UNIT 12  ETHICAL ISSUES IN LIBRARIANSHIP

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12.0 OBJECTIVES

Professional ethics is a topic of considerable importance to determine, set and maintain acceptable standards in professional performance. This Unit explains the meaning and scope of professional ethics for librarians and information scientists. It also discusses the code of ethics for LIS professionals promulgate by American Library Association (ALA) and Library Association (LA). Views of professionals and attempts to formulate professional ethics for librarians in India have also been presented.

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

• explain the meaning of ethical values;
• appreciate ethical values which enhance quality in professional performance to ensure societal recognition and appreciation;
• realise the responsibility of being a library/information professional to work according to prescribed ethical standards; and

• discuss various ethical standards for LIS professionals.

### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

You have been introduced to the concept of a profession in Unit 11. One of its characteristics is that it has a code of ethics that regulate the relations of professionals with clients and colleagues. Selfless service keeping the interest of the user uppermost is the key to ethical service. Objectivity in routines and practice is essential. Service without discrimination should be the motto of professionals.

Professional performances should conform to ethical principles to give customers full satisfaction for services rendered by professionals. A set of ethics is necessary for a profession to regulate and guide its conduct in professional activities. This Unit introduces the concepts of ethics and ethical codes in library profession.

### 12.2 ETHICS

The word ‘ethic’ is derived from the Latin word ‘ethicus’ meaning the custom or character or attitude of community or people. Ethic is the science of moral. It is one of the branches of the subject of philosophy. Each facet of this branch is concerned with character, attitude and conduct. It deals with what is right or wrong, good or bad. Ethics is the set of moral principles that governs the person’s professional conduct, behaviour, morality, values, commitment and obligation to the society / profession. When such guidelines of do’s and don’ts is codified for practice it is termed as ‘code of ethics’

#### 12.2.1 General Ethics

According to the web definition (en.wiktionary.org/wiki/ethics) ethics is “The study of principles relating to right and wrong conduct; morality; the standards that govern the conduct of a person, especially a member of a profession”

The Oxford Dictionary defines ethics as “the science of morals, the department of study concerned with the principles of human duty”.

Encyclopedia Britannica explains ethics “as the branch of Philosophy that is concerned with what is morally good or bad, right and wrong”. A synonym for ethics is moral philosophy.

Encyclopedia of Philosophy and Psychology defines ethics as “the art to conduct, just as logic has been called the art of thinking”.

Webster’s International Dictionary defines Ethics as:

1) The discipline dealing with what is good and bad or right and wrong with moral duty and obligation;

2) A group of moral principles or set of values; a particular theory or system or moral values; the principles of conduct governing an individual or a profession; standards of behaviour.

3) The adjective ‘Ethical’ connotes conformity to professionally endorsed principles and practice or a system/philosophy of conduct and principles practiced by a person or group.
Ethical Issues in Librarianship

Ethics versus Morals

Ethical framework of a profession gives its members a playing field and a rule book. The mission statement guides the profession in the framing of the ethics. Ethics and morals are related terms. Moral is more generic in nature, it refers to one’s own principles for what is right and what is wrong. Ethics is the guidance on what is right and what is wrong provided to an individual by her/his profession. Morals of an individual are reflected in an individual’s actions which reflect her/his principles and ideals. These come from within though imbibed from one’s family and society. When one has to act against one’s morals s/he feels uncomfortable and pained. Morals are stable in nature though they may change with a change in one’s beliefs.

Ethics are not moral or immoral, legal or illegal. They guide the members for an optimal behaviour and educate them on the values of the profession. Ethics are important when values conflict one another. In such a situation ethics guide the course of action. Ethics of a profession speak of its character. The professions established since long had strong ethical base. The source of ethics is external to an individual; one is bound to follow them to be part of the community and may have to face action on not following them. One may even be barred from the community for not following the ethics, e.g. a doctor may be expelled from the Medical Council or an advocate from the Bar Council for not acting ethically.

12.2.2 History

Ethics has been a subject of study and enquiry in philosophy which is as old as human history. There are three philosophical positions in ethical enquiry in the West, viz. monistic, relativistic and pluralistic. In Indian philosophical thought, moral behaviour is closely associated with religious beliefs and practices. All these ideas; thoughts and theories lead to different aspects of studies of ethics, particularly in modern societies. Some of these studies relate to personal, organisational, professional; business ethics which quite often introduce conflicts in practical applications in the real life of an individual.

In this Unit, however, we are concerned only with professional ethics, although the other aspects of ethical values are relevant and are in many ways interconnected.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of this Unit.

1) What do you understand by ethical values?

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12.3 PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Every profession establishes a code of conduct to govern ethical behaviour within that profession. Professional ethics is considered as an expression of the ethos (i.e character, spirit, culture, practice) of an occupation. In other words, it should reflect or be based upon, all the basic values associated with the occupation. It should reveal what the occupation is, what the practitioners think of themselves and of their place in society. It should indicate what is distinctive about the group. The quality of service offered by them should be of a class that makes them distinguished. Very often; we refer to the quality of the work of a person being highly professional, meaning thereby that there is a near-perfection in the nature of the performance, the intellectual and/or technical expertise and her/his sense of responsibility and commitment to the clientele. So professionals carry, generally, this kind of a reputation, although there may be on occasions poor performance too. In order to sustain societal recognition and to give their best, almost every profession, attempts to evolve a code of professional behaviour to guide practitioners.

Interest in ethical behaviour of occupations, often formalised into codes, has a long history. Although rules of conduct have existed since many centuries; the modern codes had their origin in the nineteenth century. For example in the United States, the Code of Ethics of the American Medical Association (AMA) was adopted in 1848 when AMA was organised.

12.3.1 Objectives

According to P. S. G. Kumar, the motto of professional ethics in library and information science is to:

- provide dedicated service;
- build up the knowledge base of the professional;
- maintain neutrality to caste, creed, religions and idealisms;
- uphold the six freedoms – study, thought, speech, press, dissemination of knowledge and instruction; and
- voice the convictions relating to library legislation, censorship etc.

12.3.2 Importance

The value of ethics can be summarised as follows, they:

- guide the professionals in decision making in professional work;
- enhance and validate the image of a profession and professional;
- help the librarians to project their practices; and
- inculcate professional zeal among the members.

P. S. G. Kumar stated that the ethics help a profession in the following ways:

- “Helps a person to know what is expected of him by the profession;
- How he should conduct himself;
- How he should prepare himself to meet the demands of the clientele;
- How to uphold the values;
- Above all to keep his profession at a higher pedestal in the eyes of the users or society in general”.

According to Bob Usherwood (1981) code of ethics have a role to play in:

1) “Protection of client – as a code informs the clients of the quality of the service they have right to expect;
2) Protection for librarians – against unethical practices that may be forced on them by institutions/individuals;
3) Enhancement of the status of the profession; and
4) Enhancement of the ability of the individual professional to influence the direction of his/her organisation.”

12.3.3 Professional Ethics for Librarianship

Ethics are essential elements for the profession of librarianship. Librarianship has an indispensable role in the society in collecting, preserving and disseminating knowledge. Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals have to deal with users, administration, and people in book/information trade and colleagues. There are varied expectations from different groups at different stages from the LIS professionals. To resolve these complexities while practicing the profession, certain moral guidelines or ethical norms are essential.

According to A.K. Mukherjee, “Librarianship as a vocation has evolved through the ages, allowing values to accrue to the principles observed in the long sojourn of human civilization. It has undergone certain metamorphosis. The modern professional librarian displays in his principles of acquisition, organisation, utilization and ultimate dissemination of knowledge.”

Broadfield, Foskett and others have provided the professional librarian with a creed and a code of ethics and it should be remembered in this context that the principles of library service, ethics of librarianship and librarian’s creed are all indistinguishable features in the moral, intellectual and professional make up of the librarian.

According to IFLA professional ethics means “A collection of professional guidelines for librarians and other library employees adopted by national library or librarians associations or implemented by government agencies”.

According to Navalani, “Professional ethics is the science of right conduct and character; the science which treats of the nature and grounds of moral obligation; the doctrine of man’s duty in respect of himself and the right of others.”

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answers in the space given below.
ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of the Unit.

2) Discuss the concept and objectives of professional ethics.

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3) What is the role of professional ethics?

12.4 CODE OF ETHICS FOR LIS PROFESSIONALS

Johan Bekker, a leading authority on ethics in librarianship stated that “a code of ethics should be an expression of ethos of an occupation. It should reflect or be based upon all the basic values associated with occupation. It should reveal what the occupation is, what the practitioners feel and of their place in society. It should indicate what is distinctive about a group. The code should reflect the nature of library and the library like agencies as one of the functioning systems.”

He has suggested a few broad principles for designing a code.

1) Librarians should exercise their best professional judgment on behalf of users. They should therefore: provide the highest level of service; not only complying with requests, but also anticipating needs; consider the needs of users the central focus of their work; assist actively in preventing incompetence and misconduct in their profession and in encouraging adherence to this code and other standards; protect each user’s right to privacy.

2) Librarians should strive to improve libraries and library services. They should therefore: be active members of local and national professional associations; pursue continuing education in order to improve their skills, knowledge and qualifications; protect and enhance the reputation of libraries by exemplary professional conduct and service; involve themselves in research and other systematic efforts to understand and improve library service; avoid situations that could compromise professional judgement or provide personal benefits at the expense of the library and its users.

3) Librarians should help to create and maintain conditions under which learning and scholarship can flourish freedom of inquiry and of thought and its expression: They should therefore ensure the free flow of information between libraries; allow access to the library holdings and services to everyone in need of information; avoid bias in the acquisition and presentation in information; resist efforts to censor library materials or restrict intellectual freedom.

4) Librarians should be sensitive to the concerns of the larger society of which they are a part. They should therefore protect and preserve sources of information for future use; assure that confidential and proprietary information is safeguarded; avoid transgression into the practice of other professions; take care that the access to information provided to users is not misused to curtail the freedom of others.
This type of code attempts to present, both to those who work in libraries and to those who use libraries, an indication of what it is that librarians stand for and what should be expected of them by the public. The implementation of such a code would depend on the ability and willingness of librarians and the public to take such statements seriously and to see that breaches of the code do not occur.

The word ‘ethics’ was first used in 1908 during a discussion on the topic at Boston. The results pronounced as ‘Librarian’s Canons of Ethics’ 1909 was the first set of ‘Code of Ethics’ in librarianship in USA. These were revised by Botton in 1912 and published as an article in The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Sciences entitled as “The Ethics of Librarianship”. The first code of ethics from ALA was prepared in 1938 by Ms Flora B Ledington. According to IFLA on Professional Codes of Ethics / Conduct (http://www.ifla.org/faife/ethics/codes.htm) so far national bodies / libraries of 34 countries have devised code of ethics. India has no place in the list.

**Self Check Exercise**

**Note:**

i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

4) What are the initial attempts made for professional ethics in library science?

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**12.4.1 American Library Association Code of Ethics**

Since 1939, the American Library Association has recognized the importance of codifying and making known to the public and the profession the principles which guide librarians in action and revised the same from time to time to reflect changes in the nature of the profession and its social and institutional environment. The ethical statements help when values are in conflict.

The ALA drafted the code of ethics for library professionals on the following relations:

1) the governing authority;
2) their constituency;
3) their fellow employees within the library;
4) their profession; and
5) society.
The statements of code provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

i) We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organised resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.

ii) We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

iii) We protect each library user’s right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

iv) We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.

v) We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.

vi) We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.

vii) We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.

viii) We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

(Adopted June 28, 1997, by the ALA Council; amended January 22, 2008.)

12.4.2 Library Association Code of Professional Conduct

The Library Association (UK) appointed a working party on professional ethics in 1978. The Code of Conduct indicates the standards of behaviour expected of a member of the Association. It sets out, in general terms, the standards and duties which it is reasonable to expect a professional to observe. This can be used as a point of reference when dealing with disciplinary procedures against members. This is intended to protect the profession, individual practitioners, and their clients. Some important aspects of the Code are:

1) Members of the Association must conduct themselves in such a way that their conduct would not be reasonably regarded by their professional colleagues within the field of librarianship (including the provision of information services) as serious professional misconduct or as professional misconduct. It is by this overall test that the conduct will be judged.

2) Members must comply with the Charter and Bye-laws of the Association and the provisions of this Code of Conduct (Details provided).

3) Failure to comply with the requirements set out in paragraph 2, if proved before the Disciplinary Committee, be regarded as serious professional misconduct and, the member concerned is liable to be expelled or suspended.
Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.
   ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of this Unit.

5) Give the features of the codes of ethics of ALA of USA and LA of UK?

12.5 CODE OF ETHICS FOR LIS PROFESSION IN INDIA

In India the importance of code of professional ethics is recognised but there were no constructive attempts. It was few professionals like A.K. Mukherjee, Megnanand, R.L.Mittal, Amitabha Chatterjee, P.S.G. Kumar et al who wrote about Code of Ethics in their books. Some seminars/conferences like IASLIC (1984) addressed the issue. However these attempts are inadequate as code of ethics will have validity if devised by national professional association. Unfortunately, no ethical code has so far been adopted by the library profession in India, though such a code has become all the more necessary.

According to Megnanand, the code of ethics has to consider the following factors:

- Librarian and his committee
- Librarian and his staff
- Librarian and his book supplier
- Librarian and the book trade
- Librarian and his professional colleagues
- Librarian and his clientele
- Librarian and society
- Librarian and the state laws and nation.

A.K. Mukherjee stated that the essence of the professional is the consciousness to provide quality service to users and proposed twenty points as code of ethics. Some important points among them are:

1) Libraries have demonstrated their ability to enrich community life. The librarian should retain the belief in his/her job. One must believe that libraries are good for people and that he/she is good for libraries. One must not expect gratitude.

2) In our cultural work all branches of learning pay them role. Librarians must be trained to know the essence of culture and do their work of promoting culture (Brodfield).
3) The librarian enjoys perfect freedom and autonomy of individual judgment. He should uphold the sanctity of six freedoms of our creed – the freedom of study, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of the circulation of knowledge and the freedom of instruction.

4) The librarian must have the conviction that libraries are indispensable to society. They should never be apologetic about their profession.

5) A good librarian must himself be an avid reader and eager to help others find their way in the collection. Techniques can be learned quickly by those keen to learn. The important factor is enthusiasm for the job. Librarians must be book men quite distinct from administrators in general.

6) The function of the library is to serve as a store of information from which each reader can draw the required information. A store requires a key so the librarian and his professional technology can only provide it.

Amitabha Chatterjee suggested the following aspects for consideration while developing code of ethics.

1) “Loyalty to one’s own work, institution, fellow professionals, the society and the self;

2) Integrity of character;

3) Cooperation and team spirit in library work;

4) Service above self;

5) Devotion to duty;

6) Impartiality and fairness in dealings with staff, clientele and vendors/suppliers;

7) Allegiance to the laws of the land.”

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of the Unit.

7) What factors should be taken into account for LIS professional ethics?

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12.6 FACETS OF LIS CODE OF ETHICS

According to R.L. Mittal ethics of librarianship denotes the conduct and behaviour of those who adopt the profession. A library professional owes certain obligations to the library’s public and its books; and to the profession in general. The Five Laws of Library Science are the basic principles for librarians in India to render their duties with morals. R.L. Mittal has suggested the ethical principles to be followed by LIS professionals as under:
- Duty to the Readers
- Duty to the Books
- Duty to the Profession
- Duties to the Staff
- Duty to Himself.

The ‘Seven Lamps of Conduct’ that are ‘musts’ for library professionals are:

1) Impersonal book selection
2) Service before self
3) Split-mind
4) Sympathetic behaviour
5) Tact
6) Industry
7) Scholarship

In 1989 Joint Council of Library Association in India (JOCLAI) had finalised a draft code of ethics. The draft covered eight aspects:

- Library and Information Science service to clientele
- Library and Information professional and their upgradation
- Library and Information professional and information resources
- Library and Information professional and professionalism
- Library and Information professional and ethical values
- Library and Information professional and timely service
- Library and Information professional and professional organisations
- Library and Information professional and cultivation of professional knowledge.

Amitabha Chatterjee (2008) recommends the following facets for code of ethics:

1) Librarian/information worker and the authority of the library/information center;
2) Librarian/information worker and his/her colleagues in the library/information center;
3) Librarian/information worker and his/her clientele;
4) Librarian/information worker and suppliers/vendors of books, journals, equipment, stationary, etc.;
5) Librarian/information worker and the resources of the library/information center;
6) Librarian/information worker and himself/herself;
7) Librarian/information worker and library and information profession;
8) Librarian/information worker and the society;
9) Librarian/information worker and the laws of the land.

Based on these facets he prepared a draft ‘code of ethics’ for Library and Information profession.
The contemporary information environment is influenced by information communication technologies. Now we have electronic collections, network based and internet based access to global information and provision of net based services round the clock (24x7). Libraries are bestowed with the responsibility of providing equal access to information and balanced services to users. There are problems with the authenticity of information on the internet and providing quality information is a challenge to libraries. They are further challenged with privacy issues as digital information can be accessed from anywhere, beyond library premises. Now the deal is not to purchases / subscribe but to get license with several terms and conditions for privacy. More over the libraries hitherto acquired copyrighted documents, but now accessing intellectual property of others under free and fee based environment. It is the accountability and responsibility of librarian to check the validity of information, protection of privacy, equal access to information and provision of services to all without discrimination of caste, creed, gender, class, social status and he has to bridge the gap in digital divide. In other words the primary issues in digital era are:

- Privacy
- Authenticity /validity
- Accuracy and timeliness
- Intellectual property
- Accessibility.

As a result the libraries commitment to users (now renamed as customers), management, information security and access, and commitment to society at large in bridging the digital divide has increased. Therefore ethical issues have a major role in the present digital era.

**Self Check Exercise**

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

8) What are the ‘Seven Lamps of Conduct’?

9) What are the ethical issues in digital era?
Professional misconduct consists in the failure of a librarian to fulfill his duties. Stern action is required to control such misconduct of the professionals. For example in medicine the Medical Council of India cancels the registration of a doctor if s/he is found guilty of his professional duties. However such national council does not exist for library science in spite of several proposals and recommendations.

**12.8 ISSUES AND PROBLEMS**

Apart from the difficulties in designing an acceptable ethical code for professionals, there are also many other issues and problems which emerge with professional ethics. Some of these are:

1) Image of the library and information profession in society;
2) More than one professional body;
3) Authority in implementation with provisions for disciplinary action in case of violation of the ethical principles enunciated by ethical codes;
4) Expanding dimensions of the profession;
5) Consequent undefined state of the profession;
6) Quality of professional work;
7) Immigration of specialists from other disciplines and professions.

**12.8.1 Professional Image**

The image of the library profession, particularly in India, is not very high in society as library and information work is considered auxiliary to education, research, industrial or business development etc. As a result librarians and information workers constitute a group of specialists in their respective parental organisation and their independent image does not get the proper focus in the eyes of the public. It is only a small group of users that gets high quality of library and information service that appreciates the support given to if in to activities. Such a limited appreciation does not contribute to the image of the profession in the society as a whole. As far as Indian public libraries are concerned, there has never been any remarkable performance/ achievement that would enhance the professional image in the eyes of country.

**12.8.2 Professional Bodies**

In many countries, there are more than one professional body each of which may have different goals and objectives, although there may not be any serious conflicts between them. The ideal condition for effective disciplinary action in the case of violation of ethical codes enumerated by the leading American expert Bekker are:

There should be only one national occupational association;

There should be only one basic national code of ethics;

Subscriptions to the code should be a condition for the acceptance or renewal of membership;

Membership in the occupational association should be a condition for licensing to practice;

There should be only one national committee on occupational conduct.
Notwithstanding the desirability of the above stated basic approach to the design of professional codes, it is not possible in practice to have such a single central authority. But it is essential to have coordination and cooperation among the various professional bodies in designing of a code of ethics, because all persons are basically librarians and information personnel.

### 12.8.3 Authority in Implementation

Even assuming a central professional authority, it is not always possible to penalise anyone who may violate professional ethical codes. There are no legal validity to these ethical codes. Conforming to ethical codes are invariably more voluntary individual effort arising out of personal belief or faith in ethical values.

### 12.8.4 Expanding Dimensions

The dimensions of professional activity have expanded unprecedentedly in the last quarter of 20th century. The conventional and traditional functions of a library have undergone a tremendous change. New skills are expected in library and information work and such skilled persons are to be drawn from outside the profession. Professional education and training in this changing context have, therefore, been in a state of flux. This creates numerous problems, particularly the new entrants acquire a new view of professional work and activities. This is not peculiar to the library professional alone. Other professions are too facing similar situations, for example the medical profession. But the medical profession has an established public image and hence has no such problems as faced by the library profession. What would be the stature of librarians of the future? It is difficult to predict at this stage of transition but, it is bound to be different from what it is now and what it had has been in the past.

### 12.8.5 Professional Quality

Today’s insistence on quality assurance has been a major concern of those involved in every human activity. Consumers’ societies have been asserting their right to have quality in whatever they buy and seek legal protection in consumer courts to ensure quality. Library and information products and services also have to face this problem sooner or later as pricing for library and information services is on the anvil.

### 12.8.6 New Entrants

Library and information activities are attracting persons with different educational and professional backgrounds and qualifications: Persons with different professional experience are migrating to the library and information fields with varied conviction, faith, world views, – and political influences. All these are affecting professional conduct and behaviour.

In the final analysis, it is important to note that it is only personal conviction, involvement, commitment and faith in library and information service that would largely, determine professional behaviour and conduct.
Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.
ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of the Unit.

10) Enumerate the problems and issues in designing professional ethical codes for librarians.

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12.9 SUMMARY

Professional performances should conform to ethical principles to give customers full satisfaction for services rendered by professionals. Ethics is science of morals. The word is derived from Latin word ‘ethicus’. A set of moral principles are necessary for a profession to regulate and guide the conduct of its members in professional activities.

The general meaning of ethics is the science of morals concerned with the principles of human duty. However in this Unit we are more concerned with professional ethics as librarianship is a profession. In order to sustain societal recognition and to give their best, almost every profession, attempts to evolve a code of professional behaviour to guide practitioners. For example in the United States, the Code of Ethics of the American Medical Association (AMA) was adopted in 1848 when AMA was organised.

Librarianship though started as vocation soon became profession having a specialised body of knowledge and specialised skills to serve the users with best collections of information that are organised for easy access. Thus the librarians ought to follow standard moral principles in selection, collection, organisation and dissemination of knowledge. The basic objective of LIS code of ethics is neutrality to caste, creed, religions and idealisms; to uphold the six freedoms – study, thought, speech, press, dissemination of knowledge and instruction.

The code of ethics in librarianship has a vital role to play as it helps a professional to know what is expected of him and how he should conduct himself to meet the demands of the clientele and uphold values to keep up the profession’s image. It has a role in protection clientele, librarians and enhancing the status of the profession.

Though the code of ethics for librarianship can be traced back to the publication of ‘Librarian’s Canons of Ethics’, 1909, the ALA (USA) code of ethics, 1938 provided the base for the development of coded by the world at large. Now 34 countries have code of ethics for librarianship but not India.

A code of ethics should be an expression of ethos of an occupation, indicate what is distinctive about librarianship and should reflect the nature of library. In
India, A.K. Mukherjee, Megnanand, R.L. Mittal, Amitabha Chatterjee, P.S.G. Kumar and others discussed the issue of code of ethics and suggested model code of ethics. JOCLAI has suggested a draft code of ethics. The facets / components of code of ethics should reflect the core activities of the profession and include duty of libraries and librarians to the readers to the books, to the profession, to the staff and to him. There are, however, a number of practical difficulties in implementing a code of professional ethics. Some of these are:

1) Image of the library and information profession in society;
2) More than one professional body;
3) Authority in implementation with provisions for disciplinary action in case of violation of the ethical principles enunciated by ethical codes;
4) Expanding dimensions of the profession;
5) Consequent undefined state of the profession;
6) Quality of professional work;
7) Immigration of specialists from other disciplines and professions.

Despite these difficulties, problems and issues, professional ethics are necessary for professional practices; to ensure quality in service and in social recognition.

### 12.10 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

1) The study of principles relating to right and wrong conduct; morality; the standards that govern the conduct of a person, especially a member of a profession.

2) Professional ethics means a collection of professional moral guidelines for librarians and other library employees. The basic objective of LIS code of ethics is neutrality to caste, creed, religions and idealisms; to uphold the six freedoms – study, thought, speech, press, dissemination of knowledge and instruction.

3) The code of ethics in librarianship has a vital role to play as it helps a professional to know what is expected of him how he should conduct himself to meet the demands of the clientele and uphold values to keep up the profession’s image. It has a role in protection of clientele, librarians and enhancing the status of the profession.

4) The code of ethics for librarianship can be traced back to the publication of ‘Librarian’s Canons of Ethics’ 1909 which was revised by Botton in 1912 and published as an article in *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* entitled as “The Ethics of Librarianship”. The first code of ethics from ALA was prepared in 1938 by Ms Flora B Ledington that was revised several times so far. According to IFLA, now 34 countries have code of ethics for practicing librarianship.

5) The American Library Association (USA) code of ethics for library professionals followed the relations between the governing authority; their constituency; their fellow employees within the library; their profession; and society.
Library Association (UK) Code of Conduct indicates the standards of behaviour expected of a member of the Association. It sets out the standards and duties which it is reasonable to expect a professional to observe. This is intended to protect the profession, individual practitioners, and their clients.

6) According to Johan Bekker a code of ethics should be an expression of ethos of an occupation; It should reflect the basic values associated with occupation. It should reveal what the occupation is, what the practitioners feel and of their place in society. It should indicate the distinct feature or the specialty of the profession. The code should reflect the nature of library on the basis of its functions.

7) The code of ethics has to consider the commitment of the library and librarian to the library clientele; Library Committee or management; library staff; book suppliers and book trade; professional colleagues; and commitment to society in general.

8) The ‘Seven Lamps of Conduct’ that are ‘musts’ for library professional:
   1) Impersonal book selection
   2) Service before self
   3) Split-mind
   4) Sympathetic behaviour
   5) Tact
   6) Industry
   7) Scholarship

9) The contemporary library environment changes under the influence of information and communication technologies. Now the collections are in digital format and accessible through networks without possessing the physical unit as in case of books. This has brought in new responsibility and accountability on librarians and they have to bridge the digital divide by providing equal access to information and balanced services to all. The important issues that attract ethical values in this digital environment are:
   - Privacy
   - Authenticity /validity
   - Accuracy and timeliness
   - Intellectual property
   - Accessibility

10) The problems and issues that crop up while developing the code of ethics are: professional image; too many professional bodies; authority for implementation of ethics and body to punish the guilty; unprecedented expansion of the profession beyond the core areas of library science, embracing ICTs; quality of profession in serving the customers; people from different subjects and sectors without service motto for the profession entering the library science.
12.11 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING


