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Librarians are the people having expertise in organisation of universe of knowledge. As long as printed books on library shelves and journals titles in the racks will exist, librarians will continue to exist. You will have books on shelves in 21st century also because you will still need to possess much of the material you are holding now and because you will need to support the browsing function, which is so important to the creative process, and most users will still prefer browsing in conventional books and journals¹. Most of your holdings will in fact still be in the form of print on paper, although the process by which it got onto paper will generally have involved a great deal more computer assistance than is the case at present.

Desk top publishing has invaded and librarians will face difficulties not only of bibliographic control but also the danger of poor quality material since authors will start publishing themselves and bypass the quality control provided by the refereeing and editing process. These custodians of knowledge already facing the problems of publication explosion will be in the stage of further confusion in differentiating and choosing for acquisition because pressures on library budgets would still be strong. Staff numbers will decline. Publications will get outdated very soon. Publishing, abstracting and reviewing process will fail to find the readers which the author intended to reach, possibly because the publication channel selected was ill-chosen for the particular information, or because the information was not yet ready for release. The potential readers may have been deterred from reading the publication either through shortcomings in their own ability, or through inadequate authorship or editing. Readers will face confusion to choose reading material and in faith on validity of what they are reading. Concepts will get obsolete and will no longer represent reality. Decision making agendas will undergo change and holdings may also get obsolete.

A book contains information whether current or outdated and whether it is read or not. Information is an asset and like other assets it is useless until it is put to use. Duplication in research publication and original contributions may become undifferentiated. Dilemma of what to keep and what to discard, and what to read and what not to read will create further confusion.

So long knowledgeable person was the one who had stored data and information in his memory and will

recall whenever need arises. In future, storage function of the brain will be relieved/undermined and will no longer be nurtured. Machines will store data, interpret and generate information and machines will be put to use for recall and retrieval. Dependence of man on machines will increase and man may be of no use in the absence of the advanced technologies so curiously generated by him to assist him for advancement.

Libraries would be equipped with CD-ROMs, a lot more micros with better peripherals, many more fax machines, cheaper and of better quality, smaller photocopiers, smaller modems, fewer typewriters but more word processors, more online services and a number of general improvements. The user of the library of the future need not be a person. The user may be another knowledge system or any intelligent agent with a need for knowledge. Library will have metamorphosis into a network of knowledge systems in which people and machines collaborate.

CD-ROMs are not suitable for material that needs to be browsed and scanned or that is heavily used. Authors want to be published in visible and not invisible forms. Readers want to browse and scan. Libraries can't afford double costs (printed and CD-ROM versions). Publishers won't produce what won't sell. However, CD-ROM is the medium for disseminating large amounts of data and full texts of documents at a relatively low cost. CD-ROM technology will become an important and useful addition to an arsenal of information packaging materials. Future CD-ROM usage will provide mass storage that is accessible by telecommunications.

Librarians are introverts who will be further affected by the virus of insecurity, professional confusion due to absence of standards and boundaries of duties. Change is unavoidable and one has no alternative but to welcome the change, cope up with the change otherwise accept extinction. Will you allow professionals from other disciplines to overtake your librarianship function or you will imbibe advancements in latest technologies and put those systems under your control depends on your decisions and actions today. Whatever you decide the production and demand for knowledge and information will continue to grow. If you get on your decisions wrong, then the users may suffer to some extent, but you, as a professionals, will probably suffer more, because most important factor affecting future of libraries is the librarian.

Aim of libraries will not be to have upto date information but up-to-the-minute information.² Accept the challenge to assist in making of a better informed world, a safer and happier place to continue dwelling. A growing role for the library would lie in information, coun-

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selling and individual training, advising the users on services and products appropriate to their needs, and how best to use them. Librarianship is a thankless profession although you were taught that is a noble profession. Your respect lies in your utility. Hence, master the change. Alter your behaviour. In an era of competition you will need dynamism in forward thinking and action. You will need clarity to see and seize your opportunities, and you will need energy to update yourselves and your profession.

No other alternative but encouraging continuous life-long learning, especially through well considered courses and programmes that foster continuous professional development.³ Maximise the profession's potential to influence the future of the issues that concern us. Persuade the best of your members to apply themselves to the development of the institutions as the professional body in your field. Exercise your influence in the corridors of power. Don't remain a passive observer. You may be good. But today goodness alone does not count. Marketing of your professional skills and grabbing the job and service opportunities by becoming extroverts is essential today, whether you like it or not. Nurture the highest ambitions and aspirations of your professional colleagues. Update your professional skills. Unite and stand yourself into a national level body of professionals to serve the society in the best possible way. Unfortunate thing with librarianship had been that before maturing itself into the cadre of profession, it has got fragmented and stunted its growth because of the overall inferiority complex among the practitioners.

I find lack of leadership in Indian library professionals. After Dr. S.R. Ranganathan very few have emerged who cared for the library profession. Cultivate the leadership skills and go ahead of all so that other disciplinarians will run after you to help you to enable you to provide guidelines for their social betterment.

Update your user profiles by various methods and provide them with selective dissemination of information and current awareness services.⁴ Let others feel your importance and need for the development of the organisation. Analyse your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and get ready and equipped yourself. None else can help you better than you can help yourself.

Acquire managerial skills like business analyses; systems analysis and design; network and communications; specific operational computing; information analysis; data management; project management; presentation, training and human interaction; and data and information sources awareness.⁵ Converge the skills and knowledge of a range of other professions in addition to conventional management skills that are recognised in public and private sectors. Encourage positive or rather aggressive thinking and activities to highlight your role in the present information age by upholding the recognition of information as resource.⁶

Library managers have wide responsibilities which

call for a mixture of specialist and generalist knowledge and skills if they are to make a contribution to the overall management of their organizations. Recognise yourself as leader. Nobody will recognise you unless you recognise yourself. Instead of getting extinct, evolve further by adaptations to changing environment. We do live in information age. To survive, either one tries to join it or perishes. Maintaining a professional approach to information management is very similar to running a successful business.⁷

We frequently handicap ourselves by our own self image. We see ourselves as technicians-information retrievers, system builders, etc., and so are viewed by others in this light.⁸ These are obviously useful skills, but they are not management skills. In order to attain a management position we need to believe in ourselves as managers rather than as technicians and begin to act in the appropriate manner. We should develop our career path with a management job as its goal. We are bad at advertising and marketing our skills and abilities. Indian librarians should apply 'Hybrid Manager' strategy.⁹ Hybrid Managers are managers who can combine knowledge and practical experience of business with technical competence in order to strategically and competitively benefit the organisation.

Research and publication activities are essential components and indicators of growth of any profession. On this count also Indian librarians are very poor. The survey shows that mortality rate of Indian L & IS periodicals is more than 50 percent.¹⁰ This clearly is an alarming situation for library professionals.

An unexamined life is not worth living. The same should be true of one's profession. Do it now in this birth centenary year of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, the father of Indian Librarianship.

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