Understanding the Importance of Continuous Lifelong Learning Programme for Academic Librarians

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Abstract: *Lifelong learning is activity of learning throughout life. It is continuous process with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies. The present study explores the participation of academic librarian in lifelong learning program. This paper examines weather academic librarian understand the need to participate in lifelong learning program and explore various learning tools used in lifelong learning programs. The article begins with an overview of Lifelong learning and its need for academic librarian, for their professional development. It continues with presentation of methodology and results, then summaries findings and concludes by reflecting on how lifelong learning program are gaining importance for continuous professional development in the ICT driven age.*

Keywords: Continuing professional development; Lifelong learning, Professionalism

I. Introduction

The advent and development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) have brought remarkable changes in every walk of human life. Libraries are not option to this. Every field of library activity is touch by ICT. Due to this the role of traditional librarian is also changing fast and the librarian are struggling to keep a track with this changes. Not only the role of librarian changed as information provider the new generation users demands are also changing fast. In this context library professional had to keep themselves abreast with the new working condition, professional responsibility, and cliental demands.

With the new technological advancement the users are king and queens, and it is the need of hour that the library professional should be able to serve the clientele with knowledge and enthusiasm. For this they had to acquire and practice the latest technology specially the ICTs. Contentious Professional Development (CPD) with lifelong learning is the only way to improve the skills and techniques involved in the profession.

II. Defining Lifelong Learning

The concept of Information literacy primarily used in the library field. Information literacy is "the ability to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information". In this view, information literacy is the basis for lifelong learning.

There are many definition of lifelong learning, According to Collins English Dictionary [1] Lifelong learning is "the provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfillment."

With the emergence of new technologies, the concept of Lifelong learning gain importance as there is drastic change in the way we gather and disseminate information. The Commission of European communities(2001)[2] defined lifelong learning as" all learning activity throughout life, with the aim of improving, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment related perspective."

From the above definition it shows that lifelong learning is ongoing process throughout lives which is driven by self-motivation as everyone participate willingly to stay themselves up to date with the emerging trends.

For every professionals lifelong learning is matter of sustaining themselves in this fast chaining world. Library professional is not optional to this.

III. Need for Continues Lifelong Learning for academic librarians

The modern ICTs have made radical changes in the conventional system of library activities i.e. information processing and its delivery. In this changed scenario, the academic library and its role, and the role of academic librarians need to redefine and redesigned. Library which is still a combination of past (print collection) and present (new information technology) is viewed with a new perspective. The skills and knowledge acquired by librarians through formal education and on the job tanning experience may no longer pertinent for carrying day to day activities in the technologically driven environment. For this the library professionals had to take up the challenge to learn and acquire new roles, responsibilities, make familiar

themselves with new technologies for rendering library services, by actively participating in continuous learning process of professional development. Then only they can effectively play their role as information professionals. Librarians as information professionals must understand the need for continuous professional development with lifelong learning by maintaining competences and learning new skills process as they are the active partners in learning process. There are number of approaches of lifelong learning for continuous professional development which include, workshops, short-long term formal / informal courses, seminars, conferences, publishing, attending refresher/ orientation courses. The success of any lifelong learning program is depend on the skills and strategies gained by the library professionals and make comprehensive use of it in day to day activities and to undertake continuous professional development as a continual goal.

IV. Objectives

1) To find out whether academic librarians understand the importance of participation in lifelong learning program

2) To find of out the use of various learning methodologies in lifelong learning programs.

V. Review of Literature

The role of librarian is evolving from traditional librarian to new age information scientist. Those librarians who understand the challenges face by this new role are aware of the expectation of new age cliental.

Blanche Woolls (2005) noted in his paper   continuing professional education to continuing professional development and work place learning that no one would question the introduction of new technologies as a catalyst for drawing librarians to continuous professional education. According to him CPE is needed to encourage more librarians to desire higher level position.

Sudhir Kumar (2006) is of the view that the CPD is not an end itself but as a means to an end. In his paper evaluating effectiveness of CPD and measuring returns on investment: a case study of UGC refresher course(India) mention that refresher courses along with paper presentation and attendance of conference and seminars are potential useful forms of CPD and their benefit are difficult to achieved by other methods.

Scope and Limitations

The purpose of the present research survey is to understand various approaches used by the librarian to keep them up to date with the change in skills and professional responsibilities. The scope of the study is restricted to 42 randomly selected libraries of higher educational institution offering Science, Arts and Commerce courses affiliated to University of Mumbai. Well-formed questionnaires were distributed among 42 librarians. The responses are received from 42 librarians. The response rate was 100%. This study will provide a broad spectrum of situation and importance of lifelong learning programs for the continuous professional development of academic librarians and will give new direction for further research to researchers and librarians.

Research Methodology

The present study is regarding continuous professional development of academic librarians through lifelong learning programs. Descriptive research design is used to analysis the objectives set for the study. The study is purely based on the primary data collected from librarians of higher educational institutions. To collect the data for the study Survey research method were used. For selection of sample stratified accidental random sampling technique is used. Well-formed questionnaires were distributed among 42 librarians. The response rate was 100%. After obtaining the questionnaires from the respondents the data was analyzed through simple percentage tool to draw inferences and presented in the tabular form.

VI.Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data are organized and tabulated by using statistical method, table and percentage. The Data Analysis is as follows

Table No **1.Question: No of Refresher Course Attended.**

Refresher Course	Responses	Percentage
0	10	24%
1	13	31%
2	8	19%
3	9	21%
4	2	5%
Total	**42**	**100%**

Table No. 1 shows that out of 42 respondent 10 (24%) respondent had never attend refresher course, 13 (31%) respondent attended one refresher course, 8 (19%) respondent attended two refresher course, 9 (21%) respondent attended three refresher course, 2 (5%) respondent attended Four refresher course. It's clearly shows that 76% of respondent had attended the refresher course.

Chart No. 1: No. of Orientation program completed.

As per the Chart No. 1, shows that out of 42 respondent 31 (75%) respondent had attend 1 orientation program, 8 (19%) respondent never attended any orientation program, rest of others have attend more than one orientation program.
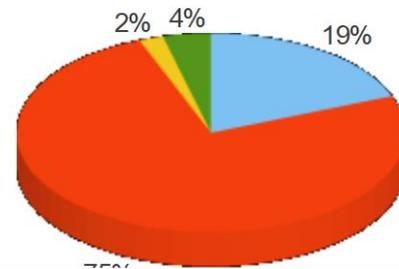

Chart No. 1: Orientation program completed

Table No.2 Number of National/State Level Seminars/Conferences Attended.

National/State Level Seminar/ Conference Attended	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+	Total
Responses	17	8	8	4	5	42
Percentage	40%	19%	19%	10%	12%	100%

According above Table No.2, 40% i.e. 17 respondents attend 1-5 National/State Seminars/Conferences, rest of other have attend more than 5 International Seminars/Conferences.

Chart No.2. Number of International Seminars/Conferences Attended.

Chart No. 2 : International Seminars/Conferences Attended
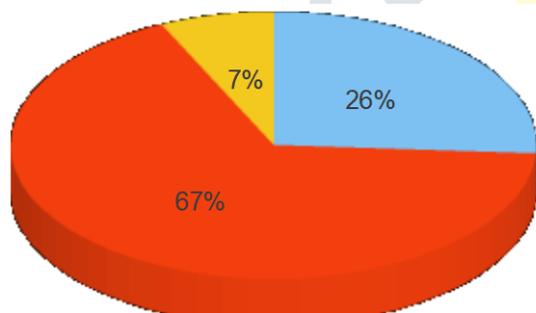
According to this Chart No. 2, 67% i.e. 39 respondents attend 1-5 International Seminars/Conferences, 7% i.e. 3 respondent attend 6-10 International Seminars/Conferences but 26% i.e. 11 respondents never attend any International Seminars/Conferences.
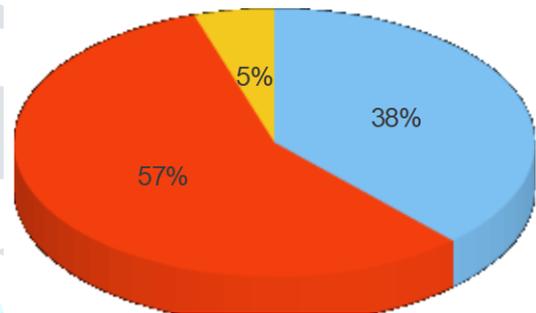
Table No.3 Number of Research Paper Presented / Publish in National/State Level Seminars/Conferences.

Research Paper Presented/Publish in National/State Level Seminars/ Conferences	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	15+	Total
Responses	4	16	14	6	2	**42**
Percentage	10%	38%	33%	14%	5%	**100%**

Table No 3 indicates that out of 42 respondents 16 (38%) are present/publish 1-5 papers in National Seminars/Conferences., 14 (33%) respondents present/publish 6-10 papers, 6 (14%) respondents present/publish 11-15 papers, 4 (10%) respondents never publish any papers and only 2 (5%) respondent were publish more than 15 papers in National Seminars/Conferences.

Chart No 3 Number of Research Paper Presented / Publish in International Seminars/Conferences.

Chart No 3 indicates that out of 42 respondents 24 (57%) are present/publish 1-5 papers in International Seminars/Conferences., 16 (38%) respondents never publish any papers and only 2 (5%) respondent were publish more than 5 papers in International Seminars/Conferences.


Chart No. 3. Research Paper Presented / Publish in International Seminars/Conferences.

Table No.4 Number of Workshop Attended.

Workshop Attended	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	15+	Total
Responses	3	28	8	2	1	**42**
Percentage	7%	67%	19%	5%	2%	**100%**

As per the Table No.4 shows that 67% respondent i.e. 28 attended 1-5 workshops, only 7% i.e. 3 of the respondent not attended any workshop, rest of other were attended more than 6+ workshops.

Chart No.4 Number of Short Term / Long Term Courses Attended.
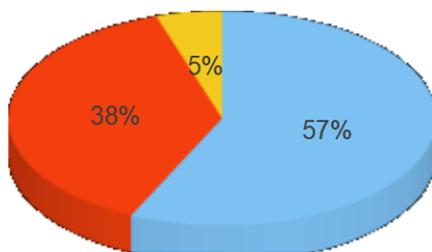
Chart No. 4.Short Term / Long Term Courses Attended

As showed in Chart No. 4, majority of the respondent (57%) not attended any short term or long term courses, 38% completed 1-5 short term or long term courses i.e.16 & only 5% respondent i.e. 2 completed more than 6 short term or long term courses.

Table No5. Number of Minor Research Project Completed.

Minor Research Project Completed	0	1-5	6+	Total
Responses	27	13	2	42
Percentage	64%	31%	5%	100%

The above Table No 5, show that Minor Research Project (MRP) Completed by the respondent. From the above table it has been clear that out of 42 respondent 33 i.e. 64% respondent never applied for the MRP, 13 respondent i.e. 31% completed one MRP and 2 respondent i.e. 5% completed 2 MRP.
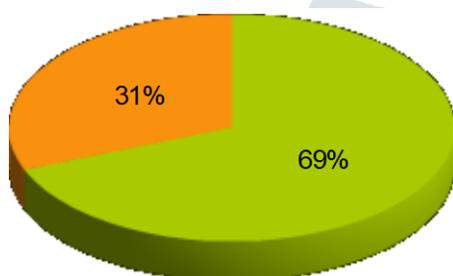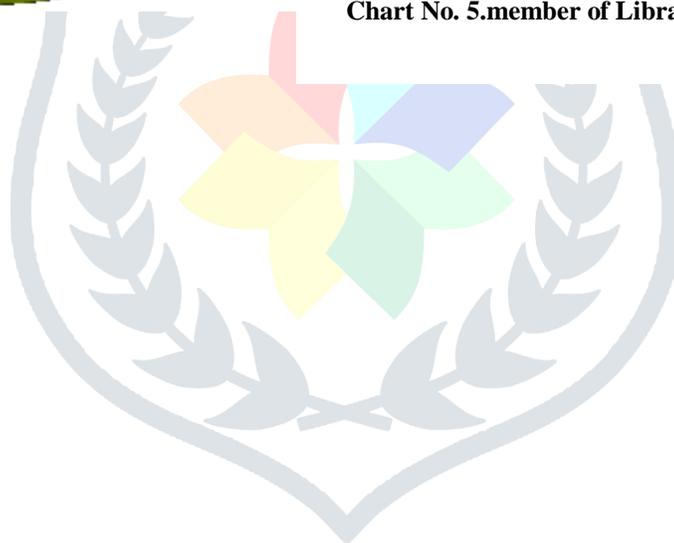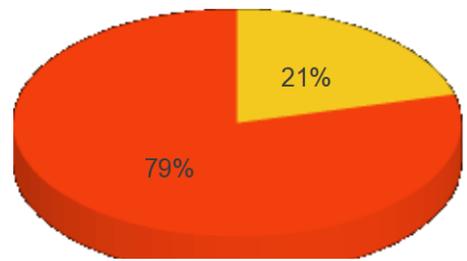
Chart number 5. Are you a member of Library Associations?

Chart no. 5 shows most of the respondent 29(69%) are the member of Library Association but 13 (31%) respondents are not member of any Library Association.

Chart No. 5.member of Library Associations?

Chart No.6 .Are you a Member of Committee other than Library Advisory Committee?

Chart No. 6 shows majority of the respondent 33 (79%) are the member of committees other than Library Advisory Committee but 9 (21%) respondents are still not member of any other committee.

**Chart No. 6.member of Library Associations?**

Table No.6 Number of training program organized by you for your library support staff.

Training program organized library support staff.	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	Total
Responses	15	24	2	1	**42**
Percentage	36%	57%	5%	2%	**100%**

Table No. 6 shows that 15 respondent never organize the training program for their support staff, 24 respondent organize 1 to 5 program for their staff, only one respondent organize 11+ training programs for their support staff.

Table No.7. Do you belief that participating in Lifelong Learning program will result in being up-to-date and competent in Professional Field?

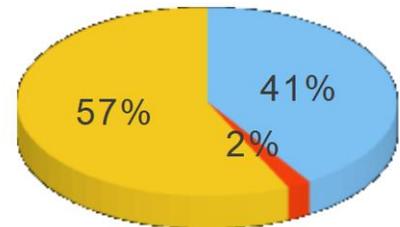| Participating in Lifelong Learning program will result in being up-to-date and competent	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Responses	9	33	**42**
Percentage	21%	79%	**100%**
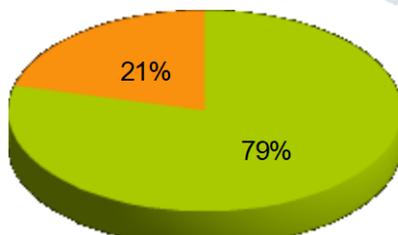
Chart No. 7. Participating in Lifelong Learning Programme will result in being up-to-date and competent in Professional Field.

T   Table No. 7 indicates that 79% i.e. 33 respondent belief that participating in LLP programs will keep them up-to-date in the professional field followed by 21% i.e. 9 respondent agree on the same.

Table No. 8. Do you belief that being up-to-Date in Your Profession will benefit in Promotions, Pay and Gives a Feeling of Accomplishment?

Benefit in promotions, Pay and Feeling of Accomplishment	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Total
Responses	9	24	1	**42**
Percentage	41%	57%	2%	**100%**

Table No 8 clearly shows that 57% respondent are strongly agree that LLP will benefit in promotion and pay followed by 41% respondent are agree for the same.


Chart No. 8: Benefit in promotions, Pay and Feeling of Accomplishment

Table No. 9. According to you what is the reason for not participating in Lifelong Learning Programs?

Reason for not participating in Lifelong Learning Programs	Duty Leave	Finance	Lack of Awareness about LLP	Lack of Motivation
Responses	24	20	14	8
Percentage	57%	48%	33%	19%

Note: Response – Respondent allowed to multiple responses.
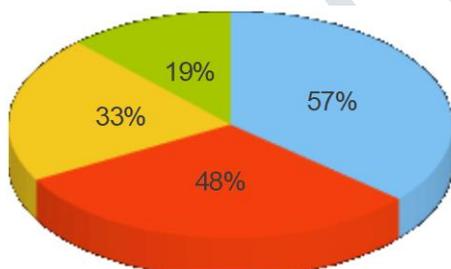
Chart No. 9.Reason for not participating in Lifelong Learning Programs

The above table clearly indicates the duty leave (57%) is one of the important reason for not participating in LLP program, followed by financial support (48%). Lack of awareness and motivation is also the reasons for not participating in the LLP programs.

VII. Findings

Findings of the present study are:

- Study shows that majority of librarians 76% attended refresher course but 24% of library professional not completed any refresher course which is a very high ratio.
- Fair good number of library professional 81% attended orientation programme though it is compulsory for high scale 19% of library professional not attended orientation program.
- 100% of library professional attended state level seminar/conference out of which 90% presented paper.
- Majority of librarian 74% attended international conference out of which 62% presented research paper 38% professional not presented paper in international conference / seminars.
- It is found that 93% librarians attended workshop that shows that professionals are interested in attending workshop.
- From the above study it is clear that there is lack of interest among professionals to attend any short/long term course as only 43% attended such type of courses as compare to 57% not attended any single course.
- It is found that librarians are less interested in doing MRP 64% as compare to 36% librarians had done Minor research project.
- For knowledge sharing and knowledge gaining it is very much important to build the professional relation among the librarian but study shows that 69% librarians are member of professional association still 31% of librarian still not member of any Library Association.
- It is the responsibility of the librarian to train library support staff the new advance techniques and skill that is required to do their duties in better way. The study shows that only 64% librarians organize formal/informal training program for their support staff
- The study shows that 100% library professional are understand the importance of Participating in Lifelong Learning for remain up-to-date and competent in their Professional Field and 98% are of the believe that being up-to-Date in Profession will benefit in promotions, pay and gives a feeling of accomplishment. This shows that the first objective of this study is achieved.
- The study reveals that not allowing duty leave is the major reason 57% for not attending lifelong learning program, followed by financial support 48%, followed by lack of awareness 33% and lack of motivation 19%.
- From the above study it was found that majority of the library professional are aware about the various Lifelong Learning programs for continuous professional development.

VIII. Recommendation/Suggestions

In the view of above finding it is recommended that academic librarian should update their knowledge and skills by attending more refresher course, orientation program, workshops, and short and long term courses. It is also suggested that, they should encourage to present/publish more research papers in national as well as international seminars/conferences. It is also suggested that university / academic staff college should give wide publicity to the Continuous lifelong learning programs. To base on above study it is suggested that at college level management should motivate their librarian to join the program by giving duty leave and other benefit for attending the program.

IX. Conclusion

The study focuses on participation of academic librarians in continuous professional development programs .Academic libraries today are confronted with growing competition within and outside the national boundaries. The goal of continuous lifelong learning program is to develop skills required to the delivery of high quality library services. This will succeed if library professionals start actively participating in lifelong learning. Through such kind of programs librarian are gaining greater exposer to mainstream of professional betterment. Librarians should be motivated to participate in such kind of activities for better services to their users and gain good competence in work. For this organization must support their library staff and make more and more continuous professional development opportunities available for learning and to keep themselves up to date.

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