Continuing education & professional development programmes/resources for library professionals

Sarman

Librarian, Dept. of Library, Bhag Singh Khalsa College for Women, Kala, Tibba, Punjab, India

*Corresponding Author:
Email: librarian.bshkc@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper aims to bring out the resources one can required to keep abreast of the latest trends and information within the field of library science. To maintain excellent service delivery, library and information professionals should continue to develop their knowledge and skills in this ever changing and complex information environment. Professional development is universally recognized as an imperative for on-going effectiveness. The present paper encompasses professional development and continuing education programmes and resources run by various library agencies at both national and international level.

Keywords: Professional development, Continuing education programmes (CEP), Library professionals, Continuous learning, Training programmes, Career development.

Introduction

Library and information science professionals embrace life-long learning. Librarians have been facing challenges in the profession due to the rapid technological changes with the development of information technologies, particularly the internet. Now librarians have to play the role of mediator between the vast network of resources and its users. To meet the ever-changing demands of the users, library professional require continuously updated knowledge and skills for effective performance. Continuing education is necessary for every professional, not only in library profession but also in all service sectors and it is fundamentally a responsibility of the individual professional (Mathew, Baby & Pillai, 2011). Professional development is universally recognized in education and librarianship as imperative for on-going effectiveness. The library profession, which overlaps to a significant extent with the education community, demonstrates a parallel commitment to continuing professional education. The principal objective of library education remains to produce new entrants to the profession who have a broad-based understanding of professional issues and the context in which they are applied, as well as appropriate practical skills. The latter will always need to be constantly updated through continuing professional development; the former should, however, inform and underpin an entire career (Feather, 1997).

Continuing education is the formal and informal learning by which an individual attempts to update or advance his/her knowledge, attitudes, and skills and thereby enhance total job competence for the present and for the future. In India, formal continuing education is considered to be an education where the person is enrolled in a formal degree programme. Informal continuing education includes workshops, seminars, conferences and lectures.

Definition and meaning of Continuing Education and Professional Development: UNESCO (1993) defined continuing education as "broad concept which includes all of the learning opportunities all people want or need outside of basic literacy education and primary education." This definition implies the following:

1. Continuing education is for literate youth and adults
2. It is responsive to needs and wants
3. It can include experiences provided by the formal, non-formal and informal education sub-sectors
4. It is defined in terms of "opportunity" to engage in lifelong learning after the conclusion of primary schooling or its equivalent.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is closely related to the above, but with a more specific focus on work related development. Chartered institute of personnel and development (CIPD) (2018) defined continuing professional development as "Combinations of approaches, ideas and techniques that will help you manage your own learning and growth. The focus of CPD is firmly on results-the benefits that professional development can bring you in the real world."

From above definitions we can say that both continuing education and continuing professional development are the skills, knowledge and experience one can gain formally or informally as an on-going basis.

Continuing Education and Professional Development in Library Science Profession: At virtually every level, the education community seems to attach importance to the continuous professional development of its constituents. The library profession, which overlaps to a significant extent with the education community, demonstrate a parallel commitment to continuing professional education (Smith, 2004). Continuing education and training plays

a great role in the overall development of the library professionals.

Continuous learning is critical to renewing the expertise and skills needed to assist patrons in this information age. Library workers must continually expand their knowledge in order to keep up with the rate of change (American Library Association, 2013).

Library and Information Science: Resources for Professional Development: The resources listed below are one way to keep abreast of the newest information and trends within the field of library science:

WebJunction (http://www.webjunction.org)

A program of OCLC Research, WebJunction is a learning place for libraries, regardless of size, type or geographic location, to effectively use and share resources towards common goal. It is a place where library staff gather to build knowledge, skills and support they need to power relevant, vibrant libraries. Since its launch in 2003, WebJunction has helped more than 80000 library staff to build knowledge, skills and confidence they need to deliver transformational services to their communities.

Infopeople (https://infopeople.org)

Based in California, Infopeople provides continuing education and professional development opportunities to worldwide library staff. Infopeople training is open to all members of the library community: academic, public, school and special. Infopeople offers over 70 training events per year on a wide variety of topics, utilizing subject experts as instructors and presenters. In an average more than 4000 people participate in Infopeople training events annually. Training formats include 2 to 6 week online courses, as well as free one hour webinars.

ALA eLearning/Online Learning Center (http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/elearning/)

ALA eLearning covers library related fundamentals, advances, trends, and hot topics for all types of libraries. It includes information about webinars, courses, workshops, e-forums, etc. to keep the library professionals current. ALA divisions, offices, ALA publishing and other units offer new e-learning options from time to time.

Library and Information Technology Association (LITA) (www.ala.org/lita)

A division of the American Library Association, the Library and Information Technology Association (LITA) is the leading organization reaching out across types of libraries to provide education and services for a broad membership. The membership includes new professionals, system librarians, library administrators, library schools, vendors and anyone else interested in leading edge technology and applications for librarians and information providers. Programmes are offered for everyone from absolute beginners to hi-tech professionals. Continuing education is provided through workshops, institutes and an annual national forum. Guidelines offering practical experience with various technologies are published regularly. Through LITA's Web presence, one can discover a variety of services addressing trends and practical applications.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Forum of CILIP (https://archive.cilip.org.uk/about/cpd-forum)

The CPD forum is a national CILIP meeting which brings together the CILIP professional development group and the professional registration support network which supports candidate support officers (CSOs) and mentor support officers (MSOs). Together these groups work to provide development opportunities for CILIP members. The CPD forum supports the development and delivery of online training to support professional registration which will supplement face to face training. The focus of the CILIP's professional development group is to develop career development opportunities for all CILIP members throughout their career.

SLA's Click University (https://www.sla.org/learn/)

The name CLICK stands for "Continuous Learning to Improve Career Knowledge." Special Libraries Association offers its members many opportunities for professional development like participate in webinars, certificate programmes and annual conference to stay competitive and learn skills that are critical to their job satisfaction and career success.

Coursera (https://coursera.org)

Coursera was founded in 2012 by two Stanford computer science professors who wanted to share their knowledge and skills with the world. Since then, Coursera emerged to be a platform where anyone, anywhere can learn and earn credentials from the world's top universities and education providers. Coursera includes group forums, video lectures, weekly quizzes and monthly projects.

edX (https://www.edx.org)

Founded by Harvard University and MIT in 2012, edX is an online learning destination and MOOC provider, offering high quality courses from the world's best universities and institutions to learners everywhere. Open edX is the open-source platform that powers edX courses and is freely available. For librarians, various courses are available relating to public library management, marketing and public relations.

Continuing Education Programme/Resources for Library Professionals in India

In India, several information centres and academic bodies are doing commendable work in the field of continuing professional education. These institutions regularly conduct several short term courses in the field of library classification, library cataloguing, indexing, computer applications, digital library, multimedia, information and knowledge-management, collection management, content management, preservation and conservation and industrial information system and management.

Academic Staff Colleges (UGC): The academic staff colleges in various universities of the country conduct

refresher courses in specific subjects on recent themes for duration of three weeks. These refresher courses are attended by library and information science professionals working in colleges and universities. These courses help them in upgrading their professional knowledge with recent developments which they can implement in their work place.

INFLIBNET (https://www.inflibnet.ac.in/): INFLIBNET an Inter University Centre (IUC) of UGC runs number of training programs for library professionals. The major training program organized by INFLIBNET is to train library professionals in SOUL, integrated library software developed by them. It covers installation and operation of SOUL software. Minimum 5 to 6 short term training programs are organized annually by INFLIBNET. Besides these INFLIBNET conducts training programmes on:

1. "Content management system using drupal"
2. "E-resources management"
3. Cloud computing, virtualization and network management
4. Urkund anti plagiarism software selected by INFLIBNET centre for universities
5. Content management system using joomla
6. Content management system using drupal
7. KOHA: Installation and operations
8. Research methodology and academic writing
9. Configuration and management of digital library using DSpace
10. e-Learning: Content creation and hosting on LMS
11. Bibliometrics and research output analysis

The training programs conducted by INFLIBNET under continuing education program are resourceful and keep the professional update with the latest development in librarianship (Mete, 2015).

DELNET (http://delnet.nic.in/index.htm)
DELNET organized a series of training/orientation programmes in different parts of the country. The chief focus of these programmes was to make working professionals aware of the DELNET services. DELNET organizes NACLIN (National Convention on Knowledge Library and Information Networking) every year to train the library professionals. DELNET has organized 14 NACLINs up till now in different parts of India. DELNET arranges tutorials, workshops, lectures, and training programmes every year from time to time in various parts of India for the continuous professional development of library professionals.

NISCAIR (http://www.niscair.res.in/): National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) came into existence with the merger of National Institute of Science Communication (NISCOM) and Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC). Both NISCOM and INSDOC, the two premier institutes of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), were devoted to dissemination and documentation of S&T information. NISCAIR conducts 16 training programs for library professionals annually. The programs are as follow:

1. Information technology for information management
2. Library automation using KOHA – Basic
3. Bibliometric tools and techniques for measurement and evaluation of research output
4. Library automation and networking
5. Office sutomation
6. ABCD - A complete solution for libraries
7. Science communication through print media
8. Design and development of digital libraries using DSpace – Basic
9. Design and development of digital libraries using GSDL – Basic
10. Library automation and networking
11. Library automation using KOHA – Basic
12. Design and development of digital libraries using GSDL – Advance
13. Design and development of digital libraries using DSpace – Advance
14. Science communication through print media
15. Library automation using KOHA -Advance

NISCAIR conducts five week short-term program entitled "Information technology for information management" for the library & Information science professional in SAARC countries with collaboration with SAARC documentation centre, New Delhi. NISCAIR being leading institute of CSIR conducts training program on recent developments in information & communication technology and bibliometrics. It provides excellent facilities to the participants. The programs conducted by are useful for library professionals in acquiring skills to manage the library in ICT environment (Mete, 2015).

LIS-Forum (http://ncsi.iisc.ernet.in/mailman/listinfo/lis-forum)
LIS-Forum is an e-mail based discussion forum for library and information professionals in India. Discussion posts of LIS community from all over the country are available in its archive. It includes issues related to seminar, workshops, conferences, short-term training programmes or any other information related to continuing professional development of LIS community.

LIS Links (http://www.lislinks.com)
The LIS Links is a virtual community of Indian library and information science professionals. It is the first and largest social networking site in its domain and one of the much popular destination and huge gathering place. It provides customize services in various sub-areas of library science in the form of discussion forum, events, job postings, chat, and by sharing current awareness as well as selective dissemination information service to its members.

SWAYAM (https://swayam.gov.in/)
SWAYAM is a programme indigenously developed by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)

and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) with the help of Microsoft to bridge the digital divide for students who have hither to remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy. The courses hosted on SWAYAM are in 4 quadrants:

1. Video lecture
2. Specially prepared reading material that can be downloaded/printed
3. Self-assessment tests through tests and quizzes, and
4. An online discussion forum for clearing the doubts.

Courses delivered through SWAYAM are available free of cost to the learners, however students wanting certifications shall be registered, shall be offered a certificate on successful completion of the course, with a little fee. At the end of each course, there will be an assessment of the student through proctored examination and the marks/grades secured in this exam could be transferred to the academic record of the students.

Library professionals can join various courses through SWAYAM related to management of libraries, digital libraries, library automation, information sources and services, etc.

Conclusion

LIS professionals have a wide range of channels and ways to develop their professional competencies and manage changing technologies effectively. There are various programmes and resources available in India and abroad for library professionals for their continuous education and professional development. The important methods/ways for improving professional competences are acquiring formal qualifications, pursuing doctoral research, attending short-term courses, distance and e-learning courses, reading professional literature, tours and visits to well managed libraries, affiliation to professional bodies, attending professionals meetings, presenting papers in conferences and seminars, personal interactions with expert fellow professionals and web resources.

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