

User Education in College Libraries

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Abstract— To encourage the use of library and to participate in the teaching and research programme as well as to become anucleous of intellectual gravity for the community it serves the, library staff provides various types of sevice. User education is one of them. User education is a comprehensive service and a process of making the user self reliant in locating , sorting , and repacking information. It is service by which we can promote use of libraries . For this library professionals have to orgnise , plan and provide user education efficiently and effectively.

Article deals with the the use of importance of user education in college libraries. Discusses in brief the essence of librarianship. Points out various newly emerging problems faced by users in getting library services.

I. INTRODUCTION

“A library is a collection of books kept for use. Librarianship then, is connecting a user and a book. Hence, very life of a library is in the personnel service given to the people.” The first law of library science enunciated by Dr. S .R. Ranganathan , the father of library profession in india . “Books are for use” is said to be the essence of library profession. He also visualized personalized reference service as the essence of librarianship. Libraries became an important centre of information for everyone. Subsequently the responsibility of the librarians has increased to ensure that the use of its information sources, resources and servies are maximized to benefits its users, hence the necessity for user education programmes. The general objective of user education programme is to design a system to teach potencial as well as existing user about library services, resources and search strategy.

Today, libraries and information centers attached to higher educational institutes are semi-mechanized systems. There is an exponential growth of documents, users and to some extent of staff. The inclusion of modern information technology (IT) in libraries and information centers such as computers, CDROM, telecommunication networks, multimedia ,etc. for quick, effective and efficient sevice as also posed problems to users. Though these modern information technologies have changed the way, library profession used to think and act, ignorant users should be guided to handle them.

II. COLLEGE LIBRARY

The basic feature of a good college library is its complete identification with the college in its strive for conservation of knowledge and ideas, teaching, research and publication. College library play a pivotal role in

providing valuable services to the academic community by selecting and organizing information resources that support research, education and extension activities of the organization. Education is the process by which people not only acquire knowledge, information, and skills, but also values and the ability to live and interact within and with social groups. Higher education contributes to human resource development in many ways. Institutions of higher education have the main responsibility of training students who participate in the development of the country.

III. WHAT IS USER EDUCATION

Necessity is the mother of invention. The above necessitating factors have given birth to the concept like "User education". The history of user education can be traced back to the imagination of professional librarians all over the world.

The following definitions will highlight what user education is

Fleming (1990) defines user education "as various programmes of instruction, education and exploration provided by libraries to users to enable them to make more effective, efficient and independent use of information sources and services to which these libraries provide access".

ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science "User education encompasses all types of activities, design to teach us about library services, facilities and organization of library resources and search strategy".

So user education is a program designed to equip users with the knowledge and skill to use library and information resources effectively and confidently.

IV. NEED OF USER EDUCATION

Eugene Garfield once said "that the scientists and technologists and the other scholars and experts waste time and money with their information needs because they do not have any training or awareness of the information provisions and library activities".

The need for the user education may be essential because of these reasons...

- In the information society a far greater knowledge potential is accessible than ever before and the challenge of the library is to make use of this growing potential. The need to be able to use of library and information sources effectively by the users has in many cases become more important than the acquiring of factual knowledge itself.
- Librarians need to identify and develop the new role that the 21st century demands of information professionals. While users require services that teach them how to locate and select information, they also need to develop strategies to use and interpret information as a basic skill to ensure their survival in the information age.
- Intelligent and responsible users of the information society should expect basic rights of access to information. Educational and training systems allow them to effectively execute such access. And though user education librarians can guide and train users.
- There is an enormous waste of resources due to non-use and misuse in all types of libraries. This presents a great challenge. Educating the user is the proper solution.
- Educating the library user improves the quality of use. User education aims to provide knowledge and skills necessary for user to find his way.
- A new library user would not be familiar with the ways of the library. He would not know rules, regulations, and services of the library. The tools of the library are not easy for a beginner to understand. There are many particulars about the arrangements of documents, the layouts of the various sections, and the kind of services being provided. All this requires some sort of orientation; otherwise new users might feel inhibited in using the library.
- There is a gap between what librarians build up in their library collection and what the user looks for. And user education programmes try to fill this gap.

V. USER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

User Education Programmes should aim to make all users aware of the information resource available, both directly in the library and from external sources and enable users to enjoy the search for information

UEP is “a procedure whereby students are taught to use library devices such as the card catalogue, bibliographical tools ,such as periodical indexes, subject reference sources etc, and to utilize effective search strategies in the library.

Designed and planned to focus on following components

- Library Orientation
- User awareness
- Bibliographic instruction
- Familiarity with the handling of Information technology

VI. USER EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR STUDENTS

Library brochure:

A library brochure containing all details of the library- its collection, various sections, services and working procedure-should be provided to the all the new users at the time of registration as a library member.Initially this will be a great help to the new entrants and ultimately help them to exploit the services of the library .

Display charts :

Secondaly, UEP should be display of charts,it will be more effective if it in a diagrammatic sequence instead of in lecture form.

Group Instruction :

The aim of an UEP is to familiarize the users with resources and services of the library. In the beginning of academic session library workshop should be arranged for the new comers. Library staff should be present in a condensed form all about the library and its services, with a suitable demonstration. It is called group instruction and will be more effective in library premises in presence of concerned faculty members “ While the teaching faculty have the central responsibility in the educational enterprise, librarians help them carry out that responsibility much more effectively and at the same time enhance it, while the two groups- teaching faculty and librarians can an should work together, rather one can do the others job.” To assure proper response to the teaching needs the library instruction program should be integrated with formal and independent studies .

Training:

Library staff well acquainted with these sources should be employed to train and guide the users. The users should be given an idea about the various sources either by a lecture or by a displaying certain diagrams. They should be encouraged to look up their own topic of interest. As far as technological devices are concerned, the users should first be given some tutorial lectures in classroom environment for handling the computerized devices, used in the particular library for automation. Further they should be practically allowed in the library premises under proper expert guidance to handle them and search for various information sources. This will slowly but steadily help the users community in long range to obtain electronic information through technologies, which are some thing alien to them .

Local Resources:

The next step in an UEP should be familiarize the users with local sources of information. it should include information about all the libraries in the area ,their collection, specialization, service hours, rules and regulations, networks and databases they are connected to, etc this will help them to understand concept of resource sharing, inter library loan,etc.

National Resources :

At the final stage the users should be given idea about national and international sources and services .This should cover, National library and documentation centers ; as well as international systems and services .

VII. USER EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR TEACHERS

The teachers not only have to teach but also to conduct fruitful research. Hence they need special attention from the library. They may be politely made aware of the steps in literature search, information retrieval, technical writing, interlibrary loans, etc.

These users are to be given effective user education programmes with the active cooperation of the faculty members. Cooperation between the library personnel and faculty will help to remove the misgiving about the library and library services. It is noted though various studies that even faculty members are often unaware of many library services that are rendered from the college libraries. It is all the more important to give services to the faculty not only for themselves but for the reasons that they are the greatest motivating force for the students and research scholar.

The objective at the faculty level should be help them to sharpen their knowledge, improve their ability, and develop their skill in the effective use of the reference and information tools, and arouse their interest in the documentation and information services ect.

VIII. CONCLUSION

It can safely be said that user education programmes should be made integral component of the college libraries in india now a days. These programmes must be done at the beginning of each semester, and in between also, if possible. The user education day by day is becoming an important aspect of information work on the use of information, which itself is becoming more and more complex.

Students joining undergraduate courses have no experience of using any large library either close access or open access. It is therefore, necessary to give them adequate introduction of the library, its use and importance in their studies. Libraries should try to inculcate reading habits at this initial crucial stage so that they will become regular and effective users of the future. Librarians help students/faculty in the learning process by guiding and instructing them in the effective use of the library resources and providing information required supplementing classroom teaching through reference and information sources.

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