# Professional Requirements of LIS Professionals in E-World and Digital Environment: A Case Study of Public Libraries in Rajasthan

**Dr.D.K.Shrivastava** | Divisional librarian (In-charge)Govt. Divisional Public Library Kota-324009, Rajasthan

**ABSTRACT**  *The Rapid development of information and communication technologies has revolutionized the way in which information is collected, organised and accessed. An attempt has been made to study the role played by the Public Libraries in the socio-economic and educational development of nation. The services provided by these libraries could depend on the skills of the library professionals. Taking into consideration the importance of public libraries and technological changes that takes place today, the investigators conducted a survey to understand the library professional staff working in public libraries of Rajasthan, highlighted that the ICT Knowledge of the Library professional are significantly very low and need serious attention by the library authority of the state.*

## Introduction

The challenges of the 21st century digital environment on library and information services cannot be over emphasized. The dichotomy between the countries of the "centre" and those of the "periphery" could best be explained from the way and manner the former package and disseminate information. Hence information packaging and retrieval has shifted (in developed nations) and is gradually shifting from traditional methods to electronic formats in developing countries. Literature affirmed that although developing countries are striving to move with the developed nations in the area of digital information services, they lack adequate personnel to do so. The term digital environment conveys more or less the same meaning with information technology, library automation and digital library. The term digital environment is used to denote activities connected with computer-based processing, storage and dissemination of information. Information technology covers the application of computers, communication technologies, reprography, and microfilms including CD-ROM, online networking database technologies in the task of information handling and information flow from the generation to the utilization level. The impact of information Technologies on library and information Science has been so pervasive and momentous that information technology is characterised as industrial revolution. It is rated as a magical technology, which combines the skillful hand with reasoning mind.

The library professionals will have a challenging and dynamic role to play in the electronic environment. The technology is replacing the old methods of information collection, storage and retrieval. Advances in multimedia application will add new dimension to a librarian's job. Not only this, the library professionals are encountered with twin challenges of managing print collections and simultaneously developing digital resources and networked based information services. In order to face the technological changes, continuous professional development is an essential part of modern library and information professionals and it is a way to successful career planning and prospects. The library professionals with better managerial, personal, professional and technological competencies and skills have greater demand and the right future in the modern libraries. Frequent changes in the ICT in libraries require immediate improvement of different competencies and knowledge among library professional. Continuous staff training on emerging technologies is essential to learn, improve and develop various kinds of professional skill and to learn, improve and develop various kinds of professional skills and competencies.

## Rajasthan Public Libraries

Public libraries have long been the place where governments supply the necessary resources to develop an informed citizenry, including a safe and welcoming space, a trained librarian who can act as a guide, and a variety of information on topics ranging from culture to economics to education. The purpose of this assessment was to gain an understanding of the current information environment in Moldova, including strengths and weaknesses, and to begin to identify opportunities for the de-velopment of the public library sector that have the potential to lead to greater access to information for the citizens of Moldova. The purpose of this report is to publicly share the assessment results in order to inform the decisions of librarians, government officials (both local and national), investors, private donors, and concerned individuals who seek to improve the quality of life of Moldovan citizens through supporting the development of a modern public library system. Public library presents an opportunity for enhancing the dignity of individual human being. It is a potent force and the future will be greatly influenced by its vitality, variety, quality and extent .Most of the Public libraries today have more than just books and printed reference materials for patron use. Granted, printed materials still comprise a great deal of information contained in today's libraries but more and more libraries are expanding the resources available to the patrons. Libraries are starting to embrace technology as a method of increasing the library experience and resources available to patrons and guests at the library location. Most libraries today use some form of an electronic cataloging system or an ILS system which integrates most all of the libraries functions into electronic form to perform such tasks as tracking books loaned out, where books are located in multi-library systems, patron information and library Card barcodes, overdue books and the fees and fines levied against the patrons account and a great deal more. In using an ILS system with the book catalog in electronic form library patrons are able to perform searches on the libraries book collection much faster than could be done using the old card catalog method. Not only are books (both fiction and non-fiction) available but now there are also different sources such as DVDs and Cassette Tape books, DVD movies, electronic books on-line and access to on-line databases and the Internet as well. Most all but the smallest libraries offer some form of Internet access, mostly as Public Access computers setup within the library location that patrons can use to access both internal information resources (databases and online card catalogs) as well as Internet resources for information and research. Some libraries choose to "filter" the content of websites patrons and guests can access for many different reasons, mostly due to the "type" of content contained in some "types" of websites and protecting younger library patrons from some of the forms of information on the Internet. We all know what I mean by "type" of content. Other libraries choose to not filter any content and leave it to the discretion of the patron and/or guest to do the right thing. I am not going into a debate over which is the best method here as that is not the reason for this article. I only bring it up as it is a "sticky" point in discussions on Internet access in libraries and other public locations.

In Rajasthan there are number of public libraries established by the Government of Rajasthan. They are governed by Department of Language and Library, Govt. of Rajasthan Jaipur. Right now there are one State central Library, Seven Division Libraries, 33 District Libraries, 9 Departmental Panchayat Samiti libraries, 228 Panchayat Samiti Libraries run under Supervision of Schools and their Librarians and total libraries in Rajasthan is 278 and 39 Kids libraries run parallel by Some of Libraries.

### Table: Overview of Public Library in Rajasthan

| S.No. | Kinds of Public Library | Kinds of Public Library |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | State Central Library | 01 |
| 2. | Divisional Libraries | 07 |
| 3. | District Libraries | 33 |
| 4. | Panchayat Samiti Library Departmental | 09 |
| 5. | Panchayat Samiti Library Run under Schools | 228 |
| 6. | Kids Libraries | 39 |
| Total | | |

## Objective of the Study
**The objectives of the study are as follows:**
- To highlight the problems of IT application;
- To assess and evaluate the opportunities available to library personnel for their career growth and development;
- To reveal the attitude of the staff towards the implementation of IT in the Libraries;
- To evaluate the need of Manpower training for implementation of IT application
- To find out the present status of digital environment in Rajasthan public libraries.

## Methodology
The study was conducted through a questionnaire-based survey and interview method. A structured questionnaire with multiple choice and open ended question was designed according to the objectives, and was distributed to the staff of the State central Library, Division Libraries, District Libraries, Departmental Panchayat Samiti libraries, Panchayat Samiti Libraries run under Supervision of Schools. Altogether there were near by 229 Members of the staff in the public Libraries in the state. So total of 200 questionnaires were distributed out of which 147 were collected. The data thus collected was processed and analysed and the results obtained were discussed in the light of known facts to arrive at the finding and conclusion presented in the following section.

## Observation and analysis of Data
The present study has been taken to examine the staff strength of the Rajasthan Public Libraries and their attitude towards the digital environment. Analysis of Data is presented in the following tables.

### Table: 1 Strength of Public Libraries' Staff

| S.No. | Kinds of Public Library | No. of Staff | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Professionals | Non-Professionals | |
| 1. | State Central Library | 07 | 08 | 15 |
| 2. | Divisional Libraries | 21 | 70 | 91 |
| 3. | District Libraries | 33 | 68 | 101 |
| 4. | Panchayat Samiti Library Departmental | 09 | 13 | 22 |
| 5. | Panchayat Samiti Library Run under Schools | 228 | 0 | 228 |
| 6. | Kids Libraries | 39 | 0 | 39 |
| Total | | 337(67.94%) | 159(32.05%) | 496 |

As per collected data, the public libraries in state suffer from the lack of sufficient Professional staff. The authority needs to attend to this aspect and appoint more library Professionals, which amounted to only few Percent if we ignored to Panchayat Samiti libraries Run under the Schools. Panchayat Samiti libraries Run under the Schools are suffering the Problem of Subordinate staff like Class IV, Book Lifter, Ministerial Staff like –LDC, UDC etc.

### Table 2(A) Category: Professional

| With IT | Without IT |
|---|---|
| 97(28.78%) | 240(71.21%) |

### Table 2(B) Category: Non-Professional

| With IT | Without IT |
|---|---|
| 53(33.33%) | 106(66.67%) |

Table 2 reflects that only 28.78 % Professionals with the Knowledge of IT and rest are without IT. It's a serious indication shows that we have urgent Need to train the Professionals about IT .In this Condition a library in the digital era endowed withal the technologies cannot be functional Properly. It has to be kept in mind that the application of IT in Public libraries raises the efficiency of acquisition, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination services. Thus, it is high time for the library authorities to arrange proper IT training Programmes for all the staff.

### Table 3: Attitude towards IT

| Attitude | Favorable | Unfavorable | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| IT makes works easier | 343(69.15%) | 153(30.85%) | 496 |
| IT enhance my work | 301(60.68%) | 195(39.32%) | 496 |
| Eliminates tedious & repetitive work | 402(81.04%) | 94(18.96%) | 496 |

Table 3 shows that staff awareness of emerging IT environment and indicate that the great majority of Staff were aware of IT and were in favor of application of IT in libraries.

### Table 4: Opinion of IT Application

| Categories | Opinion of IT Application | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Necessary | Not Necessary | |
| Professional | 212 | 125 | 337 |
| Non Professional | 69 | 90 | 159 |
| Total | 281(56.65%) | 215(43.35%) | 496 |

The above table shows that 56.65% of the staff accepted the implementation of IT in the Libraries, while 43.35% respondents replied not necessary. They were the non Professional Staff.

### Table 5: Satisfaction of Man power Issue

| Elements | Satisfaction of Man power Issue | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | |
| Working Condition | 19.55 (%) | 399(80.44 %) | 496 |
| Job offered | 84(16.93%) | 412(83.07 %) | 496 |
| Opportunities to take part in Seminars/Workshop | 69(13.91%) | 427(86.09%) | 496 |
| Opportunities to enhance Qualification | 402(81.04%) | 94(18.96%) | 496 |

Table 5 reflect that the staff were not satisfied with working conditions with 80.44% saying "Dissatisfied" ,and 83.07% responded "Dissatisfied" to the opportunities to take part in seminars/workshops. While great majority of staff 86.09% replied "Satisfied" to the opportunities to enhance Qualifications, over and above the attitudes remained not so satisfactory in all elements given. The Authorities need a serious introspection in all the matters mentioned above.

## Discussion
The Professional development of the library professionals of public libraries respondents in the survey can be reviewed in the light of many factors including staff with IT Knowledge, their attitude towards the application of IT and libraries and other data from the respondents .while conducting the survey, it was strongly felt that the public libraries in the state have to adopt the tools of IT in order to provide information to the users community. Use of computers for resource sharing has to be accelerated to face the challenges posed by the developments in IT taking place in India and abroad. The Present study also reflects a sad Panorama of Rajasthan Public Libraries Pertaining to their Human resource planning with regard to IT Environment. The Survey results also highlighted that the non Professionals outnumbered the Professionals and most of them were computer illiterate. The Responses of elements provided also reflect a sad View. As a result, the public libraries are unable to provide effective services to the users and fail to cope with rapid changes of library environment owing to the emergence

of IT in Libraries excepting State Central and Divisional Librar-ies and Some of District Libraries. Budget also played an impor-tant part in working of the Libraries. The budget of the Public Library was so merge that no development work can be carried out smoothly .due to lack of funds the libraries are unable to subscribe the E-journals, Famous Indian and International Pro-fessional Journal. They could not Organise the library Extension service. Owing to the lack of Funds the staff were not encour-age to participate in workshop, seminars and conferences. As a result the professionals are not able to keep abreast with latest developments in their fields and motivate the People on the Im-portance of Public Libraries.

### Problems in the Application of Information Technology

Some of the Problems are listed below related to the application of IT in the Public Libraries of Rajasthan.

1. Lack of the qualified Professionals to operate library Auto-mation in the Libraries;
2. Library Professional Lack Knowledge and Training in IT ap-plication;
3. Limited numbers of library Professionals;
4. Inadequate numbers of Computers in the libraries.

### Implied suggestions

Library Professionals are important input in Public library Ser-vices. as such well qualified ,and trained library professionals in required numbers are essential to run and administrate the public library in the Progressive development of IT, particularly in digital environment .But the survey result indicate a gloomy picture of the Fact because defects lie in the Human resources Planning and Process. Therefore, to overcome these problems, some Important Suggestions are follows:-

1. The Main Hurdle towards the Implementation of IT in the Libraries is the Finance. Here as a suggestion we would like the Department of language and library, Government of Ra-jasthan to provide more grants for the development of the libraries in the state.
2. The Professionals should be provided with required moti-vators such as monetary gains, better working conditions, authority in decision Making, Personal Growth, etc to up-grade their skills in ever changing digital environment.
3. Selection and Recruitment of Library Professionals should be more stringent and the Skills and the qualification re-quired should be consistent with a nature of the Jobs to be performed.
4. In order to upgrade the professional competencies a contin-uous program of Training and other in-service /off-Service Course should be implemented.
5. Professionals should be encouraged to participate in the training Programmes, Seminars, Conferences, etc to keep themselves abreast of the latest trends in the field of library and Information Science.
6. Professionals should also try to develop their skill and com-petencies in the changing library Environment.

### Conclusion

Public Libraries are important focal points in community. In to-day's age IT, public libraries have to conceive as an effective sup-port mechanism for both the disseminations well as cultivation of Knowledge. The development of It in Public libraries is essen-tial if the libraries are to play an integral role in the New World of networked Information, Knowledge and Learning. The Library and Information are required to possess enhanced managerial, professional, and technical skill, adequate Knowledge and the right kind of experience. So training the existing manpower or recruiting new professionals will become essential. They must possess flexibility of attitude, imaginations and scientific bend of mind further, the libraries need to be upgraded along with the changing environment from its traditional to digital envi-ronment. Even though the introduction and the Use of It I the public libraries are in the initial stage, steps may be taken to develop the libraries with IT rather then being just Custodian of documents. It also appeal that soon the recommendation of Na-tional Knowledge Commission should be entertain to develop the Public library system in India or Especially in Rajasthan.

## REFERENCE

▪ Adedoyin, S.O. (2005). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy among the Staff of Nigerian University Libraries. Library Review54 (4): 457-266. | ▪ Chiware, Elisha R.T. (2007). Training Librarians for the digital age in African University Libraries. | ▪ Choubey, O. N. and Rajesh Kumar. "Role of Library Professional in digital Environment". In Proceedings of 50th All India Conference, December 1-14, 2004, Vadodara, Delhi: Indian Library Asso-ciation, 2004. | ▪ Devendra Singh ,H. "Scenario of Public Library system in Manipur". In Khomdon Singh and Tiken, M.C., Ed. Developments of Public Library Service and movement in the north –Estate state. Imphal: Manipur Library Association, 2002.pp .105-113. | ▪ Edie Rasmussen Choi, Y. (2006). Digital Libraries, 2006 JCDL'06 Proceedings of the 6A ACM/ IEEE Joint Conference on, Chapel Hill, NC., June: 187-188. | ▪ Hileima Devi, Aramab and Purnima Devi, Th. "Digital Environment of Manipur State Central Library: A Public Library Opinion Survey" in Proceedings of Bridging the digital divide, May 19-21, 2005.Aizwal.Kolkatta: Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, 2005. | ▪ Sagolsem,Memori, Purnima Devi and Vikas , "Professional development in Digital Enviornment : A Case Study of Public Libraries in Manipur" in Proceedings of Knowledge,Library and networking NACLIN 2007,November 20-23,2007.New Delhi: delnet,2007. | ▪ www.telegraph.in The Telegraph, July 30, 2007 |