Continuing Education for Library Professionals: A Need of the Hour

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Association of Indian Universities
Indian Universities : Now into Franchising

Ashish Kumar*

According to Indian constitution, everyone has fundamental right to educate. I as well as you have this right. All of us may individually or collectively educate anyone. When the education was given due priority and importance in a developing country like India, many education centres were opened. To look after these centres, universities were established. To make provision for the co-ordination and determination of standards in the universities, University Grants Commission (UGC) was established in 1956 as a statutory body. This Act was called The University Grants Commission Act 1956.

Now-a-days, there are several Indian universities, offering franchise-ship to private education centres and institutes. The university may call it a Franchise Centre or Partnership Institution (PI) or Nodal Centre or Partner for Advance Learning System (PALS) or Recognised Study Centre or Authorised Training Centre (ATC). The courses announced from these centres are normally under Distance Education. Under the system, a contractual agreement between the particular university and the institute is made under which both the parties have to work collectively to ensure a satisfactory and wide academic output. Both the bodies have some well-defined responsibilities. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Makanthal National University of Journalism, Bhopal, Jai Prakash Vishwavidyalaya, Chapra, Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur, Purvanchal University, Jaunpur, Kota Open University, Kota (Raj.), Pondicherry University, Pondicherry, Osmania University, Hyderabad etc are some universities, offering various degree and diploma programmes from its nationwide ATCs. The system has brought into effect probably for the first time in the country. So far only private institutions were engaged in offering franchise centres. But now, the UGC-recognised universities have joined this practice. Now, let us focus on some specific considerations, made by the university before planning to offer franchise centres.

Provision in Act

Before offering a franchise centre or a nodal centre or an authorised study centre, the university must have a provision for the same in its Act. As an example, for Patna, the Patna University is a non-affiliating university, as it is well defined in its Act. But Magadh University, Bodhgaya is an affiliating university, as it’s Act says. Although modifications and amendments may be made in the Act and provisions for new developments may be introduced.

Jurisdiction

Since it is practically impossible for just one or two universities to look after academic activities by all the colleges in the country or in a state, each and every university has a well defined jurisdiction to work. As for example, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has whole of India as jurisdiction. It may establish partnership institutions in any part of the country. Whereas, the Magadh University, Bodhgaya

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Continuing Education for Library Professionals: A Need of the Hour

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Introduction

The world is fast moving from industrial society to 'Information Society', in which information plays a major role in planning and decision making at all levels. It is a widely accepted fact that input in modern production systems has not only confined to land, labour and capital but it also include information. Information is recognised as a basic resource for the socio-economic development. Access to right information at the right time in a convenient form can provide new directions in research and development.

As Library & Information Centres are the important channels for acquisition, processing & dissemination of information to the society and due to tremendous development in the field of information technology, the library & information professionals need to update their knowledge & skills in order to satisfy the different needs of its clientele. Therefore there exists an urgency for brushing up the acquired knowledge periodically by all library & information professionals as the professional education imparted in library schools is not adequate to meet the specific requirements of the ever changing present information society. Hence library & information professionals need Continuing Education Programme (CEP) to prepare themselves in order to perform their duties efficiently & effectively.

Need for Continuing Education

Need for continuing education has been felt in almost all the professions including library & information science, because of new developments being taking place rapidly in every profession. There are various reasons which demands library & information professionals to pursue continuing education.

- Information explosion: Information is published in various types & forms, therefore, library & information professionals need skills and techniques for acquiring, processing and dissemination of information.
- New developments in computer technology: Computers, now a days, are available at reasonable costs. Each library big or small tries to procure them.
- Developments in communication technology: e.g. internet, through which information can be accessed and retrieved while sitting anywhere in the world.
- Handling of new information tools: e.g. union catalogues, indexes, abstracts, thesaurus etc which are now available in printed as well as machine readable form.
- Providing better services effectively to users: i.e. to provide the required information with mini-

Meaning

Continuing education is of great importance in almost all rapidly changing professions. “Continuing education is a process by which library personnel (single, in groups or in institutional settings) purposefully seek to improve themselves or their profession by enhancing their knowledge, attitude and skills.” Continuing Education Programme allows library & information specialists the opportunity to grow with the profession.

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maximum efforts and in minimum time i.e. to say maintaining information economy.

- Development of profession: Research and creation of new ideas can only be possible if platform for interaction and mutual discussions among working librarians, research workers, teachers & students of library & information science is provided.
- Job satisfaction and professional growth.

Objectives of Continuing Education

- To help the professionals to keep abreast with the latest developments in the profession.
- to adjust with the changing professional growth.
- to help the library & information professionals in their personal and professional growth.
- to disseminate new ideas.
- to provide better information services to the user.

Agencies

There are various agencies at national as well as international levels involved in imparting continuing education programmes. These programmes can be effectively carried out by such agencies which have the potential as well as sufficient financial and physical resources. The following agencies can play a vital role in conducting continuing education programme:

1. Library Associations such as ILA, IASLIC, ALA, LA, IFLA etc.
2. National & International Organisations such as INSDOC, INFLIBNET, UGC, SSDC, FID, UNESCO.
3. University Libraries
4. Individual Professionals

Types of Continuing Education

Continuing education for library & information professionals can be broadly of two types

1. Formal methods of continuing education
2. Informal methods of continuing education.

1. Formal Methods

Formal courses, Extension courses such as summer schools, short term courses, refresher courses, inservice training etc comes under the purview of formal method of imparting continuing education to the library & information professionals. The most important characteristic of this method is the facility of direct contact between the experts and the participants in the course.

2. Informal methods

Seminars and conferences, professional literature, professional meetings, lectures, study circles, workshops, exhibitions etc are some of the informal methods of imparting continuing education programme to the library & information professionals. For keeping track with the new developments in the field it is essential that the information professional meet periodically.

Continuing Education — National & International Organisations

Organisations at national level in India such as INSDOC, UGC, DRTC & associations like ILA, IASLIC, IATLIS, MALI etc and international organisations such as FID, IFLA, UNESCO etc are contributing to a great extent in continuing education programme by organising seminars, workshops, refresher courses, summer schools etc at their own and also in collaboration.

UNESCO action in this field takes the form of meeting of experts, specialized courses, setup of regional training centers like those in Dakar (Senegal), Kampala (Uganda), Legon (Ghana) and Kingston (Jamaica), and schools of librarianship, the sending of experts and consultants to member states, the granting of fellowships and the organising courses for library & information professionals and teachers in schools for librarians & archivists. UNESCO in collaboration with IFLA & FID is giving special attention for the professional development of library & Information science professionals.

FID Committee on Education & Training (FID/ET) is to promote the training of documentalists and information scientists at all levels of accomplishment, especially in developing countries. FID also brings out a quarterly ‘Newsletter on Education & Training Programmes for Information Personnel’ since 1947 under UNESCO contract.

Impediments for Continuing Education

The following factors given below are generally responsible for library and information professionals for not participating in the continuing education programmes.

- Lack of motivation for acquiring further knowledge.
- Ignorance about continuing education programmes and their utility.
• Financial reasons.
• Psychological complex for joining formal courses with juniors.
• Unfavourable & negative attitude of authorities.
• Duration, timing and dates of courses.
• Feeling of jealousy among coordinate and subordinate colleagues.

Suggestions

Continuing education programme is a shared responsibility of professional associations, library schools, individual professionals and the employer. The following steps are recommended for a successful continuing education programme.

i. Library schools and professional associations should consider continuing education programmes as a part of their activities and liaison should be maintained with all library schools, professional associations and various organisations at national as well as international levels.

ii. Financial assistance for organising continuing education programme for library & information science professionals from UGC, universities, government and professional organizations & associations can be sought.

iii. The duration of courses should not be more than 3-4 weeks.

iv. The experts should be experienced in teaching methods & techniques and he should also have practical knowledge of the subject. Library specialists from other countries may also be invited.

v. Course contents should be according to the needs of the participants.

vi. The stress should be more on practical aspects and information about latest trends & developments should be provided.

Conclusion

For the successful accomplishment of continuing education programme it is essential that a survey regarding qualification, status, needs and interests of library & information professionals has to be conducted before designing the programme. There is need for bringing out a publication which indicate and provide information regarding availability of various continuing education programmes. Further the curriculum in library & information science courses have to be restructured so as to keep library & information professionals in tune with the latest trends and developments in the field.

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INDIAN NATIONAL SCIENCE ACADEMY
New Delhi

The Indian National Commission for History of Science approves about 50 projects annually on the subjects pertaining to History of Science under the guidance of three advisory board for ancient, medieval and modern periods. Through this programme an investigator can take up Source and Theme oriented studies by compiling important sources for study, translation of important scientific and technical work and making critical assessment in the thrust areas as mentioned below, relating to Indian Science and Technology in proper historical perspective:

Ancient Period

(i) Existing system of text based studies, (ii) Oral traditions of scientific knowledge system, or Ethno-technological traditions and practices — metals, stones, textiles, medicines etc, (iii) History of Scientific ideas/concepts, (iv) Preparation of scientific and technological glossaries based on inscriptions and other traditional records.

Medieval period

(i) Sanskrit Astronomical Tables, (ii) Commentaries such as Krsna Daivajna’s Commentary of Bhaskara’s Bijaganita, (iii) Bibliographical Survey of Arabic/Persian Scientific Works Produced in India, (iv) Fazee’s Persian Translation of Bhaskara’s Lilavati, (v) Craft/Architectural Technologies and (vi) Diffusion of Science & Technology in South and South East Asia.

Modern Period


Interested scholars may write to Assistant Executive Secretary (History of Science), Indian National Science Academy, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002 or e-mail at : insa@giad101.vsnl.net.in for further details. 1st November, 1999 is the last date for submitting the detailed project in the prescribed application form.

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