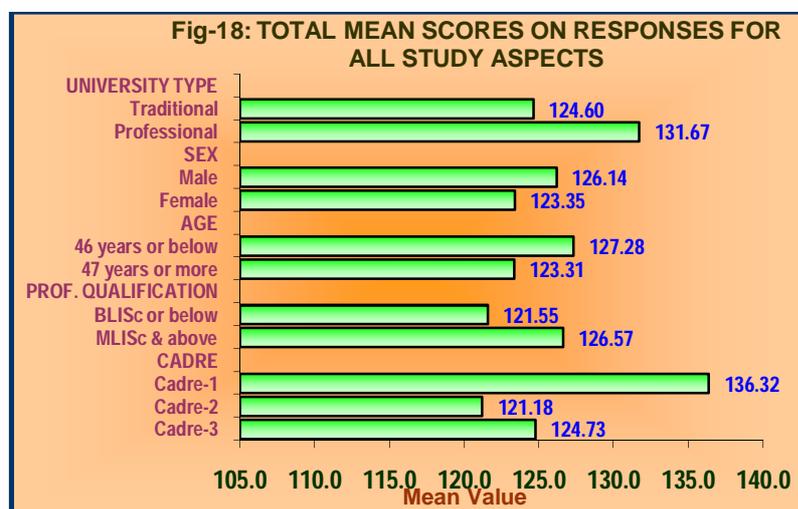
Nearly 78 percent of the respondents have knowledge regarding computer applications in acquisition section. Rest of the libraries are going for library automation by developing their own package or adopting commercial packages and it is observed that some of the University Libraries have already using a software package for various activities in libraries. The level of knowledge of computer applications in circulation section, serial control and office management among the respondents is fairly good. Therefore, the library can make use of the skills possessed by these professionals in various sections for achieving the goals of the library as well as to advance technically and technologically also.

When the responses are quantified by using unit scores for each of the aspects and a final Total Score is computed, it is observed that, for almost all the aspects, the maximum and minimum mean total scores are recorded in the cadre groups. From the Correlation Co-efficient computed between mean scores and background characteristics of the professionals, it is noticed that the cadre of the professional, type of university, professional qualification and age group are having some influence on the responses to questions put under the 15 aspects including the total score of the study. The influence is also noticed to be in the same order of characteristics given above. In general, the observations made through the analysis are in the expected direction.

Mean Scores and Mean total score for all the 14 aspects of study by selected background

Aspect of study	Type of University		Sex		Age group		Professional qualifications		Designation		
	Traditional	Professional	Male	Female	46 and below	47 and above	BLISc and below	MLISc and above	Cadre-I	Cadre-II	Cadre-III
1. Goals and objectives of the library	11.38	11.44	11.48	11.16	11.53	11.24	10.90	11.55	12.24	11.26	10.93
2. Nature of job	12.79	12.56	12.84	12.59	12.84	12.69	12.60	12.82	13.41	12.60	12.56
3. Relationship with co-workers	12.81	13.39	13.01	12.51	13.11	12.61	12.98	12.83	13.51	12.74	12.59
4. Views on Management/Administration	9.35	10.61	9.44	9.59	9.72	9.24	9.31	9.54	9.97	9.41	9.23
5. Knowledge and initiative	11.28	13.11	11.45	11.53	11.57	11.37	10.90	11.65	12.68	11.10	11.23
6. Views on training programmes	8.21	9.11	8.46	7.90	8.39	8.21	7.86	8.45	9.14	8.01	8.20
7. Views on performance appraisal	9.56	10.0	9.49	9.86	9.74	9.45	9.46	9.64	10.06	9.61	9.15
8. Awareness about IT and automation	10.16	10.56	10.33	9.88	10.28	10.11	9.74	10.35	10.95	9.92	10.14
9. Use of computer & communication technology	7.53	8.72	7.83	7.20	8.01	7.27	7.43	7.72	8.65	7.07	8.02
10. Use of computer printing technology	3.78	4.33	3.86	3.78	4.10	3.56	3.55	3.93	4.51	3.49	3.98
11. Views on library networking	6.38	6.72	6.59	6.00	6.53	6.30	6.19	6.49	7.22	6.05	6.50
12. Knowledge on general procedures (service)	7.90	8.22	7.89	8.06	7.85	8.02	7.76	7.99	8.70	7.78	7.61
13. Knowledge on classification & cataloguing	9.26	10.39	9.28	9.61	9.61	9.13	9.26	9.42	10.51	8.96	9.30
14. Knowledge on computer applications	8.09	9.22	8.34	7.88	8.65	7.75	7.74	8.36	9.51	7.45	8.68
15. Total Score	124.60	131.67	126.14	123.35	127.28	123.31	121.55	126.57	136.32	121.18	124.73

characteristics



SUGGESTIONS

1. Rotation of professionals between different sections is necessary to avoid the dependency for a particular work by an individual or group.
2. The professionals should be encouraged to become members of professional bodies where they get an opportunity to exchange their ideas with other professionals working elsewhere.
3. Suitable Performance Appraisal method should be evolved to assess the performance of professionals and also to assign right job to right person.
4. Suitable training facilities be made available for updating their knowledge to offer information services and products economically and efficiently.
5. The professionals should know the latest developments in Library and Information Science field.
6. The professionals should be encouraged to attend short term and long term training programmes, seminars, discussions etc.,

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, to meet the ever-changing goals, training for professionals, improvement of existing library services and introduction of new library services, understanding of gender issues, etc., the Self-Assessment of professionals would provide suitable solutions to achieve the goals of libraries. The self-assessment would help the professionals to understand themselves whether they fit for the job or not and understanding the ability and interests of professionals on various aspects is also possible through self-assessment.

Application of performance appraisal in Indian context is not possible because of the lack of set standards, which are comparable for deferent types of libraries that are functioning with different set of aims and objectives.

The development of Information Technology influencing the library activities particularly the information storage, processing and dissemination. To get the benefit of the Information Technology in libraries, the capacity of professionals should equally be understood. In most of the libraries, the recruitment process is almost stop. In such a situation, the library has to make use of the available Human Resources to satisfy the requirements of the users. In addition, the parent institutions are coming forward to meet the budgetary requirements of the libraries. Instead, the libraries are advised to develop their own mechanism to over come the problems. This problem can be successfully attended by implementing the facilities of Information Technology with the available professionals. Therefore, a kind of review, assessment and appraisal of professionals in libraries is become important and necessary.

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