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Paper No : 06 Management of Libraries and Information

Centres and Knowledge Centres

Module   : 06 Governance of a Library

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MODULE 6
GOVERNANCE OF A LIBRARY

I. Objectives

The objectives of the unit/module are to:

- Describe the meaning of governance and its need for libraries;
- Discuss the role of library authority in governance;
- Enumerate the principles of effective governance of a library; and
- Bring out the practices followed in different type of libraries.

II. Learning Outcomes

After going through this unit/module you would learn the meaning of governance and its importance and need for libraries; the role of library authority (ies) in governance; the principles of effective governance of a library; and the practices followed in different type of libraries, and role of IFLA in bringing good governance in libraries throughout the world.

III. Structure

1. Introduction

2. Meaning of Governance

    2.1   Relation between Governance and Management

3. Need for Governance of a Library

4. Goals of Library Governance

5. Governance and Authority of the Library

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1. Introduction

' Good governance' is the mantra of modern governments around the world. Good governance is a relative term which is interpreted in different ways, may be in regard to decision making process, implementation of plan and projects, measurement of economic indices or up liftman of backward classes of society and so on. In corporate world, good governance is about commitment to values and voluntary ethical business code of corporations. This includes the process of structuring, operating, and controlling an enterprise with specific aims of fulfilling its long term strategic goals. Many a times it is considered synonymous with sound management, transparency, accountability, disclosure of information, etc. The term governance can apply to corporate, international, national, local governance or to the interactions between other sectors of society. What includes good governance remains a point of discussion in inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental agencies and enterprises.

Good governance of a library is equally important as library is a not-for-profit-organization and the theories of good practices are equally applicable for all organizations including not-for-profit ones. But, to make it understood it is pre-requisite to understand as to how a library is governed. In general, it is an assumption that a public library is governed by the people of the local community or the municipal body. The academic library is governed by the parent body and the way the parent body is governed vitally affects the governance of the library. The library governance refers to the persons (or committees or departments, etc.) who make up a body for the purpose of governing the library. Such committees are of executive, advisory or ad hoc in nature. This module discusses the concept of governance, need and goals for governance in a library, governance and library authority governance practices in different kind of libraries and role of IFLA in bringing good governance in libraries. Let us now understand the meaning of governance.

2. Meaning of Governance

What is meant by governance? Is governance what governments do? Or is it more than that? What is 'good governance' which has been now in the public discourse for many years? What do we mean by 'transparency' and 'accountability' in governance? Several perspectives on governance have been presented in these years. Good governance is

an indeterminate term used in international development literature to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources. Governance is "the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)". (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_governance)

"Public sector governance refers to the way that the state acquires and exercises the authority to provide and manage public goods and services, including both public capacities and public accountabilities" (Levy, 2007).

UNDP Strategy Note on Governance for Human development defined governance as "a system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interaction within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way society organizes itself to make and implement decisions - achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interest mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. It is the rules, institutions and practices that set the limits and provide incentives for individuals, organizations and firms" (UNDP, 2007).

"Governance is distinct from government, and is the process through which various stakeholders articulate their interests, exercise their rights, and mediate their differences" (Debroy, 2004).

Tenth Five Year Plan stated that "Governance relates to the management of all such processes that, in any society, define the environment which permits and enables individuals to raise their capability levels, on one hand, and provide opportunities to realize their potential and enlarge the set of available choices, on the other" (Planning Commission, 2008)

Tandon (2002) defined governance as "the joint responsibility of the state, market and citizens to mobilize public resources and promote public decision-making towards the advancement of common public good."

Thus, governance is about defining and prioritizing public goods, institutional mechanisms and structures for delivery of those public goods, and processes by which such structures and mechanisms operate. It focuses on articulation of interest by various stakeholders, specially the hitherto excluded and the marginalized. It recognizes that differences among various interests around public goods, and the preferred modes of

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delivering the same, would necessarily exist in a democratic polity, and it, therefore, lays emphasis on negotiated and dialogical approaches to dealing with those differences.

2.1   Relation between governance and management

The role of governance and management of an enterprise is immense in attaining its objectives. Many a times these two terms are compared and distinguished. But, these are interlinked and interdependent.

Governance concerns the structures, functions, processes, and organizational traditions that have been put in place within the context of a program's authorizing environment "to ensure that the [program] is run in such a way that it achieves its objectives in an effective and transparent manner." It is the "framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organizations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives." Good governance adds value by improving the performance of the program through more efficient management, more strategic and equitable resource allocation and service provision, and other such efficiency improvements that lend themselves to improved development outcomes and impacts. It also ensures the ethical and effective implementation of its core functions.

Management concerns the day-to-day operation of the program within the context of the strategies, policies, processes, and procedures that have been established by the governing body. Whereas governance is concerned with "doing the right thing," management is concerned with "doing things right." The boundary between governance and management is not hard and fast. In particular, both the maturity and the size of the program will influence the dividing line and the degree of separation between the program's governance and management structures. Lessmature programs may take time to establish formal governance mechanisms. Smaller programs with limited staffing and financial resources may tend to blend responsibilities between those who govern and those who manage, and to call on governing body members to be more involved in specific day-to-day management decisions. The extent of governance should be proportionate to the size of the program in order not to result in an over-governed and under-performing program.

The distinction between governance and management has been described in the following manner:

- Governance is a concern for the basic purpose of the organisation or 'large picture' rather than details of its parts. It involves measurement of outcomes or results rather than the way in which these are achieved.
- Governance is about the ends while management is about the means of organizational operation.
- Governance is 'hands off'; management is 'hands on'.
- Governance is about approving policy and goals. Management is concerned with ensuring that the policies are followed and the goals achieved.
- Above all, governance is fundamentally about relationships. The major determinant of success relates to human capital factors, such as the mix of skills and knowledge on the Board and its alignment to organizational needs at a given time.

Although there may be a well-developed appreciation of governance issues and the allocation of responsibilities between the governing body and the head of the library, it is important to continue to test and enhance this understanding. The governance is concerned with the orderly development of the library to take place in a most effective way whereas management deals with day to day problem of the staff and operations and management is concerned running of the library. Good governance can look at the relationship between the authorities and the employees, authorities and the users, authorities and the fund providers, authorities and the government, and relations with other library authorities. Governance is not merely set of documents administering the library nor it is set of decisions or precedents set by the authority. It is these, plus combination of written and adopted constitution and body of experiences develop to express the concepts in the charter.

3. **Need for Governance of a Library**

Governance is a framework set by an authority (generally referred as the library committee in case of public libraries) to direct the library as an organization that identifies the process of conducting business of the authority, delegation of powers, and processes and policies to achieve accountability in achieving the objectives of a library. It is different from management, as the library committee does not run the library but ensures that it is run properly. In many countries, such authority is known as Governing Board, Board of Trustees, Board of Management, Executive Committee, etc.

Generally, governance of a library allows the library to clarify about its mission, organizational structure, goals and objectives and developments taking place of a library, and to make the necessary documentation so that stakeholders are convinced about the activities undertaken by the library for the benefits of its user community. There is always need for a working document that provides a basis for the work done by the library. Such document may provide a baseline and guidance for services and facilities, information resource development, operational procedures, membership, privacy policies, copyright issues and the like, the day to day and long-range goals of the library. But in absence of such documents the governance of a library remains subjective and may differ with the authority which control or advises or manages the library.

The National Knowledge Commission recommendations address the issue of the governance and ask for the greater community involvement in the governance of the libraries. It recommends that "It is necessary to involve different stakeholders and user groups in the managerial decision-making process of libraries. Public libraries must be run by local self-government through committees representing users of the library. These committees should ensure local community involvement and should be autonomous enough to take independent decisions to conduct cultural and educational community based programmes. Libraries should integrate with all other knowledge-based activities in a local area to develop a community-based information system. In rural areas, the responsibility for village libraries and community knowledge centres must lie with the Panchayats. These should be set up in school premises or close to them."

4.   **Goals of Library Governance**

Good governance involves far more than the power of the state or the strength of political will. The rule of law, transparency, and accountability are not merely technical questions of administrative procedure or institutional design. They are outcomes of democratizing processes driven not only by committed leadership, but also by the participation of, and contention among, groups and interests in society—processes that are most effective when sustained and restrained by legitimate, effective institutions.

Governance is an agenda of modern enterprise as it may help to manage the enterprise effectively, therefore, there is a need for clear cut mentions in the enterprise documents about the establishment of the enterprise, its purpose, legal framework, funding, planning, and reporting for the governance, so that enterprise is effectively managed.

Governing bodies of a library can perform the following key functions:

- Establishing The Legal and Policy Framework: The role of the authority, its composition, tenure of members, roles, etc. must be clearly spelt out in the respective laws and regulations of the library. The governance questions may be: Whether guiding principles for governing the library have been spelled out? Whether there is any board or council in the act/ordinances/statues to govern the library? What is the mechanism to fill in vacant positions of the board/ council members? Is there any criteria defined to select the board/committee members? Whether the role of the head of the governing council/ board has been defined? What is the relation with the Executive head with the governing council and its head? What are the meeting requirements of the board? , etc.

- Clarity of Mission and plans: There should be written mission statement of the library with a clear-cut plan to achieve the mission. The governance questions may include: Is there a solid governance framework that includes by-laws, policy and an achievable plan that is based on why the library exists? What it is that needs to be achieved?

- Policy making and mobilizing resources: The library authority's major role lies with the policy making and resources mobilization. Effective use of resources, therefore, makes sure it works and keeps it in shape. The governance questions may include: Does the library's planning address both short-and medium-term horizons? Does the library's plan articulate with the university's strategy? Is an appropriate annual implementation plan in place? Is this supported by appropriate financial resources and robust project frameworks? Where and how to get the resources that are needed?

- Effective bondage between the Authority and the Managers and Staff: There should be clarity of the functions and relationship of the authority and the managers and the staff of the library. The governance questions may include: Does the university's HR strategy support library needs? Do we have a succession planning framework? Are we identifying, supporting and developing our star performers? Do we have effective equality and diversity policies? Are we investing sufficiently in staff development? Do we have effective staff review procedures?

- Decision making: The library authority makes decisions on behalf of the stakeholders with regard to resources, facilities and services. Governance related questions may include: whether new services for children have to be started? Whether focus of the collection development should be on print or electronic resources? How much of the bandwidth needs to be subscribed to facilitate high speed internet access? Whether new staff is to be employed to strengthen customer service in the library?

- Taking stock of the achievements from time-to-time: Library authority has to take a look of the implementation of the policies and affectivity of the decision in regard to achievements set forth by it for the benefit of the user community. Governance related questions may include: Has the Committee conducted a self-assessment of its performance? How does it fit into university governance? Is it expected to report regularly and actively? Are processes for refreshing membership effective? Are members trained? Are communications between the Library and committee members effective? Do members understand the Library's management structure and systems? Do members provide independent review of risk strategies etc? Do our facilities meet student expectations? Do they contribute to attracting high quality staff? Are we investing annually to maintain and improve facilities? Are high-cost space and facilities adding value to the university? Are we duplicating facilities on campus unnecessarily?

5. **Governance and Authority of the Library**

In the instances searched, governance was in place in some form – bylaws, articles, etc. – if not directly searchable. In public settings, the term tracked to documents dealing with how it was organized – membership in committees, meeting occurrence, community representation, etc. This appears to vary from the size of the body and the library involved. Size does matter, in both holdings and community.

In governing a library, the library authorities make decisions with regard to various aspects of planning, operations and management of a library. The powers and functions of such authority are attained differently in various kind of libraries Higher education libraries have such provisions in their handbook and procedures in the form of statutes and rules. In public library, provisions for library authority can be found in laws passed by the Government in the form of bylaws, articles comprising of its constitution, terms of reference, membership, tenure, conduct of meetings, community representation, etc.

Power of governance resides in the body which is responsible for overall development of a library. Many of the authorities involved in governance are appointed, volunteers, or are involved as part of their employment, etc.

In University library, it is based on the statutes and ordinances adopted by the governing body of a university. The statutes made in accordance with the policy enunciated by the university act would determine the status of the librarian in the general set up of the university and provide for its organization and administration.

In public library, laws enacted by a state legislature forms the legal basis for the establishment, maintenance and governance of the public library. In India, the public libraries were formerly under the ministry of education but now it is under the ministry of culture.

In a special library run by a company or industry, there may be no legal basis of library governance. The library concerned may be their internal matter and the librarian may be at the mercy of the higher authorities of the concerned organization. There may be no prescribed rules, regulations, etc.

The word "authority" implies a person having the power to do something, the power being derived from his office or character or prestige. A person having power is authorized by a competent agency / authority to carry out a certain job. The purpose of granting authority is to allow him / her to perform some kind of service by means of administrative process.

i. College Library

In a college, the Board of Management is the authority and college librarian is directly answerable to the principal.

ii. University Library

In Indian Universities, the Executive Council (EC) is the library authority. In actual practice, many powers are delegated by EC to the Vice Chancellor (VC). So, the librarian is directly answerable to the VC.

iii. Public Library

In a public library, the Directorate of Library Services or Local or State Library Authority is the library authority or otherwise a library board might be the authority. The librarian is responsible to the board. In case of a public library, where there is

library legislation, it is mentioned in the library act as to who will be the library authority. But when there is no library legislation, then the Director of Library Services will be the library authority.

iv. **Special Library**

The Board of Directors or Board of Trustees of the parent body is the authority. The librarian is answerable to the Managing Director or some other senior officer and in practice the situation differs from library to library.

5.1 Types of library committees

There are mainly two types of library committees

- **Executive Committee:** This committee is most powerful as it has full power over those matters which are delegated to them by the library authority. So the decision of the library executive committee is final and mandatory. It need not report its decision to the library authority.

- **Advisory or Recommendatory Committee:** It simply gives proposals which are subject to the approval of the library authority.

- If we go deep into the history of library committees we will also find some other types of library committees. These are as follows:

- **Self Perpetuating Committee:** These committees have the sole authority and independence as regards the control and management of the library under it. It does not have to report to any other higher body about its activities.

- **Adhoc Committee (Statutory Committee):** It has the advantage of being independent of politics. It takes decision expeditiously. This committee is more or less independent. The Madras Public Library Act of 1948 provides the appointment of such a committee. This type of committee serves as library authority.

- **Nominated/Elected Committee:** A large committee or an authority nominates or elects a smaller body for looking after certain bodies under it. It delegates certain power to such smaller bodies or committees.

- **Recommending Committee:** It does not have any real power except that it simply gives certain proposals which are subject to the approval of the library authority.

- **Reporting Committee:** This committee has sufficient powers to decide the matters within certain limit. Such decision needs no confirmation of the supreme authority but the decision is to be reported to the latter for information.

5.2 Powers and functions of library committee

Powers and functions of a library committee vary according to its nature. In case of the Executive Committee, the powers, functions and responsibilities are more whereas in case of a recommending committee, these will be narrowed to a great extent. Almost all the proposals for discussion at the library committee meetings are put forth by the librarian who generally acts as an ex-officio secretary to the committee. The library committees generally serve the following purposes.

- **Library Building:** Library committee plays a great role in the construction of the library building and also makes necessary arrangements for the maintenance of the library building.

- **Library Furniture and Fittings:** Library committee ensures the availability of the adequate and proper standard furniture so that in future any number of identical articles may be added without any wastage of money or space.

- **Library Staff:** A library committee employs the qualified and adequate library staff for the library.

- **Library Rule:** It frames a set of library rules and keeps them up-to-date.

- **Library Finance:** The librarian not being an elected representative of the people cannot successfully appeal for more fund allocation for the library. But the committee being a representative body of the people can successfully and convincingly appeal for more funds. The committee can also allocate the funds for the library.

- **Library Collections:** A library committee may appoint a sub-committee to serve as book selection committee so that the lists of books are thoroughly scrutinized to avoid the purchase of undesirable books.

- **Library Accounts and Audits:** A library committee provides the proper machinery for checking the library accounts. It may appoint an account sub-committee for auditing the accounts.

- **Standard Library Service:** A library committee put in its best efforts to secure full coverage and standard library services to the users.

- **Library co-operation:** A library committee finds out ways and means of securing co-operation between various branches within a locality and between other authorities.

- **Supervision and Advice:** Public functions are best performed by a committee of persons who may be elected or nominated out by the people themselves as such the library committees also supervise and advise the librarian in matters on which public participation is essential.

- **Buffer Agency:** The committee serves as a buffer agency and an interpreter of the needs of the library to the community, controlling and guiding the library activities. In the absence of a library committee the librarian would find himself defenseless and unprotected.

5.3 Formation of a library committee

Soon after the decision of establishing a library, it is beneficial to have a library committee which can draw the objectives, short and long term goals, and make a plan to achieve the objectives and goals. It should be reflected in the constitution of the committee that the committee represents the people the library will serve. For a public library, it could include people from all segments of the society, namely, teachers, students, professionals, workers, community leaders, mothers, elderly people and others who have an interest in the library and others whom interest is to be created.

Once the Committee is formed, there is a need to decide how to structure it. The members' strength and category should be decided and mentioned clearly. In a committee, there could be officers of the committee, like: president (sometimes called the chairperson), vice president, secretary and treasurer. The tenure of the committee could be for one or more years, but tenure of the committee, required number of meetings in a year, minimum and maximum time gap in the meetings should be to clearly mention.

There could be provisions for honoring people who are doing a good job by re-electing them, and allows people to leave office gracefully when they no longer wish to serve. It also ensures that the officer's change regularly, which gives more people a chance to serve. Here are some basic "job descriptions" for the different offices:

The President is the chief officer of the committee. He/she runs the meetings, decides on the agenda and keeps order. The president should make sure that discussions are kept to the point and that everyone has a chance to participate. He/she works with the committee to set policies, recruit librarians, make reports and oversee the finances of the library.

The Vice President takes place of the   president when he/she is not there and does any other duties assigned by the committee.

The Secretary keeps notes on what happens during all the meetings. These should include who were present, what was discussed and any decisions that were made. He/she should be able to write clearly and summarize discussions.

The Treasurer is responsible for the library's finances. He/she distributes funds according to the decisions of the committee and should report all income or expenses to the committee.

Regardless of the committee structure chosen, it is wise to have a set of written guidelines that describe how the committee works. Sometimes these guidelines are called a constitution or bylaws. Their purpose is to make sure that the committee does things in a consistent and fair way.

Here is a list of things to consider when writing the guidelines:

Composition of Committee: How many people should serve on the committee? It is fine to give a general range, such as- How will members be selected for the committee? Will the whole community elect them or will they be chosen by someone? Sometimes, the initial leaders of the library project choose or appoint core committee members who then elect other members. If there are certain people who have to be always on the committee, like the librarian, head of the school, president of the community development committee or others, it has to be included in the guidelines.

Decision making process: How will decisions be made? Will you try to reach a solution everyone agrees on (a consensus) or will you discuss different viewpoints and then vote? Each method has advantages and disadvantages. Deciding by consensus ensures that everyone agrees, but it may take a very long time, and in some cases, it may not be possible. Voting is quick, but people on the losing side may feel dissatisfied.

Meetings of the Committee: How many members of the committee need to be present at a meeting for a decision to be official? This number is called a quorum and it is usually at least half the members plus one. It is important to decide this number because you don't want only one or two members to be able to make decisions for the whole committee. Pick a number that seems reasonable. If you require too many members to be present, you may never have enough to make an official decision. If you require too few to be present, a small group may end up making all the decisions. Under what circumstances will members are asked to leave the committee? For example, you might decide that people who miss three meetings in a row will be expelled.

Finally, how will changes be made to the committee guidelines? These rules are not meant to be absolute laws. Leaving outdated or unpractical rules in the guidelines can lead to arguments and confusion, so be sure to have a procedure for making changes.

Establishing a library committee and writing the guidelines are major steps toward making the library a success! Having a committee ensures that the library will reflect the needs of the community, and writing guidelines ensures that the committee has clear rules for action. There is always a need of reviewing the efforts of the governing body as to what extent it has been able to achieve the goal set for a particular time.

- Has the Committee conducted a self-assessment of its performance?

- How does it fit into university governance?

- Is it expected to report regularly and actively?

- Are processes for refreshing membership effective?

- Are members trained?

- Are communications between the Library and committee members effective?

- Do members understand the Library's management structure and systems?

- Do members provide independent review of risk strategies, etc?

5.4   Examples of Library committee

Example-1

IIT Roorkee

As the Library has to cater to the needs of variety of clientele such as faculty, research scholars, post graduate and under graduate students, institute administrators as well as specialists, industrial workers engaged in neighborhood industries and non teaching institute staff, a wide range of subject fields are to be represented in our book stock with prime thrust for meeting the needs of students and faculty members. Besides this, for smooth functioning of the library and safe guarding the interest of all sections of the library users, formation of policies, rules & regulations and implementing the library policies in a judicious manner, an infrastructure is needed for the library. To meet the all the above objectives the Central Library is advised by a Library Advisory Committee with the following constitution and representatives.

Constitution & Functions

The committee shall consist of the following members:

- A Senior Professor to be nominated by the Director as Chairman.

- One Faculty representative/scientist from each Academic Department/Centre, generally the Faculty-in-Charge of the Departmental Library.

- Three representatives each from UG, PG and Research Scholars to be nominated by IITR Students' Association and FRS, respectively.

- Librarian – Member Secretary (ex-officio).

o In addition to the composition specified above, the Chairman of the Senate may make an additional nomination to the Committee.

o The Chairman of the Committee shall be appointed by the Director from amongst the Professors. The tenure of the Chairman shall not exceed three years.

o Faculty members on the Committee other than its Chairman shall serve on the Committee for two years. However, student-members shall serve for one year only.

o The Committee shall meet at least four times in an academic year with 50% of its membership consisting a quorum.

o The duties and functions of the Committee shall be as under:

- To consider policy matters regarding Central Library/Departmental libraries including the policy for procurement of books and journals and render advice to the Purchase Committee for Library procurements.

- To look into day to day problems of the Library clientele, Library staff and send recommendations to the ECS/Senate, Board for the desired decision.

- To supervise the allocation and utilization of funds for different departments for purchase of books and journals for the Central and Departmental libraries.

- To maintain liaison between Central Library and various Academic Departments for the purchase of networking of Departmental libraries with the Central Library.

- To consider and put forward the views of faculty members regarding books/journals selection, ordering process etc.

- To consider and put forward the views of students and Research Scholars regarding their problems and solutions sought thereof.

Example-2

Library Advisory Committee (LAC), Sir Dorabji Tata Memorial Library, TISS, Mumbai

The function of the Library Advisory Committee is to support the functioning of the library so that it can facilitate the library development plans by advocating the library development activities with the management. The purpose of the Library Advisory Committee is to act as a channel of communication and dialogue between the University Library and its users. The Committee's main objective is to aid in the establishment a bridge between the Library and the academic fraternity and the institute management. The Library Advisory Committee (LAC) is to be appointed by the Director of the Institution.

Composition: The suggested composition of this Committee is as follows:

- Chairperson: Director/or any person nominated by the Director will be the chairperson

- Members: One faculty each from Schools/Independent Centers (Librarian to propose panel names)

- Secretary : Librarian Shall be the Secretary of LAC

- All officers of the Library shall participate in the meeting to provide required inputs

- o Meeting Frequency: The LAC would meet at least once in every quarter to review the library affairs.

Tenure: The committee shall be reconstituted once in two years. Director can recommend a replacement for a member who withdraws from the LAC. No member shall serve the Committee for more than two consecutive terms. For the sake of continuation one third of members from previous committee need to continue

Meeting Minutes: Meeting minutes shall be recorded and circulated to all members for consideration. In the next meeting, the minutes shall be confirmed by the members.

Terms of Reference for LAC:

a. To provide general direction to the Library

b. To review the functioning of the library with regards to its support to the academic programmes of the institute.

c. To advise the management on matters of policy relating to development of library.

d. To outline the library collection development policy as and when required, for its implementation.

e. To monitor and evaluate, from time to time, trends and developments in information technologies, networking, library automation, library cooperation etc., and to direct the library in their adoption.

f. To suggest ways and means to generate revenue from library resources.

g. To formulate action plan for the development of library infrastructure, facilities, products and services.

h. Evaluate the suggestions made by the library users

i. To formulate the policy for library use and procedure to be framed

j. To assist library in providing need based information services

k. To review the requirements of the new programmes being introduced and advise library about financial assistance.

l. Evaluating the books procurement school wise and allocation of budget accordingly.

m. Any other function as assigned by Director

6. Role of IFLA in Good Governance of Libraries

Library associations play a vital role in making good governance work in the libraries. At the international level, IFLA has developed guidelines for Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption. IFLA considers that:

- Transparency is the basis of good governance and the first step in fighting corruption. It provides a universal rationale for the provision of good records management systems, archives, and financial regulatory and monitoring systems. It is directly linked to the practice of socially responsible authorship and journalism, the work of editors, the publishing and the distribution of information through all media.

- Corruption undermines basic social values, threatens the rule of law, and undermines trust in political institutions. It creates a business environment in which only the corrupt thrive. It hinders scientific work and research, weakens the functions of the professions and obstructs the emergence of the knowledge society. It is a major contribution to the creation and prolongation of human misery and the inhibiting of development. Corruption succeeds most under conditions of secrecy and general ignorance.

o IFLA asserts that libraries are in their very essence transparency institutions, dedicated to making available the most accurate and unbiased educational, scientific and technical, and socially relevant information to each and everyone. The information materials and access provided by libraries and information services contribute to good governance by enlarging the knowledge of citizens and enriching their discussions and debates.

o Libraries and information services should extend their mission so as to become more active components in good governance and the struggle against corruption. In particular they can perform a significant role in informing citizens of their rights and entitlements.

o IFLA, therefore, calls on all library and information professionals, and all those responsible for the governance of library and information services at national and local level to support the following programme:

- Librarians should counter corruption directly affecting librarianship, as in the sourcing and supply of library materials, appointments to library posts and administration of library contracts and finances. Library Associations should support this through the creation or strengthening of Codes of Professional Ethics.

- Librarians should strive to improve professional status of all information professionals and promote better pay for professionals to reduce their susceptibility to corruption.

- Librarians should reassert their role in educating citizens by developing strong collections and facilitating access to information on philosophical and socio/economic/political topics.

- Where a country has information access or freedom of information laws, librarians should seek to make the library a centre where citizens can be assisted in drawing up and submitting information requests.

- Where a country does not have information access or freedom of information laws, or such laws are not effective, librarians should support initiatives to draft, amend, promote and protect such laws from neglect.

- Training should be organized for librarians and users in the use of the type of information that will improve citizens' understanding of the laws and assist them in the pursuit of their rights and entitlements.

- Libraries should collect information materials issued by official bodies, particularly those that deal with citizens' rights and entitlements. They should seek to make information that is issued by official bodies more comprehensible and accessible (through indexes, abstracts, search support, etc). They should also organize digitization and other preservation programmes for official information relating to laws, rights and entitlements, and facilitate access to existing databases of these types of information.

- Libraries should be made available as venues for the promotion of information rights (through posters and other publicity methods) and librarians should seek to raise awareness of the right to information.

- Libraries should create or cooperate in the creation of anti-corruption portals which link content from official sources, anti-corruption NGOs and other relevant sources.

- Libraries should support existing and planned citizens' advice centres provided by anti-corruption NGOs with information provision, technical assistance with databases and all other relevant aspects of their professional expertise.

7.   Summary

The governance of the library is an important issue for achieving the objectives of a library. The governance must be clearly spelt out in rules and laws so that there the decision flows appropriately and no conflict arises in functionaries. The people who are involved in governance must set examples by accountability, transparency and qualitative decision making process. The stakeholders of today's libraries expect strong leadership. Modern governance must reach beyond budget oversight and a regular strategic planning exercise. A library board must embrace new ideas, probe its basic values and raison d'être and forge relationships to generate a comprehensive and efficient service that reflects its community's unique needs.

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