Skill Development Course Syllabus

Course Title: Reference Services and Information Assistance (RSIA-04)

Course Duration: 30 Hours

Units: 5

Structure: 4 key learning points per unit

Course Objective:

The course aims to enhance participants' understanding of reference services and information assistance, focusing on the skills needed to provide accurate, timely, and user-centered information services in both physical and digital library environments.

Course Outcomes:

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the principles and functions of reference services in libraries.
2. Identify and utilize various types of information sources effectively.
3. Provide user-centric reference and information assistance services.
4. Apply modern tools and technologies to enhance reference services in digital environments.

Topics Covered:

Unit 1: Introduction to Reference Services (6 Hours)

- Definition, Scope, and Objectives of Reference Services.
- Evolution of Reference Services in Libraries.
- Types of Reference Services: Ready Reference, Long Range, and Specialized.
- Role of Librarians in Reference and Information Assistance.

Unit 2: Information Sources (6 Hours)

- Types of Information Sources: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary.
- Characteristics and Evaluation of Print and Electronic Sources.
- Popular Reference Tools: Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Directories.
- Online Databases and Open Access Resources.

Unit 3: User Needs and Information Literacy (6 Hours)

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- Understanding User Needs and Information-Seeking Behavior.
- Designing User-Centered Reference Services.
- Information Literacy: Concepts, Models, and Implementation.
- Conducting Effective Reference Interviews.

Unit 4: Digital Reference Services (6 Hours)

- Concept and Importance of Digital Reference Services.
- Tools and Technologies for Digital Reference: Chatbots, Email, and SMS Services.
- Challenges in Delivering Digital Reference Services.
- Best Practices and Case Studies of Successful Digital Reference Services.

Unit 5: Evaluation and Ethics in Reference Services (6 Hours)

- Criteria for Evaluating Reference Services.
- Measuring User Satisfaction and Service Effectiveness.
- Ethical Issues in Reference Services: Privacy and Confidentiality.
- Future Trends in Reference and Information Assistance.

Suggested References:

1. Koehler, W. *Ethics and Values in Librarianship: A History.*
2. Feather, J., & Sturges, P. *International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science.*
3. Janes, J. *Digital Reference Services: Trends and Techniques.*
4. Chowdhury, G. G. *Introduction to Digital Libraries.*
5. Wilson, T. D. *On User Studies and Information Needs.*
6. Ranganathan, S. R. *The Five Laws of Library Science.*
7. Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. *Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century.*
8. Shera, J. H. *Documentation and the Organization of Knowledge.*
9. Katz, W. A. *Introduction to Reference Work.*
10. Bopp, R. E., & Smith, L. C. *Reference and Information Services: An Introduction.*

Evaluation and Certification

- Quizzes and Discussions: 20%
- Practical Demonstrations and Role-Playing: 30%
- Final Project/Presentation: 50%

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