

Editorial

Library is an integral, effective, and paramount partner in the research, training, and dissemination of latest information in an ICT society. Library and information professionals are providing library services to the community of the highest caliber that meet expressed and anticipated needs of users through innovative technological means. Provision of better library services to the users is an essential element of a library. Various studies around the globe have measured the quality of library services using a variety of tools, for example, SERVQUAL and LIBQUAL.

The most emerging trend in nowadays libraries is “Formal External Review of Library (FERL).” Although this concept is not nascent in business enterprises but its formal exposure to libraries is emerging. FERL process is a unique activity starts with the preparation of an extensive self-assessment report which entails many facets of the library operations, sources and services. The external team/committee of veteran professionals and experts are invited periodically for reviewing the report and visiting the library for an evaluation. This review process ends with an appraisal in the form of detailed report of findings and recommendations.

The important TORs of the FERL committee/team may include: to review the strategic plan of the library, to judge past and present performance of the library, to evaluate the roles, structure and functions of library, and to assess any established relationships with external organizations, libraries and professional groups. Not limited to this, the team can review the library staff profile, skills and areas of operations (i.e. lending and document delivery, information services, IL programs, collection development and management, acquisition, cataloguing and classification and IT services). It will be ideal if the team seeks feedback from library users to evaluate the research and teaching goals of the library services in order to finalize the review report.

The FERL process is a regular feature in developed world and most of libraries are improving their services through this activity. Since the libraries of developing world being at their emerging stage are supposed to go through this SWOT process. This will give them a positive, constructive tone of understanding about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in all arenas. However, the external review of libraries should be staged in both formal and informal manners, for the latter can reveal what is sometimes not appreciated otherwise.