PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN LIBRARIANSHIP

Pradnya Kshirsagar *

* Librarian, SPMMV, Washim, Maharashtra, India

QR Code

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INTRODUCTION

A Library is a paradise for a pupil, a teacher and for all those who have interest in reading even it is just for the sake of reading. Some people are so fond of reading even when they do not have to enter any examination or competition that, they continue to read, and it is these people who also become and remain members of a library. This is the place where one can get unlimited stocks of books on any and every subject that may be of interest or need for an individual. A library is the place where one can spend hours of time fruitfully and filled with interest. One can learn so much by reading books authored by eminent writers and thus become knowledgeable.

This is one place of complete silence, attentiveness even though it is open to the general public. Isn't it just one plausible place where so many people can be seen yet, such silence can also be enjoyed? How can so many people sitting together remain quiet? This is the magic of a unique place that is - a library. This is because, the very ethics of entering a library is basically, the consideration of every individual entering - to keep quiet, and maintain the silent sanctity of the place. We find several libraries that have memberships that are open to the general public to name a few in Delhi are, the USIS Library, the British Council Library, the Spare House Library, and the huge Public Library. Besides these big public libraries, we find libraries in all schools,

colleges, which of course cater only to the needs of their own children.

Besides, no outsider is ever allowed in any of the Libraries of Institutions. The libraries of schools and colleges keep books that are relevant to the subjects taught in their institutions, together with an assortment of other General Knowledge books and magazines. With these numbers of books, the students are able to get all knowledge of their subjects plus general information which keeps them informed and up to date.

This habit of reading can be developed only if we get into the habit of going to a library regularly, and spending a lot of time there. That is the place that provides just the right atmosphere necessary for studies, and assimilating and retaining all the knowledge taken it. The environment in a library is ideal for the intellectual growth of individuals. The habit of reading can be developed in younger days when we are children. So, it is my earnest suggestion to all students to develop the habit of reading, which in turn can be best achieved in a library. In order to retain the habit of reading when we grow up is, to become a member of any good library, and then, to make it a routine in the daily plan to visit the library for at least some time out of the busy schedules. Reading is the best hobby we can develop, and the best companion to spend time. A library is the ideal place, and reading an ideal pastime.

ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN EDUCATION:

All over the world libraries are committed to provide free and impartial access to information for all, whether it may be in written, electronic or audiovisual form. Libraries play an important role in constructing knowledgeable atmospheres and encouraging literacy by contributing compatible and attractive reading material for individuals belonging to all age groups and all educational levels. They hold the social responsibility to propose facilities that established bond among social, political and economic barriers, and conventionally make a distinctive effort to spread their services to marginalized people. Libraries contribute in finding, using and understanding suitable information which open-up chances for lifetime learning, literacy enhancement, informed citizenship, recreation, creative imagination, individual research. critical thinking, ultimately, empowerment in an increasingly complex world.

Our civilization is experiencing a process of quick change, moving toward what is called the information culture, the knowledge culture, the network culture or the informational approach of progress (Castells, 1996; Inglis et al, 2002) refer to the following features of the current period: active and constant change and alteration; the letdown of great theories such as Marxism to locate and calculate directions of change; the discontinuous and unpredictable rather than evolutionary nature of social change; the association of various pictures of social, economic

and political life and the transformation of images like Disney world, TV sports and Web pages into the realities with which we deal. It is believed that information and knowledge are distinctive features of this contemporary society and the main driver of this transformation is the increasing use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

ORIGIN OF LIBRARIES:

The source of the ancient libraries can be outlined to human efforts in gathering documents. Preferred themes would depend on convenience, achievement, recognizing the tools for preparation in suitable order, the skill in books, getting hold of resources, their physical properties, their language and its dissemination, the role they performed in education, the level of knowledge and the funds. Other factors would include the areas of recruitment, directing unusual audiences, its devoted role in the development of the cultural legacy of the nation involved, not to express the participation of private support, the Church or the government in its matters. Digitization and computerization started playing a key role ever since its beginning in the 1960s.

The earliest library records could be traced to cuneiform writing 2600 BC clay tablets, the papyrus temple records from ancient Egypt, the Nippur libraries of 1900BC and the thirty thousand clay tablets from 700 BC in a classified library system in Nineveh, highlighting the honorable work on religion, management and literary skills of the Mesopotamian scholars that

will mesmerize the modern enthusiasts. Among these tablets was also "Enuma Elish" or the "Epic of Creation" that presents the Babylonian concept of the "Epic of Gilgamesh."

In India the earlier known libraries were reported at Puspagiri (3rd Century AD) in present Odisha, at Nalanda (5th century AD) in present Bihar, at Taxila (Takshashila) which exists in modern day Pakistan and existed back to 6th century BC. Further libraries were known to exist at Telhara, Vikramshila and Odantipura in Bihar; Somapura, Jagaddala in Bengal; Sharada Pith in Pakistan, Nagarjunakonda, in Andhrapradesh; Valabhi in Gujrat etc.

ROLE OF LIBRARIANS IN LIBRARIES:

In ancient era, there was lack of certain place that could be called a library; records were scattered and most of the time burnt by fire. Eboka (2000) classified records that formed part of early libraries into four categories:

- Temple collections;
- Government or royal archives;
- Organized business or economic records;
 and
- Family or genealogical papers.

Traditional librarianship is all about sitting down in the center of book racks and supposing people to come and read. If they do not come, then, the librarian closes library at the end of the day. This is the daily routine. But a contemporary librarian in the Digital Age must be

comprehensive in the storage, reclamation and distribution of knowledge with support of information communication technology (ICT). This may be through computer, internet, E-mail, CD-ROM, slides, teaching aids, telephones, as well the global system of mobile telecommunications (GSM), fax machines, etc. Archival resources could be stored on CD-ROMs for easy reclamation and spreading to potential users. Librarians can now appropriately store archival resources on CD-ROMs. CD-ROMs are highly harmonious with most computers; this means vital information can be conserved and retrieved easily when needed. Information and communication are genuine tools in the progress of cities and rural areas. Knowledge must be available to all; be it in the form of scientific, economic. technical, social, institutional, administrative, historical legal, or cultural information. In fact, information is beneficial only when it is accessible; that is, when users have access to it in the proper form and language. This means information must be communicated among different users with suitable facilities during exchange.

Ekpo (2001) reported that information is extremely important for individuals, families, government, and corporate organizations. Therefore, Information Technology, due to which it is easy to diffuse knowledge, has to be controlled professionally by librarians and other information professionals to escort users on their

information needs. Basic tasks of information professionals are:

- Providing information to users;
- Helping users to find out information; and
- Facilitating interchange among users of their services.

These responsibilities transforming them from armchair librarians to expert information professionals who now provide information services to users at different locations. The change has facilitated them to overcome the hurdles of place, time or format. Gone are the days when librarians supposed users to read only books kept in the shelves and go away. Thioune et al (2003) validate this, according to him ICT can be used to resolve diverse problems that impose difficulties to individuals. It also can be used to access precise information for different needs that are unusual to individuals.

FEATURES OF A PROFESSION:

It could be noted that before a discipline could be regarded as a profession, it must have some assets and morals. Hence, the general features of a profession are specified as follows:

Assessment procedure for entry into the profession

Becoming a member of a professional body is not intended for every individual; i.e. it is not for just anybody in the community. There are some standards that are used to evaluate any interested person in the society before joining a desired professional. Generally, before anyone could be admitted into any literary professional body, he/she must have some academic qualifications; that is, he/she must have graduated from the prescribed universities that undergo courses related to such profession. In other word, he/she must not be a nonentity, he must be learned. The membership doors of these aforesaid professions are not opened to just anyone in the society but they are meant for those people who possess the basic educations as members.

Nevertheless, these are the questions that might be rightly asked: what about those uneducated artisans that form association? How can we classify them? To us, we may classify them as mere group of individuals that share common goals due to their similar trades to earn a living. Lester (2010) identifies these set of individuals as semi-formal associations based on communities of practice and bodies that principally fulfill the role of a trade union, and 'paired' bodies

LIBRARIANSHIP AS A PROFESSION

Librarianship is a professional group that is associated with the accountabilities of selecting, acquiring, processing and effective distribution of information appropriate resources the information enquirers in order to satisfy their information needs. The profession administrator and curator of organized knowledge stored in a favorable environment or building known as library. This profession is one of the most important professions in the human race;

because everybody in the human society needs information at every stage of life in order to survive. This profession is a basic foundation that accommodates all other professions in the human race. Who does not need information to survive? To this end, Ranganathan (1963) opines that 'every reader his book' but we hereby assert that 'everyone and profession his/its information'. This implies that information is vital to everyone and profession; in fact, it is a life wire and bedrock of every profession.

Gorman (1995) reviewed the five laws of library science hypothesized bv S.R. Ranganathan; he reported that libraries serve humanity. They should serve the individual, community and society to a higher quality. He suggested that when librarians are making decisions on the acquisition of educational materials for the library, they should consider how the change will better serve humanity. Therefore, librarians should protect free access to knowledge. The library is key to information freedom. It needs to protect all records so that none are lost, and should be render to everyone in the society regardless of cultural settings and belief (Gorman, 1995). Michael Gorman in his book "Our Enduring Values: Librarianship in the 21st Century", provides a practical definition of librarian as a "person who earns a master's-level education at an accredited school and receives onthe-job training, as well as carries out one or more of the following tasks: Selects printed materials and electronic resources; Acquires the selected materials and resources; Organizes and gives access to them; Preserves and conserves them; Assists library users; Instructs library users; and Administers and manages the library, library personnel, services, and programs" (Gorman, 2000).

Moreover, the librarianship profession has a number of values attached to it in order to make membership of the profession to be more efficient in satisfying their roles as information disseminators in the human society.

IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARIAN PROFESSION:

According to Lester (2010), professional is someone who claims to possess knowledge about something and has a obligation to a particular code or set of values, both of which are equally well-accepted features of professions. In a related development, Wikibooks (2013) evident that values are essential to the success and future of librarianship: they embossed what is "important and worthy in the long run," and help to define librarianship profession. In a literature review on professional values in Library and Information Science (LIS), Finks (1989) categorize these values in four categories:

 Professional values are inherent in librarianship and include recognizing the importance of service and stewardship; maintaining philosophical values that reflect wisdom, truth, and neutrality;

- preserving democratic values; and being passionate about reading and books.
- General values are "commonly shared by normal, healthy people, whatever their field." Librarians' work, social, and satisfaction values express a commitment to lifelong learning, the importance of tolerance and cooperation, and the need to feel accepted.
- Personal values specifically belong to librarians and include humanistic, idealistic, conservative, and aesthetic values. He must be passionate towards people and reading.
- Rival values threaten the mission of libraries with bureaucratic, antiintellectual, and nihilistic (useless and senseless) ideas. Librarians must have faith in the profession's ability to do well (Finks, 1989; Wikibooks, 2013).

Furthermore, Wikibooks (2013) observed that in 1999, the American Library Association (ALA) formed a task force "to clarify the core values (credo) of the profession". This task force believed "that without common values, we are not a professional," and proposed the following definition of mutual objectives for our field:

- Connection of people to ideas;
- Assurance of free and open access to recorded knowledge, information and creative works;

- Commitment to literacy and learning;
- Respect for the individuality and the diversity of all peoples;
- Freedom for all people to form, to hold, and to express their own beliefs;
- Preservation of the human record; Excellence in professional service to our communities;
 and
- Formation of partnerships to advance these values (Sager, 2001; Wikibooks, 2013).

Nevertheless, Wikibooks (2013) reported that despite the work of this task force, the ALA did not approve a Core Value Statement until June, 2004. This statement represented a settlement between the task force and its critics. and took its 11 core values from ALA policies that were even now in effect. While the document of task force positioned these values about librarianship profession, the official ALA policy merely lists the values. The ALA's wording also consent its list open to other values as well, and lists these as examples of core values: Access; Confidentiality/privacy; Democracy; Diversity; Education and lifelong learning; Intellectual Public freedom: Preservation: The good; Professionalism: Service: and Social responsibility (American Library Association, 2009). Therefore. librarians must equip themselves with all the afore mentioned values of the profession so as to be efficient in their information disseminating roles; thereby

becoming more profitable to the entire human race

ETHICS

Simply defining ethics are the rules of personal behavior accepted by society. Ethics are also known as a 'code of conduct.' Our personal values contribute to the strength of our ethics with positive behaviors and positive attitudes. Having an initial idea about ethics let's elaborate what actually ethics is?

The word ethics evolved from the Greek word ethos, which means something like 'morals'. In fact, ethics is defined as the systematic reflection on what is moral. In this definition, morality is the total of opinions, decisions and actions with which people prompt what they think is good or right. So, in short, to think ethically, you need to thoroughly reflect on what people think is good or right. Ethics is not a road book with answers on how to act. It is only a exploration for the right kind of morals.

Ethics can be distinguish in to two kinds. The descriptive ethics is involved with the explanation of prevailing morality. It is almost facts. Descriptive decisions are therefore true or false. On the other hand, there is the prescriptive ethics, also known as the normative ethics. These divisions of ethics essentially examine morality. Hence normative judgments are significant judgments, they decide whether something is good or bad. People mostly examine theirselves with normative ethics.

The determination of what is right rather than what is wrong has been generally codified in the form of law, although not all situations have been, and can be, covered by any such codification. Laws are rationalized for the welfare of society; thus, any behavior considered ethical should also be legal in a just and fair society. This does not mean, however, that simply because an action is not illegal it is necessarily ethical. In other words, just living up to the 'letter of the law' is not sufficient to guarantee that one's actions can be or should be considered ethical (Schermerhorn, 1989).

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS:

The concept of professional ethics is partly comprised of what a profession should or should not do at work place .Every profession has developed its ethical codes These professional ethical codes should define the limits of acceptable conduct and give guidance to what kind of actions are regarded as right or wrong in occupation .

Professional ethics is a field of applied ethics whose purpose is to define, clarify, and criticize professional work and its typical values. Professions are characterized sociologically by means of their members' scientifically grounded expertise and their service ideal. Such a definition applies to what can be called classical professions. Their service ideal can be understood in reference to values that define the goals of their work. Every classical profession has its own service ideal associated with the typical value of its members' work. From the point of view of philosophical

ethics, professional work can be said to embody rights and obligations that are peculiar to each profession. Professional work entails also the virtuous character of the professional

CODE OF ETHICS

An ultimate profession organization must have a well-designed code of ethics to escort the general conduct of its members. It is a professional standard of conducts for members of a professional organization (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1998). Lester (2010) perceives ethics as a division of philosophy that is related with what is right, moral or fair. General ethical codes are in religion and philosophy; they can be characteristic in ideas such as citizenship and civil values, and many people would claim to have a personal set of ethics that guides their behavior. Most professions have some system of ethical codes that either takes the form of a code of practice or forms a more general set of principles that administers behaviour in the profession, with the code of practice unfolding specific behaviors expected in particular situations (Brussels, 2007).

LIS PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Code of ethics is one of the features of a profession. Thus, the membership of librarianship profession is being directed by some numbers of professional ethics so as to add trustworthiness to the profession and to avoid its members from involving in any unholy activities in the society. In the United States, professional librarian ethics are codified in the ALA's.

THE BENEFITS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS OF LIBRARIANS

There are three benefits of the implementation of the code of ethics of librarians, namely:

1. Fostering a high commitment to the profession of librarians Commitment is an attitude of self-adjustment firmly at the target that will be achieved by a person or a particular community. The existence of a code of ethics enables librarians to find something that should be done and what should not be done. With this librarians can demonstrate their commitment to keep working even though "probably" not according personal preferences. Behavioral indicators of commitment are (a) to adjust efforts that fit in organisation and do things expected, as well as respecting the norms of organisation, to obey the rules and regulations, (b) to imitate loyalty by helping others, respect and accept things considered important by superiors, proud to be part of the organization, as well as to care for the image of the organization, (c) to actively support, the organization's mission, (d) to make personal sacrifices, in terms of personal choice and decision that support the benefit of the organization even though decision is unpopular. This is consistent with the statement of Lasa (2013) that the person who has committed

- usually have the skills, willing to sacrifice in achieving the goals and working professionally, always looking for opportunities and take advantage of opportunities to excel and feel no urge to always improve performance.
- 2. Librarians are able to guarantee quality of information service for search implementing a code of ethics librarian can provide the best possible services to the patrons. Librarians are able to guarantee quality of service for the visitors and will protect the unprofessional actions. Adherence to the code of ethics is an instinctive obedience which has been united with the mind, the spirit, and the behavior of professionals. So, obedience is formed from each person rather than by force. Professionals feel when breaking their code of ethics itself, the profession will be damaged and the loss is their own.
- 3. Librarians play an important role in shaping positive image for the library. The image is an impression in the mindset on an object. Imagery is natural, although the present of image can be manipulated or purposely built for specific purposes. Positive image is a reflection of a performance based competency done consistently. In other words, what other people understand about us is actually formed by the accumulation of attitude, behavior, and how we express ourselves.

The occurrences of us to the public, in any form, through the process of time that, gradually, it will form a certain impression role in the public mind. What the community or the users saw, what they heard about us that is the image -forming factor in their minds. This can be understood by implementing a code of ethics, a positive image will awaken hopes of public confidence in the profession, in particular, librarians have eligibility to be equal with other professionals.

OBSTACLES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS OF LIBRARIANS

Based on research conducted by Suwarno (2014), there are some obstacles in implementing codes of ethics of librarians, namely:

- 1. The code of ethics of librarians is not popular. Unpopular is a term stating that the object is not recognized something well. Unpopularity of ethical code of librarian becomes barriers can be understood, as a rule can be implemented if the object, which is the librarian this case, to know the truth codes. The problem is the code of ethics that has been already owned but not all librarians understand.
- 2. Code of ethics inferior to policy of bureaucracy. The code of ethics created by librarians organization, which is a separate

- organization from the agencies institutions where librarians work for, means these agencies or institutions have their own bureaucracy or power system which is also in charge of the policy benefit making for the of them. Bureaucracy is an obstacle for the implementation of the code of ethics when the measures taken are not in line with the spirit of that of the code of ethics.
- 3. Unequal education of librarians. Education becomes an important element for a person's career in the world of work. The level of education is important to determine a person's level of understanding of something. This indicates that the unequal distribution of education of librarian constrains the implementation of the code of conduct related to the understanding and attitude of librarians to the obligations written in the code of conduct librarian
- 4. Librarians do not read the code of ethics because it is considered not important. Code of ethics of librarians are rules made and issued in writing. This means that to grasp and understand the librarian should read it. In fact,the code of ethics is known only its name, and most of the librarians do not pay attention to the substance. What important for the librarians is just working as good as possible and then counting points as credit score

- requirements to meet the standards for promotion
- 5. Sanctions for violations of the code of ethics is not decisive. A rule is created to be obeyed by the people concerned in it. Violation of these rules resulting in sanctions that must be accepted by the people who violated, and codes of ethics are made to be obeyed by the librarian. A number of informants in this study concluded that the sanctions against violations of the code of ethics has not been implemented. They assume that the risk of violating the code of ethics is not a serious risk and the resulting threats to the safety of one's soul, so that the Indonesian Librarian Association permissive attitude toward violations of the code of ethics is quite large.

There are number of ways where by library professionals can get sensitized about the ethical concepts. Library and information science departments can make it a part of their curriculum and students can get some knowledge about professional ethics while attending classes in the department .For working professionals, attending conferences and seminar on the theme of ethics can be a source of sensitization. Besides journal article, book review, podcasts, websites etc. on the theme of professional ethics can also be an effective ways of developing professional ethical features among LIS professionals.

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