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# Preparing LIS Professionals for Leadership

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## Introduction

In the Changing scenario of Information industry and tremendous impact of multi-disciplinary disciplines, Library and Information Science has emerged as a multi-disciplinary subject with a fusion of educational technology, psychology, management, and information technology and computer science. The traditional roles of the library and information centres are no longer adequate to support the changed environment. It is seen in an academic and research environment particularly state universities and colleges; library leadership is lacking results an unhealthy environment that becomes an obstacle for development of an institution or library to achieve the desired goals. Hence, a new kind of leadership with new sets of skills and orientations is needed throughout the institution. This is not only applicable to library profession but also to every sector, particularly whether these leaders are chief information officers, Information technology officers, University librarians or college librarians with responsibility for managing an institution's digital resources and information technology.

Hawkins and Marcum (2002) states that the information resource and technology leader today needs to understand that his or her role is no longer that of a specialist but rather that of a generalist, acting and participating as a critical partner in the central administration of the college or the university. To do this, the individuals must have at least rudimentary knowledge of things such as grants and contract administration, endowment spending policies, intercollegiate athletics, financial aid and tuition discounting, and myriad other facets of the institution as a whole. Since all of these issues present problems and challenges, it is imperative that the senior administrative team in the institution be able to look at all of the needs, weigh the tradeoffs, and make informed decisions. This mitigates against the notion of advocating solely for the needs of the "stovepipe" that a given individual may officially represent. The objective must be to find an optimal solution for the institution, not to maximize the advantage for a given unit or set of units. He further reiterates that strategies seem to be increasingly important for effective leadership within the broad scope of managing information resources and technology are articulate a vision, aim to make a difference, share and accept responsibility, understand yourself, focus on multiple constituencies and take risks.

Library is a service oriented organization and service to the humanity has been the motto of librarianship to enrich and enlighten the society with nascent information. This is on par with other service sectors like medicine, wherein the treatment of society is done using information as a medicine. Libraries are social agencies and they exist to serve specific needs in our society. Today's librarians will work in a broad spectrum of libraries and

information centers, and must be able to understand and interpret an increasingly complex information environment; they must be able to collaborate effectively with other information professionals; they must be able to articulate the value of the knowledge and skills of librarianship in a rapidly changing information environment; and they must be competent managers capable of innovation, efficiency, and leadership as they meet the demands of their clientele. Krishan Gopal (2006) emphasizes the need for effective leadership and the identification of an important component of such a statement of leadership competencies in the societal, organizational, and competitive changes affecting academic libraries.

Leadership should be legitimately exercised at multiple levels and by staff throughout the organization at all levels of library hierarchy. This activity cannot rest solely with one individual. It is desirable that a variety of people in different situations exercise leadership regarding their departmental goals as well as broader mission and goals of the library professionals to demonstrate leadership "regardless of their positions. Although the practice of shared leadership is not new in libraries, it has to occur only informally because there are always individuals who are willing to exert leadership within and beyond their specific position assignment. The leader who can take role of a facilitator blends his or her role of visionary decisive leader with that of listening and empowering leader. As a facilitative leader he or she involves followers as much as possible in creating the group's vision and purpose, carrying out the vision and purpose, and building a productive and cohesive team. Facilitation can be seen as a leadership approach (Rees, 1998). Distributed leadership also means a departure from staff expecting that all decisions rest with the administrative staff to expectations that they will share in and accept responsibility for the directions and results of specific goals and the over all mission of the library. It might be helpful to consider shared leadership in relation to the concept of participatory management. Participatory management is based on the view that management responsibilities could be shared that is how organization implements what is envisioned for the future through planning, allocation of resources and policy development could and should involve staff than those in library management positions. In contrast shared leadership suggests that multiple people have value to contribute is shaping what the library will become by identifying innovative and imaginative services, building and maintaining sound relationship on campus, and taking personal responsibility for the overall mission and vision of the library.

## Literature Review

The concept of leadership roles for librarianship is felt essential during 2000 and literature on leadership or managerial skills started emerging. Fitsimmons (2009) discussed that managing skill sets in practicing the performance standard of managing people effectively and results found that individuals are more productive when they have the chance to use their unique skill sets rather than having to do tasks for which they have little or no skills simply because those tasks are part of a larger function. Pors (2008) conducted leadership survey in Denmark based on extensive interviewing of directors and staff members from 24 public libraries. The main findings supports some of the newer theoretical literature concerned with isomorphism, translation and diffusion of standards and recipes, namely that the variation is great and that some of the processes are heavily influenced by the organizational culture in which leadership plays an important role. Webb (2006) discussed the concept of leadership and outlined the key skills required of a Chief Knowledge Officer. Winston (2005) addressed the issue of leadership competencies as a part of defining the nature of effective leadership, the leadership qualities and areas of knowledge needed by those who contribute to organizational success, and the educational preparation needed by leaders.

Arora (2004) highlighted leadership skills and personal traits that were used successfully for transforming a traditional library into a hybrid library in precarious circumstances and conditions that exist in some of the organizations in India. It describes the management techniques, skills and personal traits of a leader that were used to motivate staff members to computerize the library, to improve library services and to transform a traditional library into a hybrid library. Unaeze (2003) focuses on the dynamics of leadership and management of academic library reference services and what is expected of the reference department head of the 21st century. It explores the changing roles of reference librarians

and those of their leaders or department heads. It examines the leadership skills, traits, and competencies and attributes expected of the department head of reference in the new millennium. Needham (2001) stresses several important leadership roles to play in creating an environment to nurture a successful transition of libraries into the new roles they will play. Among these roles are helping to create standards and protocols, advocacy, mentoring, creating heroes, and underwriting leadership training for new members of the profession. The willingness to take a leadership role presents several potential traps which must be avoided diligently, through humility and vision.

## Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to

- Determine the Leadership Qualities possessed by Library Professionals
- Barriers in building leadership mind set for Library professionals
- Elucidate the current challenges faced by Library Professionals in managing the Libraries
- Explore the leadership Managerial Traits needed for Library Managers and
- Determine any association between category of professionals and leadership skills of library professionals

### Null Hypotheses

The null hypothesis of the study are:

There is no association between category of respondents and

- current challenges faced by library professionals in managing the libraries;
- skills needed for present and future library professionals to manage and render information services to the users; and
- managerial qualities needed for library managers.

## Methodology

Survey instrument - questionnaire method has been employed to collect research information from library professional and Non-library Professional working in Bangalore city keeping in view of the objectives of the study. To elicit the research information pertaining to the essence of leadership qualities among library professionals, a total of 312 questionnaires were distributed library professionals and Non-library Professionals in Bangalore city working in academic and corporate sectors, out of which 206 questionnaires are duly received i.e. Library professionals (68.9%) and Non-library professionals (31.1%) with a response rate at 66%. The statistical tests are computed mainly Chi-Square test in addition to mean and Standard Deviation to draw inference and test the assumptions framed at 0.05 level of significance. The rejection of null hypothesis implies there is an association between independent and dependent factors and vice versa.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1: Category of Professional and Non- Professionals

| Category | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Professionals | 142 | 68.9 | 68.9 |
| Non-Professionals | 64 | 31.1 | 100.0 |
| | | | |

| Total | 206 | 100.0 | |
|---|---|---|---|

Majority of respondents covered in the study library and information science professionals accounting to 68.9% and non-professionals accounts to 31.1%. Thus the proposition of respondents covered in the study of library professionals is higher than non-professionals (Table 1).

Table 2: Leadership Qualities Possessed by Library Professionals

| Attributes | Not sure (1) | To a Little Extent (2) | To some extent (3) | To a moderate extent (4) | To a greater extent (5) | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Are visionary, able to describe what can and should be achieved in future | 2(1.0%) | 16(7.8%) | 100(48.5%) | 56(27.2%) | 32(15.5%) | 3.4 | 0.88 |
| Build shared vision | 4(1.9%) | 8(3.9%) | 68(33%) | 92(44.7%) | 34(16.5%) | 3.6 | 0.85 |
| Innovative and creative | 6(2.9%) | 12(5.8%) | 88(42.7%) | 60(29.1%) | 40(19.4%) | 3.5 | 0.96 |
| Able to identify emerging trends and change library's culture accordingly | 4(1.9%) | 70(34%) | 32(15.5%) | 54(26.2%) | 46(22.3%) | 3.3 | 1.21 |
| Get community recognition for the library services through marketing strategy | 8(3.9%) | 16(7.8%) | 66(32.0%) | 78(37.9) | 38(18.4%) | 3.5 | 1.0 |
| Value people as precious asset of the organization | 12(5.8%) | 6(2.9%) | 98(47.6%) | 44(21.4%) | 46(22.3) | 3.5 | 1.0 |
| Manage various sources for funds | 8(3.9%) | 54(26.2%) | 50(24.3%) | 64(31.1%) | 30(14.6%) | 3.2 | 1.1 |
| Value time and mange it | 8(3.9%) | 72(35%) | 22(10.7%) | 54(26.2%) | 48(26.3%) | 3.7 | 4.2 |
| Able to function positively in a political environment | 8(3.9%) | 12(5.8%) | 108(52.4%) | 64(31.1%) | 14(6.8%) | 3.3 | 0.83 |
| Show reasonably risk-taking skills | 6(2.9%) | 20(9.7%) | 92(44.7%) | 62(30.1%) | 26(12.6%) | 3.3 | 0.93 |
| Scholarship | 18(8.7%) | 74(35.9%) | 42(20.4%) | 52(25.2%) | 20(9.7%) | 2.9 | 1.1 |
| Motivate and encourage professional development of library personnel | 2(1.0%) | 24(11.7%) | 78(37.9%) | 56(27.2%) | 46(22.3) | 3.5 | 0.99 |
| Committed and dedicated | 8(3.9%) | 10(4.9%) | 22(10.7%) | 122(59.2%) | 44(21.4%) | 3.8 | 0.9 |
| Strong inter-personnel and | 4(1.9%) | 12(5.8%) | 26(12.6%) | 110(53.4%) | 54(26.2%) | 3.9 | 0.89 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| other communication skills | | | | | | | |
| Trustworthy | 12(5.8%) | 8(3.9) | 84(40.8%) | 50(24.3%) | 52(25.2%) | 3.5 | 1.0 |
| Honesty | 2(1.0%) | 58(28.2%) | 40(19.4%) | 40(19.0%) | 66(32%) | 3.5 | 1.2 |
| Caring for colleagues and subordinates | 2(1.0%) | 12(5.8%) | 22(10.7%) | 116(56.3%) | 54(26.3%) | 4.0 | 0.83 |
| Appreciate staff's strengths | 4(1.9%) | 12(5.8%) | 72(35%) | 66(32%) | 52(25.2%) | 3.7 | 0.96 |
| Tolerant to the criticism and/or fair feedback | 6(2.9%) | 66(32%) | 44(21.4%) | 56(27.2%) | 24(16.5%) | 3.22 | 1.15 |

Leadership qualities possessed by library professionals in the Indian context are measured in terms of five scales, i.e., not sure (1), to a little extent (2), to some extent (3), to a moderate extent (4) and to a greater extent (5). The results indicate that among the various attributes of leadership qualities possessed by library professionals, more than half of them indicated to a moderate extent are committed and dedicated (59.2%); strong inter-personnel and other communication skills (53.4%) and caring for colleagues and subordinates (56.3%). However the other attributes that accounts less than half are honesty (32%), caring for colleagues and subordinates (26.3%), strong inter-personnel and other communication skills (26.2%), trustworthy (25.2%) and others. Thus the average mean value indicated that obtained against each attributes of leadership qualities possessed are found to be at scale four or nearer to four are Caring for colleagues and subordinates (X=4); strong inter-personnel and other communication skills (X=3.9); Committed and dedicated (X=3.8); Value time management (X=3.7) and others (Table 2).

Table 3: Leadership Qualities Needed for Library Managers

| Traits | Not sure (1) | To a Little Extent (2) | To some extent (3) | To a moderate extent (4) | To a greater extent (5) | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Innovative; creative; Imaginative; and Visionary Committed | 14(1.9%) | 12(5.8%) | 96(46.6%) | 42(20.4%) | 52 (25.2%) | 3.6 | 1.0 |
| Professional; Have strong and timely decision power. Build shared plans | 42 (20.4%) | 58(28.2%) | 56(27.2%) | 46(22.3%) | 4(1.9%) | 3.5 | 1.1 |
| Develop team spirit; Adapts change; Open to new ideas; Articulate; | 2(1.0%) | 8(3.9%) | 20(9.7%) | 124 (60.2%) | 50 (24.3%) | 4.0 | 0.78 |
| Result oriented; High professional morale; self-confidence; Have and credibility | 4(1.9%) | 2(1.0%) | 32(1.0%) | 124 (60.2%) | 44 (21.4%) | 3.9 | 0.95 |

Leadership qualities needed for library managers to a greater extent are innovative, creative, imaginative, visionary committed (25.2%) and then developing team spirit; adapts change; open to new ideas (24.3%), result oriented; high professional morale, self-

confidence, and credibility (21.4%). Besides, respondents opined leadership qualities needed to moderate extent are to develop team spirit, adapts change, open to new ideas, articulate (60.2%) and result oriented; high professional morale; self-confidence and credibility (60.2%). As per the mean values, definitely, leadership qualities - develop team spirit; adapts change; open to new ideas; articulate (x=4.0); and result oriented; high professional morale; self-confidence; have and credibility (x=3.9) are greatly required skills (Table 3).

Table 4: Barriers in building leadership mind set for Library professionals

| Current Educational Curriculum | Not sure (1) | To a Little Extent (2) | To some extent (3) | To a moderate extent (4) | To a greater extent (5) | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teaching & assessment methods of current education system | 20(9.7%) | 16(7.8%) | 98(47.6%) | 44(21.4%) | 28(13.6%) | 3.2 | 1.0 |
| Inactive role of library professional associations | 14(6.8%) | 14(6.8%) | 48(23.3%) | 98(47.6%) | 32(15.5%) | 3.5 | 1.0 |
| Low Status Among Public | 4(1.9%) | 16(7.8%) | 66(32%) | 88(42.7%) | 32(15.5%) | 3.6 | 0.9 |
| Low Status among other Colleagues in the Same University/Colleges/Sectors | 2(1.0%) | 18(8.7%) | 60(29.1%) | 108(52.4%) | 18(8.7%) | 3.5 | 0.80 |
| Have developed low self esteem | 16(7.8%) | 16(7.8%) | 108(52.4%) | 34(16.5%) | 32(15.5%) | 3.2 | 1.0 |
| Lack of commitment on the part of educationists and professionals | 18(8.7%) | 18(8.7%) | 94(45.6%) | 58(28.2%) | 18(8.7%) | 3.1 | 1.0 |
| Lack of leadership training … we produce subordinates and not leaders | 4(1.9%) | 14(6.8%) | 110(53.4%) | 50(24.3%) | 28(13.6%) | 3.4 | 0.87 |
| Low profile profession in society | 24(11.7%) | 6(2.9%) | 54(26.2%) | 100(48.5%) | 22(10.7%) | 3.4 | 1.1 |
| Lack of Coordination among staff | 28(13.6%) | 24(11.7%) | 28(13.6%) | 56(27.2%) | 70(34%) | 3.5 | 1.4 |
| Vested interests & self – centered attitude | 22(10.7%) | 12(5.8%) | 52(25.2%) | 98(47.2%) | 22(10.7%) | 3.4 | 1.1 |
| Librarians have not developed themselves as a professional community | 16(7.8%) | 26(12.6%) | 32(15.5%) | 50(24.3%) | 82(39.8%) | 3.7 | 1.3 |
| Demoralized and depoliticized mindset | 28(13.6%) | 18(8.7%) | 42(20.4%) | 98(47.6%) | 20(9.7%) | 3.3 | 1.1 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Undemocratic environment and ban on student union | 36(17.5%) | 32(15.5%) | 38(18.4%) | 30(14.6%) | 70(34%) | 3.3 | 1.5 |
| Substandard education system at public schools and colleges | 22(10.7%) | 20(9.7%) | 106(51.5%) | 44(21.4%) | 14(6.8%) | 3.0 | 1.0 |
| Competent professionals are engaged in making extra money by engaging In double jobs or/ and serving as library consultants | 26(12.6%) | 18(8.7%) | 46(22.3%) | 98(47.6%) | 18(8.7%) | 3.3 | 1.1 |
| Followers of employer's policies and not leaders. | 30(14.6%) | 18(8.7%) | 56(27.2%) | 76(36.9%) | 26(12.6%) | 3.2 | 1.2 |

The possible reasons that hinder library professionals in building leadership mind set are presented in table 3 reveals that nearly half of them opined the barriers mainly are inactive role of library professional associations (47.6%); vested interests and self– centered attitude 47.2%); low status among public (42.7%) and demoralized and depoliticized mindset (47.6%) at scale 4. More than one third of library professionals to a greater extent indicted that librarians have not developed themselves as a professional community (39.8%); undemocratic environment (34%), and lack of coordination among staff (34%), which have been possible reasons that comes in the way of building leadership. Only 47.6% of the professionals to some extent feel the teaching and assessment methods of current education system also add the research problem.

As per the mean value obtained against each attributes that hinder in building leadership abilities are found to be near to scale four are librarians have not developed themselves as a professional community (X=3.7), low status among public (X=3.6) and lack of coordination among staff (X=3.5) (Table 4).

Table 5: Current challenges faced by Library professionals Vs. Category of Respondents

| Current challenges faced by Library Professionals | Category | Chi-Squire | Result* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learning Information Technology Skills | Professional | 36.430(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Image of Librarianship | Professional | 88.554(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Building better Leadership Qualities | Professional | 27.391(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| | Professional | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Managerial incompetence of Head Librarian | | 54.253(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Co-operation & Team work within Library | Professional | 49.067(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Budget for Libraries | Professional | 21.812(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Support from Teaching Library staff and Practicing Librarians | Professional | 87.707(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Higher Education required to manage Library | Professional | 56.577(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| On Job training and Continuing Education | Professional | 70.670(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Lack of Initiation from Professional Library Associations | Professional | 72.314(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Marketing Concepts for better utilization of library resources | Professional | 76.363(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Communication Skills & Commitment of library staff | Professional | 66.539(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Motivation and Promotional Benefits | Professional | 75.394(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| | Professional | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strength of professional staff and Information Technological infrastructure | Non-Professional | 42.189(a) | 0.000 |
| Lack of Total Quality Management Certification/ Library Standards | Professional | 72.035(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Need for practical Research and Innovations for better service | Professional | 69.162(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Development of Customer Oriented Services | Professional | 54.144(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Library Automation – a must? | Professional | 27.945(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Inactive Library Professional Associations in India | Professional | 78.082(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |

* Results are significant

The results of the Chi-Square test computed at 0.05 level of significance reveals that results are significant depicts the cross tabulation of Professional and Non-Professional with respect to current challenges faced by Library and Information Science professionals in Bangalore and is found to associated to each other showing relation between Current challenges faced by Library professionals Vs. Category of Respondents (Table 5).

Table 6: The required skills needed for present and future Library professionals

Vs. Category of Respondents

| Skills required by Library Professionals | Category | Chi-Squire | Result* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Information and Communication Technology Literacy | Professional | 76.363(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Management Skills | Professional | 13.954(a) | 0.007 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| | Professional | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership Ability | | 90.551(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Sound Knowledge of Library information science | Professional | 49.887(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Effective Public Relations, Communications Skills | Professional | 67.718(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Service Motto | Professional | 34.662(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Internet and Database searching skills | Professional | 11.523(a) | 0.021 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Marketing Strategy skills to promote information resource | Professional | 61.398(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Professional Commitment | Professional | 110.624(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Research Bent of Mind | Professional | 29.430(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |

\* Results are significant

Table 6 depicts the cross tabulation of the required skills needed for present and future Library professionals Vs. Category of Respondents. The results of the Chi-Square test computed at 0.05 level of significance reveals that results are significant and is found to be associated to each other showing relation between required skills needed for present and future Library professionals Vs. Category of Respondents.

Table 7: Managerial Traits needed for Library Managers vs. Category of Respondents

| Managerial Traits | Category | Chi-Squire | Result* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Good finance manager | Professional | 106.385(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Good time management | Professional | 61.398(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non- | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Professional | | |
| Awareness about international library standards | Professional | 48.253(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |
| Future policy making and planning skills; Directing and organizing skills | Professional | 172.795(a) | 0.000 |
| | Non-Professional | | |

* Results are significant

It is found for the table 7 that there is an association between leadership qualities possessed by libraries professional category wise professional and non-professional and therefore good finance manager, good time management , future policy making and planning skills; directing and organizing skills and professional and non-professionals of the respondents are associated to each other .

## Discussion and Conclusion

In an academic or a research institution, people work with certain duties and responsibilities confined to a certain area and limits, but where as the leaders see themselves not in terms of the functional units they head but as part of the institution as a whole. Thus the leadership plays significant role particularly library where group work and team spirit is required unlike teaching department wherein one can handle the classes as per their schedule. But the true development of libraries calls for strong leadership to discharge their duties for the common cause of serving users, as the library in-house activities are inter related to each functional unit of the library. The results indicated that requirement of leadership qualities particularly to develop team spirit; adaptability to change; open to new ideas; articulate (x=4.0); and result oriented; high professional morale; self-confidence; credibility (x=3.9). Most of the leadership skills possessed are found to be just moderate and hence, this has also an implication on LIS curriculum and continuing education and training programs being offered.

In the light of the findings, central administration of libraries is critical both to be personally effective and to make the institution effective. This new leadership approach requires the individual to be a partner in re-conceptualizing the institutional mission, articulating a vision, and forging the political alliances necessary to achieve the kind of change that is required to serve the users with utmost care and diligence, which can be achieved only through group effort and not in isolation. .

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