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CAREER PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS: A CASE STUDY OF BIDAR DISTRICT

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Abstract:-Librarianship as a profession provides a variety of employment opportunities. Today there are a number of career prospects in Library and Information Science including corporate sectors and the qualified professionals are employed in various libraries and information Centers of national and international repute in various government, public and private sectors. Trained library professionals can find opportunities for employment both as teacher and as a Librarian. The study attempts to identify the choice of Librarianship as a career; its satisfaction and evaluate the perceptions that affect the image of librarianship based on research survey conducted in Bidar district of Hyderabad Karnataka region covering working library professionals. Results reported and conclude with a remark to include Library and Information Science as one of the growing subject on par excellence with other subjects and efforts be made to improve the image of existing libraries and market the prospects of LIS courses to attract the incumbents.

Keywords: LIS Education, Career Aspirations, LIS Employability, Trends in LIS.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science (LIS) is a fast emerging subject attained the status of a separate discipline and is an interdisciplinary field that applies the practices, perspectives, and tools of management, information technology, education, psychology and other areas to libraries; the collection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information resources; and the political economy of information.

The career in library includes areas like library and information systems management, classification/cataloguing systems, bibliography, documentation, preservation and conservation of manuscript, collection management, information systems and technology, research methodology, computer applications, reference, statistics and management, information processing, archives management, indexing, library planning, etc. Library science is constantly evolving, incorporating new topics like database management, information architecture and knowledge management, among others. It is an interesting subject and provides a great opportunity to have the knowledge of wide variety of information sources (Singh, ShashiShekar, 2013)

Houdyshell, Robles, and Hua (1999) conducted an e-mail query of librarians that challenged their respondents to ponder, "What were you thinking? If you could choose librarianship again, would you?" In justifying their decision to join the field, only about 25 percent of respondents listed salary as a significant incentive. More powerful motivations included the opportunity to serve others (95 percent), intellectual challenge (82 percent), the nature of library work (81 percent,) and previous library experience (62 percent). The survey also revealed that public and academic librarians had encouraged many respondents to enter the field. Weihs (1999) identified the factors that spurred respondents to become librarians: influence of another librarian, previous work in libraries, a desire for career change, process of elimination, a love of reading, LIS matched interests and abilities, always wanted to be a librarian, and misconceptions. Of the people who entered LIS because of the influence of a librarian, some said that a relative or friend working in a library persuaded them while others said that a librarian's service attitude had inspired them.

1.2 CAREER PROSPECTS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Library and Information Science (LIS) is an interdisciplinary field that applies the practices, perspectives, and tools of management, information technology, education, and other areas to libraries. The libraries being the repositories of knowledge and information, their importance has increased. In this situation, the librarianship has attained the status of a separate discipline. Library science is constantly evolving, incorporating new topics like database management, information architecture and knowledge management, among others. It is an interesting subject and provides a great opportunity to have the knowledge of wide variety of information sources (Singh, 2013).

In the age of information revolution, the employment and placement prospects of librarians are on the rise. Trained personnel in this field can get employment opportunities in wide areas like Public and Government libraries, Universities, professional and other academic institutions, news and broadcasting agencies (Radio, newspaper and Television channels), corporate/ private libraries (Wipro, Infosys, TCS etc.), special libraries (DRDO, NAL etc.) and Contact Libraries (British Library, American central Library etc.) meant for special categories of people. They also can be employed in museum, galleries, archives, and information and documentation centers. They can also aspire to get a job in private publishing houses and other private companies handling with voluminous information. With the requisite, it is possible to choose the kind of library to suit one's interest and background. In Librarianship, designations could be Librarian, Documentation Officer, Assistant Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Scientist (Library Science/ Documentation), Library and Information Officer, Knowledge Manager/ Officer, Information Executive, Director/Head of Library Services, Information Officer, and Information Analyst.

Husain A. Alansari, (2011),"investigated the factors affecting career choice, job satisfaction, and perceptions of the public image of librarians in Kuwait covering 117 professional librarians working in academic, public, and special libraries in Kuwait using questionnaire method. The study reported that they were moderately satisfied with their current job and extrinsic measures, such as recognition of accomplishment, fair performance evaluation, and job security were ranked in the top and are the most important aspects of job satisfaction, whereas intrinsic measures, such as suitable daily working hours and nature of work, fell close to the bottom of the list. The cause of employee job dissatisfaction occurs in the area of benefits, contingent rewards, communication, salaries, working conditions, and promotions. Allyson Ard et al. (2006) seek to communicate the career motivations of MLIS students by reporting the results of a survey conducted at the University of Alabama's School of Library and Information Studies. Library administrators and others responsible for hiring information professionals will want to hear the library students' reasons for entering the field, their salary expectations, geographic preferences, perceptions of the job market, and interest in various subfields. However, all librarians should seek to learn more about students' career motivations and professional interests so that they can recruit more people to the profession and accommodate the needs of new colleagues. Taking into account the next generation's career motivations and professional beliefs will empower all librarians particularly those in reference to boost recruitment by making LIS a more visible and attractive field for prospects. Thus, the present study touches upon one important aspect i.e. career perceptions of library and information science professionals in Bidar district.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India will be completing 100 years in 2011. Some of the studies pertaining to LIS career are reviewed and reported based on consulting primary and secondary sources like UGC Infonet e-journals particularly emeraldinsight.com and Library and Information Science Abstract.

Krishan Kumar and Jaideep Sharma (2010) provide a picture of the growth and development of LIS education in India, which lends a perspective to such a study. The discipline got recognition with the introduction of various courses at the university level. It has seen periods of growth and maturation. The recommendations of National Knowledge Commission provide an opportunity for reforms and changes in the educational system that needs to be grabbed. He stressed that Library science need to change according to the needs of the time. It is high time, librarians and teachers should come together to overcome all shortcomings and take LIS education to greater heights.

LIS education in India has undergone significant changes with the support of UGC, The seeds of LIS education in South India were sown 90 years ago in AP, which was then under the composite Madras State. The first training course was initiated in 1920 under auspices of Andhra Desh Library Association. The domain of LIS needs to be redefined to identify the core jurisdiction of the discipline and its necessary adaptability in contemporary times. Indeed the need is to design fresh information science courses keeping in view the changing knowledge society. In this context, Varalakshmi (2010) emphasized the need of the hour is to devise uniform eligibility criteria and selection policy that can really attract those students with aptitude and attitude for the profession.

Kathleen DeLong (2013) reviews the literature provides a framework for understanding the professional experiences of women library directors in academic libraries, focusing upon career advancement and writing about women librarians in the United States and Canada from the 1930s to 2012. Evidence shows the number of women in senior leadership roles has increased over the years. From the 1930s to the 1950s it was the natural order for men to be heads of academic libraries, particularly major research libraries. Research studies of the decades from the 1960s to the 1980s provide evidence of a shift

from the assumption that various personal and professional characteristics could be identified to account for differences in the number of men and of women recruited into senior positions in academic libraries. Despite this, women remained vastly under-represented in director positions in academic libraries. From the 1990s to the present, the evidence shows the number of women in senior leadership roles increased, despite factors such as mobility, career interruptions, or lack of advanced degrees that were traditionally identified as limitations to career growth. While women have gained in terms of the number of senior positions in academic libraries in the U.S. and Canada they are still not proportionately represented. The results section concludes with a review of sources that pertain to writing about women library leaders. This emphasizes that the professional lives of women librarians are largely unknown, as is the importance of their contribution to the development of libraries and librarianship. Research into the lives of women library leaders is important because women traditionally represent 75-80% of library professionals, yet the story of their career advancement and leadership within librarianship is bounded by characteristics – real or perceived – that affect their career progression.

Jeevan, V K J (2012) argues for re-designation of librarians as teachers of library and information service and proposes an environment of dual career for library professionals where interested librarians can teach and interested teachers can practice in library for certain duration, depending on the wishes of the individual and needs of the institution concerned and also calls for an institution independent career pattern for library professionals in India.

Anoush Simon and Marianne Taylor (2011) reported an ongoing project investigating library and information science students' perceptions of the library and information profession and their motivations for undertaking a degree in this field. The analysis presented here focuses on students' reasons for becoming involved in information work, and their motivations for embarking on a professional qualification. The research was focused on students enrolling on Information and Library Studies programmes in the Department of Information Studies, Aberystwyth University. Students from both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) courses are represented over the period 2005-2010, undertaking campus-based and distance learning (DL) programmes. A qualitative approach, using focus groups, was taken towards data collection and analysis. Many students followed a circuitous path into the library and information field, indicating that caution needs to be exercised when making assumptions regarding “typical” library and information workers. Similarly, motivations for attaining a qualification are a complexity of both personal and professional aspirations. Although motivations remain consistent, in line with previous studies, it is argued that “either/or” attitudes to traditional and modern aspects of information work are being replaced by a flexible understanding of the modern profession.

Nazi Torabi (2011) analyzed the career path and career movement of librarians in Korea to identify and compare factors influencing the career movement path of chief librarians in public libraries and other librarians and to determine library positions' turnover rates, average career retention, career reinstatement, proximity between careers, and proximity between different libraries. A total of 816 librarians participated in the survey. The survey results on differences in gender show that most chief librarians (58.9%) were men compare to women (41.1%), while the ratio of women to men librarians is 2:5. Therefore, it is more likely that male librarians decide to become chief librarians. Analyzing the age of respondents indicates that it takes 20 years of library experience before one becomes a chief librarian. Survey results on differences in the final academic degree between librarians and chief librarians show that more librarians (96.7%) held higher graduate degree compare to chief librarians (87.6%).

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In the Indian context, perceptions of the public image of librarians of course slowly changing especially after the 6th Pay Commission and looking at the job prospects not only in education sector but even in corporate setup as well. In order to determine the reality, investigator has undertaken this study to determine the career perceptions about Library and information Science professionals mainly to

Identify the choice of Librarianship as a career;
Determine the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of Library and Information Science as a career among Librarians;
Evaluate the perceptions affecting the image of librarianship;

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Survey method using questionnaire tool has been adopted for collecting the responses from the working librarians working in Pre-University and Degree, Colleges and Engineering and Medical Colleges including school librarians to determine the library science Career Perceptions.

The present study is restricted to Bidar district Hyderabad Karnataka region. The study populations covered from Bidar district, in which 85 questionnaires were distributed and only 64 librarians responded. This study is more of exploratory nature and it does not take into account of teaching library professionals.

1.6 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Librarianship as a career at first time (N=64)

Librarianship as a career	Frequency	Percentage
While studying for the bachelor’s degree	9	14.1
After receiving bachelor’s degree	51	79.7
While engaged in another career or profession	2	3.1
After finishing high school	2	3.1
Total	64	100

It is found from table 1 that librarianship has been chosen as a career at first time by respondents under study only after receiving bachelor degree (79.7%, N=51). However only 14.1% of the respondents have thought of selecting librarianship as career at first time while they are studying for the bachelor degree (N=9). Thus, creating awareness and providing orientation by library authorities about the prospects and future of librarianship as a career is essential.

Table 2: Factors for joining Librarianship career

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
I liked the nature of the work in the library	28	43.7
Parent, friend, relative favored this choice	14	21.8
I was no other alternative option but to select this profession	10	15.6
I was just knowingly or unknowingly selected this career	5	7.8
I was interested in books and reading	22	34.3
I was influenced by a librarian that I knew	4	6.2

The factors for joining Librarianship career by the respondents are mainly because they like the nature of the work in the library that accounts less than half of the respondents (43.7%, N=28) and 34.3% of them joined as they were interested in books and reading and 21.8% intended to join as Parents, friend, relative favored this choice.(Table 2).

Although, the librarians being surveyed have already selected and working in the library selecting librarianship as a career, but question is are they satisfied with librarianship as a career or not, is depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Overall satisfaction associated with librarianship as a career

Sources of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Recognition of accomplishment by supervisors	22	34.3
Job security	35	54.6
Reasonable salaries	38	59.3
Opportunities for promotion	21	32.8
Better status in the society	16	25

It is found from the table 3 that more than half of the respondents are satisfied with their salaries (59.3%), job security (54.6%). 34.3% of respondents however are satisfied with recognition of accomplishment by their supervisors and not happy with promotional avenues which accounts to 32.8%. Only one fourth of respondents indicated better status in the society (25%).

Respondents source of dissatisfaction are mainly found to be librarianship as a thankless profession (85.9%) and

70.3% and 67% of respondents also found reasons of dissatisfaction as unsatisfactory working conditions in the library and low prestige and status of librarians. Other factors of dissatisfaction associated with librarianship as a career are Indifferent attitude of users (50%), Lack of promotion and advancement opportunities (51.5%) and low salary compared with other professions (34.3%).

Table 4: Overall dissatisfaction associated with librarianship as a career

Sources of dissatisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Thankless profession	55	85.9
Indifferent attitude of users	32	50.0
Low salary compared with other professions	22	34.3
Low prestige and social status of librarians	43	67.0
Unsatisfactory working conditions	45	70.3
Lack of promotion and advancement opportunities	33	51.5

As per the results from Table 5, the major factors that affect the public image of librarianship are poor qualities of existing libraries (90.6%) and then followed by low prestige of the profession (85.9%), comparatively less popular profession (81.2%) and respondents also indicated that people are not aware about the library science profession and its importance (70.3%).

Table 5: Affecting the Public image of Librarianship

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
People are not aware about the library science profession and its importance	45	70.3
Poor quality of existing libraries	58	90.6
Not much high profile profession when compared to others	52	81.2
Low prestige and social status of librarians	55	85.9

CONCLUSION

Irrespective of the results, the Library profession shares the glamour and respect, but relatively less as compared to other professions, for which the librarians have to change the mindset of the society and themselves with their skills and innovations to build better image of librarianship. This also requires the librarians to be more creative and provide value added services that will result appreciation from users and they start visualizing library profession as very distinctive. Inclusion of LIS subjects at graduation level, marketing the prospects of LIS courses and more importantly improving the outlook of the existing libraries, would definitely change the perceptions of LIS as a most viable discipline.

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