

Role of Library Associations to Promote Education Research & Training

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Abstract

Library associations play an important role in the promotion of Education, Research & Training. This paper discusses the importance of Library associations in Research & Education and considers the role of professional association in recognizing, enabling and promoting a research. It addresses the prospects and challenges posted in the changing higher education environment in this information age and need for the preservation of knowledge and dissemination of information led to the establishment of more and more libraries. The role of the association is developed, affected, and changed from one period to another and depending upon a variety of circumstances. This paper discusses various contributing factors and solutions for bringing up positive change in the professional culture.

Keywords: Information, Library associations, Research, Education, Training & Programmes.

Introduction

Educational, Research & Training activities and investigation depends on the availability of information. Library Associations would have to work together to actively foster research activities. Research is considered as fundamental need for investigating the role of library association for the promotion of education, research & training.

Oxford English Dictionary defines a profession as "a vocation in which a professed knowledge of some departments of learning or science is used in its application to the affairs of others or in the practice of an art founded upon it." According to a legal definition "a profession is a self-selected, self disciplined group of individuals who hold themselves out to the public as possessing a special skill derived from education and training and who are prepared to exercise that skill primarily in the interest of others". (Klass, 1961)

According to Cambridge Dictionary of American English duty trope of work especially one that needs a high level of Education on particular skill is profession. Thus, a profession calls for specialized knowledge and technical skills. A lay person or a single institution can't possibly do much to deal with wider and far reaching issues of concerned professions. For this, a collective action by interest group is necessary, which can only be performed by collective efforts. These collective efforts can only be done by associations. These associations serve as a forum for coordinated efforts for their concerned profession.

What is Association

The word "Association" is derived from the English Word 'Associate' which means to 'unite' to bring into relation those persons who share activity in anything as a business enterprise or undertaking'(Jain,2004). In other words, it means to unite or to combine the persons, with a common feeling, pursuit and thought.

Van Mannen & Barley (1984) described the association as 'a group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; [and] who share with one another a set of values, norms and perspectives". (Hovekamp 1997, p.233). According to Virgo (1991) 'Associations are a body of people who collectively have a tremendous wealth of experience to draw upon in a common field.' (Frank 1997, p.308). Thus, we can say that association is an organization of people with a common purpose and a formal structure.

Jain (2004) categorised the associations as 'non- professional 'association' and 'professional association.' A non-professional' is one, which does not look for the interest of the profession as such but follows activities of general kind, such as religious, political, recreation etc. A professional association' is one, which is engaged in one of the specialized

professions or in an occupation regarding high level of training and proficiency.

Professional Association

Professional associations ascribe to a culture of consensual collective efforts to preserve a profession's unified front. As Galaskiewicz (1985) "one of the latent functions of professional association is to put people together in committees, panels, task force and study-groups might not otherwise be attracted to one another based on their background characteristics alone." (Hovekamp, 1997, p.640)

Infact 'professional associations' are essential for the people of various professions to get together and plan their activities to safeguard and to promote the interests of particular profession. Like there are 'Labour Unions' which look after the interest of Labours, there are bar associations which look after the interest of lawyers, there are 'teacher association' which look after the interest of teachers. As a profession 'Librarianship' also requires specialized knowledge and technical skills, so, like other professions there are 'Library associations' in existence for excellence of libraries and librarians.

Library Associations

Library associations have played an important role in growth and development of the profession. These associations vary in scope and coverage. They can be International, National, State, Local or may be limited to one field of activity such as Health, Science, Technology, Music, Law etc.

Krishen Kumar (1988) gives a brief account of the activities of library associations. He describes that these associations bring together librarians, provides them an opportunity for inter-communication of ideas through conferences, congress, symposia, workshops and publications; serve as a platform for general discussion of problems related to library theory, practice and teaching; make it possible to crystallize ideas in relations to library and society, help to built up library movements; take steps towards professionalization; interact with society; co-operate with other organizations for advancement of library and information science; popularize library; conduct research to advance frontiers of knowledge; provide financial support for research in library and information science; confer distinction /fellowship /prizes etc.on its members in recognition to their contribution to librarianship; organize continuing education programmers; support professional causes; lay down standards for various aspects of librarianship; do everything possible for the status and welfare of its members. So, we can say that library associations are powerful force representing the voice of the professions community to solve the problems related to the welfare, education and training including the research and development activities.

Objectives of the Study

Within the broad framework of library association's activities in library science field, the study is intended to:-

1. To discuss the role of library associations in promoting to education, research & training;

2. To identify the basic issues, challengers and factors causative towards education, research & training;
3. Role of library associations in education, research & training activities at National and International level.

Scope

The present study covers the activities performed by different library associations at International level and particularly the National and State level Library Associations. Some active Indian National and State level Library Associations which fall under this study are respectively: ILA, SLA, IATLIS, ISI, BLA, KLA, MLA etc.

Review of Related Literature

To promote library services and librarianship, library associations are making many efforts. Some efforts made by different worldwide library associations, particularly in the field of education, research and training are described in the following sections:-

Lam (2001) has discussed the efforts made by American library association that in USA. He describes that all divisions of the ALA support research activities either through a committee or an award programmer or publication of a journal. Since the late 1970 continuing education has also been given some priority by the ALA council when it adopted a policy statement regarding the continuing education. In developing countries library associations also contributing in the field of library training and education. Some examples are given to demonstrate the values of national library associations.

Muswazi (1998) reports on research done in Swaziland, which examined advertising, education, legislation, research done by the library association. The data consisted of association documents and interviews with association members for a strategic plan, improvements in communication, and increase in membership fees.

Harbo (1994) described the role of EUCLID (The European Association for Library and Information education and research) in promoting LIS education Europe. He describes that this association is producing and distributing information about LIS-education and research in Europe through its meeting, its research papers and the further diffusion through the newsletter and co-operation with its periodical.

Sacchanand (2008) describes the major National activities of Thai Library Association during 2007. He describes that TLA encourages and support research through its research and development section, its publication, its continuing profession development programs and also through a distance education course with STOU, which is the largest distance education university in Thailand. TLA's research presentation session provides the opportunities for members to become informed and educated about research and encourages new research. It also gives awards and grants to support a LIS research project. For professional development, TLA academic section organizes annual conference,

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training courses, seminars, workshop and other forms of continuing education programs.

Footo & Mannan (1996) describe the role of LAB in library training and professional opportunities in Bangladesh by stated that LAB is particularly active in meeting the needs for basic and continuing education of Bangladeshi librarians through its formal training programmes, seminar and symposia. The library training institute which is situated in Dakha, sponsored by LAB, is offering a six month certificate course, a twelve-month post graduate Diploma course and other special courses.

Mohmood (1997) has described the role of Pakistan library association (PLA) in it education in Pakistan library school. He describes that PLA has developed the computer centers in labore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta for the training of working librarians and library science students. It has co-operated with the Netherlands library development project in designing and implementing the library automation and management program (LAMP) for Pakistan.

Statement of the problem

Library associations in the world are playing a quite significant role in research & education, particularly in USA and UK associations are deeply involved in education & research process to maintain the quality and standard. In India, library associations are quite active but don't seem to be that much effective. Each association is limited to its own goals and objectives. There is an immediate need for restructuring these associations in pursuit of a new working model which would involve functioning in close partnership with other groups.

However, some associations are continuously active to promote education & research. So, this research assesses the current role and relevance of library associations for education, research and training from an Indian perspective.

History of Library Association

In 1853 a group of men including librarians, scholars, teachers and clergymen, with belief that better library service for public could be promoted by consultation among librarians and other interested in bibliography activities, met in Newyork for that purpose.

This first known meeting of its kind in library history caused public attention to the specialized requirement for organizing and administering libraries. "Taking the hint from the meeting of 1853, a few library devotes in May 1876, purposed a like gathering in connection with the great exhibition" (Garden, 1997).

In Philadelphia that year and the announcement of such a meeting, to be held in October, was sent to the leading libraries of this country and to the leading librarians abroad. And as a result of that conference the oldest, largest and most influential library association in the world namely 'American Library Associations' (ALA) was established on October 4,1876. There is a great contribution of Melvil Dewey in the origin of first American library association.

After that in UK British Library Association (BLA) was organized. Now it is estimated that at least

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300 library association throughout the world, are functioning currently (Dawra, 2004). In spite of these associations many other library associations were also formed like COMLA (1972), FID (1924), IFLA (1927) etc. In Africa, "The Kenya library association succeeded in putting up a regular certificate course at Kenya polytechnic in 1979."(Gupta & Gupta, 1997, p.104)

In Nigeria, where library education started in 1959, the Nigerian library association has an even stringer voice and a more important role in library education in the country. A colloquium on library education was organized by the Nigerian library association in 1974 (Fayose, 1997). Affirmed this by stating that library is a treasure-house of knowledge. Rajkoomar (2012). In Asia, LAB (The library association of Bangladesh), establish in 1956, holds an annual, publishes a twice-yearly journal and provides and promotes facilities for training and research.

Library Associations in India

Development of library associations in India differs from that of such associations in other countries. In other countries, the national level library associations emerged first, but in India we already had some state level association, viz. the Indian Library Association (1933). For instance, the Andhra Deas Library Association (1914), the Maharashtra Library Association (1925), the Madras library association (1928) and the Punjab Library association (1933). Now a number of library associations are presently functioning in India at different level and of different groups. Some of them are working actively, which are working to promote library science education and training.

In India ILA (Indian Library association) training programmes are proved to be useful to working librarians. IASLIC (Indian association of special library and information center) in 1967, introduced a foreign language training course for librarians and scientist and launched a post B.LIB. Sc. Level diploma course in special librarianship. Some of the courses are related to current issues which are recently organized. It also conduct short-term training workshop every year for professional development. Similarly, IATLIS (Indian) association of teachers in library and information science) through its seminars, conferences and publication promote research in education in library science. SIS (society for information, scientist), another national level library association, functions through four divisions and organizes annual convention. It has conduct about a dozen specialized short-term courses.

In India some state level associations are also working to promote this field. Chaturvedi (1994) highlighted the activities and role of the Utter Pradesh library association (UPLA-A state level association in India) in the education and training of professional and the special efforts made by the association towards adopting library legislation in the state. (Quoted in Ghosh, 2008)

Role of Library Associations in Education, Research & training

Education

Education is the Key factor in the development of a society to integrate each individual in the process of development and advancement of the nation, suitable education and training is varying important. To accomplish something and advance, one has to keep in touch with the latest advancement in his field of Knowledge and Keep an eye on the cultural changes, societal needs and new kinds of works performance requirements.

In the information age, libraries are the main source of relevant information. So, in the library science field, librarianship also warrants up-to-date knowledge to provide better library services. To promote library service and librarianship 'is the main objective of mostly library associations and these objectives can be gain by formal education in the field of library science and continuing education i.e. training.

Formal Education includes undergoing a formal training in a reputed school of science and 'continuing education' defined by worthy (2004) is the provision of opportunities for people to continue their learning. To prepare skilled professionals there is the need of training programmes. Powell (2004) stressed that LIS programmes do not have the entire responsibility for training competent researchers. It is also the responsibility of professional associations and, in some cases, research organizations to provide appropriate continuing education opportunities.

In the library science field, library associations are making efforts to promote education, research and training. In order to obtain current and valid information in LIS, library schools and library associations would have to work together to actively foster research activities.

These associations influenced and monitored the curricula and core competencies of the schools of library and information studies. For example, in USA, academic courses studied by graduate students are shaped by the American library association. Professional associations are producers and disseminators of relevant information. Practical up-to-date information is readily available and openly shared at conferences conducted or sponsored by library associations. Formal programs provide numerous opportunities to obtain information, new in addition to formal programmes at conferences. Discussion groups are ideal forums for information sharing. For example, at the ALA conferences, the discussion group has become an essential vehicle for the stimulation of ideas on current topics.

Library associations contribute significantly in the professional development. They provide opportunities to improve or enhance their professional skills. Medical library Association (MLA, 1996) fosters excellence in leadership and professional achievements in health science librarianship. (Gordon, 1997, p259). These associations also provide opportunities to become familiar with the process of research and publication through several options like poster sessions, calls for paper, publications etc. They provide opportunities to do research and to discuss the result with a forum of colleagues.

For example, ARL (Association of Research Libraries), which is restricted to institutional membership, works 'to initiate and develop plans for strengthening research library resources and services in support of higher education and research, (Gordon, 1997, p259) and CLR, a private foundation established in 1956, focuses on solving library problems, particularly those of academic and research libraries, via grants and contracts and educational services (Mc Chesney, 1984).

Research

Lam (2001) has discussed the efforts made by American library association in USA. He describes that for research, all divisions of the ALA support research activities either through a committee or an award programme or publication of a journal. Besides these divisional activities, the ALA also has a standing research and statistics committee and an office for research and statistics.

Fisher (1997) describes that ASIS clearly presents itself as a research-oriented organization. The society's mission statement indicates that one its primary roles is encouraging research, development, and applications that advance the field of information science". (ASIS,1996,p.6). He describes that its publication provides essays that review current research on a variety of topics, making it an excellent place for a researcher to begin his/her search of the literature. All of ASIS's special interest groups take a research focus for their area(s) of interest. ASIS also support research through a number of awards.

SLA also demonstrates a strong commitment to research. In its strategic plan, which was based on member input, identified research as one of the three major priorities for the association. SLA reinforces this with a director of research on staff and a standing research committee. In 1995, SLA sponsored a research forum with participants from a number of professional associations. (Fisher, 1997) In Vietnam, library society, which is a young association made great efforts to promote research in two years of its establishment.

Sacchanand (2008) describes the major national activities of Thai library association (TLA) during 2007. He describes that TLA encourages and support research through its research and development section, its publication, its continuing professional development section, its publication, its through a distance education course with STOU, which is the largest education university in Thailand. TLA's research presentation session provides the opportunities for members to become informed and educated about research and encourages new research. It also gives awards and grants to support a LIS research project.

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Training

The ALA's activities for professional development. He describes that through its homepage, members can check all kinds of professional development opportunities, like annual conferences, division conferences, chapter conferences, public programmes, institutes, workshops etc. since the late 1970's continuing education has been given some priority by the ALA council when it adopted a policy statement regarding the continuing education.

In the same way, library association (UK) supports professional development and, in 1992, launched a framework for continuing professional development. This provides a record of achievement for individuals and its intended to be used in appraisal professional and career development.(www.la.org.). In the developing countries, library associations also make efforts to promote the training programmes for librarians.

A Study was conducted among the all members of library and information science association (resident in Tehran and Kohorasan) in 2008, to evaluate association's informal training programmes. The general average of the study shows that the association is successful holding informal training programs for librarians. (Mohamad Zerehsaz).

Clift, DH (1962) Library associations are for the most part made up of individuals thinking, feeling, concerned individuals. The association in considering its role must keep always in mind the reasons which impelled the members to join together, the leadership areas which society has obligated it to assume, and the means by which its members can work together harmoniously and effectively and with the most scrupulous attention to the democratic process.

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