

known to be fond of the Arabs and Arabism.

Despite the supreme quality of this book, the author records in the preface that his study “does not lay claim to having brought to light something altogether new or to have disclosed anything hitherto entirely unknown” (p.x). This is commendable academic modesty that is, indeed, deeply rooted in our Islamic intellectual heritage, though, alas, we do not find it in the writings of not a few of our boastful and self-magnifying colleagues! To conclude, al-Ghazali’s book is well-balanced and scholarly. It is the most engrossing of all the discourses that I have read on Shah Wali Allah.

*Preparing the Information Professional: An Agenda for the Future* by Sajjad ur Rehman. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000. xi+177 pp. ISBN 0-0313-30673-7.

Reviewer: Mumtaz A. Anwar, Professor of Library Science, Kuwait University.

The onslaught of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), especially from the mid-1980s onwards, has, over time, changed the working environment of all the professions. The introduction of ICT into various professional activities has forced these professions to re-examine the base of their skills and competencies necessary to perform effectively and successfully. In turn, this re-thinking has had critical implications for educators, curriculum, and practitioners at the same time. Such a re-examining and re-thinking exercise, if successfully carried out, should lead to the complete re-structuring of the curriculum in the light of innovations in ICT, renewal of present educators, and continuing professional development of existing practitioners.

The Library and Information Profession (LIS) became aware of this grave situation early on. The professional discourse that began during the mid-1980s has resulted in a respectable body of research literature focusing on competencies for LIS professionals from a variety of perspectives. There is a long list of scholars and studies that have not only contributed to this body of literature but have influenced the professional associations to formulate policies and standards in this regard. These activities should have resulted in a reasonable and global change, at least in the developed countries, in restructuring and updating the curriculum, re-training of educators, and some sort of

extensive re-education of practitioners. This has so far not happened even in the developed countries. The changes that have been introduced are uneven and in many cases cosmetic.

Sajjad ur Rehman's book is perhaps the last of these re-examinations of the 20th century. This is, perhaps, the only extensive exercise, that while analyzing the developments in the West, bases its analysis in the environment of the developing countries. Developed countries, aware of the grave consequences of neglect and inaction, are moving forward, albeit slowly, in introducing changes as needed in all areas. LIS professionals, educators more than practitioners, in the developing countries are caught up with their feet in the mud and lack the will, inclination and energy in facing the real world that is being forced in their face by ICT adoptions in the profession all around them. LIS educators in these countries, who themselves lack due exposure to ICT, are supplying the market annually with a horde of totally unsuitable beginning practitioners who lack the necessary competence to perform successfully.

*Preparing the Information Professional* is a detailed analysis of competencies necessary for performing as an LIS professional at various levels and in various situations. It draws on several research studies done in Malaysia and a couple of other countries. The book begins with a review of current trends and directions in the information scene that are relevant to the LIS professional. It discusses the competency approach for educating the professionals and then examines the issue of the definition of competency and the design of a competency validation study. The next four chapters deal with the functional and institutional (academic, public, and special) perspectives of competencies with extensive tables listing necessary sets of competencies for each situation. These chapters lead to differentiated competencies for undergraduate and graduate LIS education. The last chapter provides a detailed discussion of strategies and directions for the education of future LIS professionals.

This book makes a very valuable contribution to the literature on LIS education. It deserves serious attention from LIS educators, leaders, and practitioners all over the world. However, it should be a compulsory reading for LIS educators in the developing countries. If these individuals realize what they are teaching at this time and somehow take the courage and initiative to introduce drastic changes that are needed in their curriculum and renew their own knowledge and skills to teach successfully, then this book will have achieved its

purpose. The big question is: do those who are stuck in the mud of yesteryears have the will and energy to move their feet? The fate of the LIS profession depends on that big question. This book should be of immense importance to those who would like to move LIS profession forward.

*Mental Health in Malaysia: Issues and Concerns* edited by Amber Haque. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2001, 262 pp. ISBN 983-100-108-7.

Reviewer: Khairol Anuar Masuan, Department of Psychology, International Islamic University Malaysia.

This collection of articles begins with the observation that it is erroneous to view mental health and illness as two ends of the same continuum. The editor argues that a person can be healthy and ill at the same time. Mental health refers to the whole gamut of health areas including the emotional, behavioral, cognitive, physiological, socio-economic-political and spiritual health. Mental illness, as such, is very much pervasive and is to be found in one's own backyard. Mental health, therefore, needs to be taken seriously. The book is divided into three parts. The first part supposedly deals with concepts and trends. The second part is concerned with special population groups with mental health needs. The last part explores the relationship among mental health, culture and religion.

Part one discusses the basic conceptual concerns, trends and historical contexts specifically to Malaysian experience since independence. Though this part is meant to present a sneak preview of conceptual issues of mental health, all the chapters in this part are largely concerned with the historical development of Malaysian Mental Health (MMH). Amber Haque provides an excellent overview of the MMH tracing its development to the pre-Independence Pauper Hospital in Kuala Lumpur in 1898. Ungku Suraiya Omar succeeds in providing an excellent analysis of how non-governmental Organizations (NGO) are instrumental in keeping the MMH issue alive in Malaysia. Of the three contributions in this part, the chapter by Sara Crabtree and Gabriel Chong is definitely the best. They raised a critical conceptual issue (pp.28-32) and thus lend some justification to the sub-heading of this part. They lament the fact that health institutions take care only of people who are physically handicapped,