Trends of Library Professionals' Job Market in Pakistan from 1991 to 2011

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ABSTRACT: The study analyzed the job ads for library professionals in Pakistan from 1991 to 2011. The findings show no significant changes in the span of 20 years. However, job opportunities have been growing gradually. In 1991, mostly jobs were offered in special libraries whereas in 2011, school libraries had more job openings. Higher degrees of MPhil and PhD are not requisite for any positions but the majority of jobs require BLIS/DLIS or MLIS. Although technology is penetrating in libraries, employers do not demand for it, especially in the government sector.

I. Introduction

The most noteworthy sign of the 21st century is change. In this age, everything is changing rapidly. This change happens in physical or external form as well as in internal form such as procedures of work or nomenclatures of things. The profession of library and information science is no exception. The last two decades witnessed drastic changes in this profession. Application of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in libraries has effected paradigm shifts and resulted in the transformation of libraries into the cyber and virtual environment. For example, the storage format of information is changed. So are service structure, information production, user demands, and working pattern. Even the nomenclature of librarians has evolved into knowledge manager, cybrarian, metadata librarian, etc.

In this digital age, IT literacy is a must for librarian. Safahieh and Asemi (2009) emphasized the need of latest computer literacy competencies for libraries for the enhancement of their productivity.

According to Shafique and Mahmood (2008), the use of modern ICTs in libraries is increasing in Pakistan. The findings of their study reveal that jobs in the LIS profession are growing steadily but there is a lack of consistency in job titles. Most of the job titles do not address proper requirements of the job market. The development of libraries depends on competent library professionals and IT experts.

Library schools are responsible for preparing library professionals. There are seven library schools in Pakistan that offer Master's and Ph.D. level education. These library schools need to revise their curriculum and incorporate new subjects from time to time in order to keep up with international standards. Ameen (2010) stated "Designing the regular formal educational program to learn a variety of the needed competency is a big challenge."

In Pakistan, schools, institutes, colleges, and universities are growing increasingly. So are job opportunities for library professionals.

Newspapers are the main source to publicize the job openings in Pakistan. Government, semi-government, and private employers advertise their job openings in the leading newspapers of Pakistan.

This study measured the changes in job trends by analyzing advertisements published in the leading newspapers of Sind Province, Pakistan. It is the first study that identified the changing trend in LIS profession in Sind.

II. Literature Review

Shongwe and Ocholla (2012) examined the LIS job market in South Africa by analyzing job ads published in two newspapers during three years. Their findings show that LIS jobs are growing rapidly. However, job opportunities in the public sector are high as compared to that in the private sector. Employers list the required professional skills, IT skills, and other type of skills, which indicate that libraries in South Africa are quite advanced in the application of ICT. As a matter of fact, IT skills are the most demanding skills for all positions. Among professional skills, collection development, AACR2, LCSH, MARC21, WorldCat, OPAC, RDA, library web 2.0, millennium system, and INNOPAC are required.

Cunha (2009) analyzed the Brazilian library job vacancies available online. Their findings show that 2,283 jobs for information professionals were posted during from January 2005 to February 2008. The majority (81.17%) were for librarian positions, followed by archivists.

Matthews and Pardue (2009) studied the contents of job ads from ALA's online JobLIST. Their findings indicate that librarians need a wider range of IT skills. Web development skill is the highly required skill, followed by program management and system development. However, programming language is least required.

Pamment (2008) explored the current trends and needs for professional development in the South Australian library and information service sector. Her findings denote that employers demand for professional and general skills such as communication skills and team relation skills. Furthermore, IT skills are highly demanded.

Gerolimos and Konsta (2008) identified 38 required qualifications and skills in the library job ads in United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and Australia. "Communication skill" and "working in team" are the most required skills, accounting for 38%.

Du, Stein, and Martin (2007) analyzed the content of advertisement posted on LIS job database. Their findings disclosed three themes of desired qualifications. Academic background, communication skills, and professional/technology skills are mostly required in addition to an MLS degree from an ALA-accredited library school.

Kennan, Willard, and Wilson (2006) compared job ads in Australia with that in United States and found that there was a lack of clarity in skills and competencies required for library professionals in both countries.

Zhang (2008) studied the job ads and found that the requirement of language skills has increased for academic and research librarians. Of all library positions, technical services and public services jobs require more language skills. There exists a correlation between language skills and work experiences.

III. Scope of the Study and Its Limitations

The present study covers all types of jobs relevant to the library and information science profession whether they are in academic, university, school, public, special or other types of libraries. Only professional librarian job positions were analyzed. Excluded are educators and teaching positions. Geographically, it is limited to Sind Province of Pakistan.

IV. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the trends of job market for library professionals in Sind province of Pakistan. More specific objectives are as follows:

1. To find out changes in job openings in Sind province of Pakistan
2. To compare the nomenclature of library professionals in twenty years
3. To analyze the changing trend of job titles for library professionals
4. To compare the required qualifications for library professionals
5. To analyze the deviation in skill requirements, i.e., communication skills, IT skills, and professional skills

V. Research Methodology

Content analysis is adopted in the current study for the measurement of changes in LIS job trends. It is the most common practice in Pakistan that vacant jobs are advertised in newspapers. And job ads are the best indicators of skills and competencies required by employers. Therefore, job ads published in newspapers in four leading newspapers in Sind province of Pakistan were selected for analysis.

VI. Findings and Discussion

The four leading newspapers published in Sind province of Pakistan (i.e., *Jang*, *Dawn*, *The News*, and *Jasarat*) were selected for this study. These four newspapers have equal language diversity. Two are published in English and two in Urdu. Job ads in two specific years (i.e., 1991 and 2011) with twenty years apart were examined and compared for the changes. If one advertisement published in more than one newspaper, as it is common in Pakistan, or if government jobs are posted in both English and Urdu newspapers, only one was included in the study. Similarly, if two job positions published in one advertisement, each individual job title

was counted. *Table 1* shows that 39 jobs in 1991 and 71 jobs in 2011 were advertised in the four leading newspapers in Sind.

Table 1. Distribution of job ads in newspapers

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	%	Freq n=71	%
Jang	21	19.09	33	30
Dawn	16	14.54	26	23.63
The News	-	-	12	10.09
Jasarat	2	1.81	-	-
Total	**39**		**71**	

The library professionals' jobs advertised in two years 1991 and 2011 were analyzed to find out the changes happened in 20 years.

1. Job Openings

Table 2. Jobs advertised in newspapers

Year	Freq.	%
1991	39	35.45
2011	71	64.55
Total	110	100

Table 2 shows that the library professional jobs in Pakistan have been increased. In 1991, a total of 71 (35.45%) jobs were advertised. In 2011, job openings were increased by 29.10%. These figures are encouraging and hopeful for the future, although the findgings are not compatible with that of the developed countries. For example, a study by Matthews and Pardue (2009) showed a total of 906 jobs listed on ALA's online JobLIST between October 1, 2007 to March 22, 2008 and Younger (2005) identified 1,000 advertisements for LIS positions published in CILIP gazette of United Kingdom between April 2004 and March 2005.

2. Title Description

Table 3 Job Title

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	%	Freq n=71	%
Librarian	27	69.23	49	69.01
Assistant Librarian	9	23.07	9	12.68
Library Assistant	2	5.12	4	5.63
Cataloguer	-		3	4.22
Classifier	-		2	2.82
Bibliographer	-		2	2.82
Library Officer	-		1	1.40
Flying Officer	-		1	1.40

Acting Lieut and acting sub Lieut	1	2.56	-	-
Total	**39**		**71**	

A promising job title in the library profession will create a good, motivating impact on people's mind. In Pakistan, the word "librarian" denotes a low status job. *Table 2* shows that there is no significant change in job titles in twenty years. The most common title is librarian in both years. In 1991, 27(69.23%) and in 2011, 49(69.01%) jobs were advertised by the name of librarian. There is some change decrease in the use of the title "assistant librarian" from 9 (23.07%) in1991 to 9 (12.68%) in 2011.

In 2011 some new job titles were advertised such as Cataloguer (3, 4.22%), Bibliographer (2, 2.82%), Classifier (2, 2.82%), Library officer (1, 1.40%) while none of such titles were advertised in 1991.

One job of armed forces was also advertised in 2011. Their job titles portray their nature of establishments. For example, Pakistan Air Force advertised a job by the title of Flying Officer in 2011 while Pakistan Navy advertised a job by the title of Acting Lieutenant and Acting Sub-Lieutenant in 1991.

The application of IT is gradually increased in libraries in Pakistan but not a single IT-oriented title was found in the job ads. It indidates the poor status of library professionals in Pakistan. In comparison, Starr (2003) compared library jobs in the United States in 1983 with that of 2003 and found many new IT-related job titles.

A study by Ocholla (1995) showed that the generic term Assistant Director is used to depict the nature of a job, for example, assistant director for technical services, assistant director of library services, and assistant director for reference services.

In Pakistani situations, there is an urgent need to change the old, outdated job titles. New IT-oriented, impressive job titles will help upgrade librarian's status in society. IT-related titles will give librarians confidence and make them feel proud. According to Nicholas, Dobrowolski, Huntington, and Raper (2000), "We need to change our words to change our thinking."

3. Grade/Scale

Table 4. Grade/Scale against job positions

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Below 16	-		11	15.49
16	8	20.51	5	7.04
17	8	20.51	9	12.68
18	-	-	3	4.22
Above 18	-	-	2	2.82
Not mention	23	58.97	40	56.33

NDU pay scale	-	-	1	1.40
Total	**39**		**71**	

The most common trend seen in both years is that the grade/scale against the job position is not mentioned. Jobs advertised without indicating the grade/scale in 1991 were 23 (58.97%) and in 2011, 40 (56.33%).

In general, private sector organizations in all professions do not have a pay scale/salary structure except for large private organizations/groups. In other words, private sector organizations usually advertise their job openings without mentioning the salary range. For those organizations, salaries are negotiated at the time of interview.

The situation in the government sector is quite different. Their job description is made at the time of job creation. Scales and their allowances are fixed according to government rules. Similarly, their salaries are not negotiable. The government revises their pay scale and allowances time to time. The findings in *Table 4* show that 11 (15.49%) jobs below Grade 16 were opened in 2011 while none were announced in 1991. 5 (7.04%) advertised jobs were of Grade 16 in 2011 and 8 (20.51%) in 1991. Grade 16 and above are gazetted grades. In 1991, 8 (20.51%) jobs of Grade 17 were opened whereas in 2011, 9 (12.68%) such jobs were advertised. Only 3 (4.22%) jobs of Grade 18 and 2 (2.82%) above Grade 18 were advertised in 2011. On the other hand, none of the jobs of Grade 18 or above were opened in 1991. Usually, the Grades 18 and 19 are not advertised. The professionals who are working in Grades 16 and 17 grades are promoted to higher grades. So such vacancies are filled internally without being publicized. Some government organizations do not offer promotions. Every position in such organizations is a selection position. If one is in Grade 17, he or she needs to qualify for the selection criteria before applying for the job. Some federal government organizations have their own pay scales. Only one job at the National Defense University was found in the data collected and it has its own pay scale.

4. Salary

Table 5. Salaries

	Year 1991		**Year 2011**	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Fix	21	53.84	36	50.70
Negotiable	3	4.22	5	7.04
Not mention	15	38.46	30	42.25
Total	**39**		**71**	

As far as salaries are concerned, government salaries are offered according to pay scale. In 1991, only 21 (53.84%) jobs were advertised with fixed salary in Rupees whereas in 2011, 36 (50.70%). The range of salary was 3,000-6,500 Rupees in 1991 and in 2011, this range was increased to 9,000-20,000 Rupees. With the difference of twenty years, the value of currency is more or less the same. As to the jobs with negotiable salaries, there were 3 (4.22%) job in 1991

and 5 (7.04%) in 2011. The jobs in which salaries are not mentioned were 15 (38.46%) in 1991 and 30 (42.25%) in 2011

In general, private organizations do not mention salaries. Some offer negotiable salaries. Obviously, these are low-paid jobs in the private sector, especially in school libraries, institutes and private college and university libraries.

5. Occupational Status

Table 6. Occupational status of jobs

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Permanent	10	25.64	5	7.04
Temporary	4	10.25	2	2.82
Contract	-	-	4	5.63
Internship	-	-	1	1.40
Others	-	-	3	4.22
Not mention	25	64.10	56	78.88
Total	**39**		**71**	

Table 6 shows that most jobs in both years do not mention the occupational status. 25 (64.10%) jobs advertised in 1991 and 56 (78.88%) jobs in 2011 did not indicate their occupational status.

In 1991, 10 (25.64%) job openings were for permanent employment while only 5 (7.04%) jobs were permanent in 2011. As far as temporary jobs are concerned, 1991 had 4 (10.25%) and 2011 had 2 (2.82%).

There were no contract-base jobs opened in 1991 but 4 (5.63%) in 2011. Similarly, no internship jobs were found in 1991 but 1 in 2011.

Generally, government jobs are permanent with a 2-year probationary period. Usually, the private sector does not offer permanent jobs. Contract-based jobs are offered due to the fact that library professionals seek new opportunities and resign from their current jobs. To discourage this practice, contract-based jobs are offered.

6. Qualification Requirements

Table 7. Qualifications for library professionals

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Not mentioned	8	20.51	20	28.16
Ph.D.	-	-	-	-
M.Phil.	-	-	1	2.82
MLIS	21	53.84	27	38.02
DLIS/BLIS	8	20.51	10	14.08

B.A.	1	2.56	9	12.68
Intermediate	1	2.56	2	2.82
Metric	-	-	-	-
Post graduate	-	-	2	2.82
Total	**39**		**71**	

Theoretical knowledge is the foundation of every profession. In the library profession, it is embodied in the BLIS and MLIS degrees. The most required qualification for library professionals is MLIS. It is true in both years. *Table 7* shows that 21 (53.84%) jobs in 1991 and 27 (38.02%) in 2011 required MLIS. Du, Stein, and Martin (2007) reported that the most wanted qualification listed in advertisements stored in the LIS job database is an MLS degree from an ALA-accredited library school.

There were 8 (20.51%) job ads in 1991 that required BLIS and 10 (14.08%) in 2011. At the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Karachi, MLIS is a two-year program. First year of MLIS was once called DLIS but in 1982 it was renamed as BLIS.

M.Phil. and Ph.D. are higher-level research-oriented degrees. Only one job ad required an M.Phil. degree in 2011 while none in 1991. Ph.D. was not required in any ads in both years.

Here is an interesting finding regarding qualifications. It is amazing that B.A. was required in 2011 in 9 (12.68%) job ads but only 1 (2.56%) in 1991. An Intermediate degree was demanded in 1 (2.56%) job ad in 1991 and 2 (2.82%) in 2011.

Generally, employers in Pakistan are not aware of the library profession. Small private organizations usually demand for a B.A. degree or intermediate-level education.

Cunha (2009) reported that in Brazil, a librarian documentalist position required a bachelor degree in library studies. Gerolimos and Konsta (2008) investigated job ads in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, and Australia and found that 82% of the library positions required a degree in LIS.

7. Professional Skills Required

Table 8. Required professional skills

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Preferred	-	-	2	2.82
Not mention	32	82.05	64	90.14
Cataloging	1	2.56	2	2.82
Classification	1	2.56	-	-
Reference	-	-	-	-

Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Resource management	-	-	-	-
Record management	-	-	-	-
Bibliography	1	2.56	-	-
Typing	1	2.56	-	-
Library administration	-	-	2	2.82
Others	3	4.22	1	1.40
Total	**39**		**71**	

The history of library and information science evidenced that it is a transitional and growing field. Professional skills are the most neglected skills in the job ads. *Table 8* shows a list of library professional skills. In 1991, 32 (82.05%) job ads did not mention professional skills required and in 2011, 64 (90.14%). None of the job ads in 1991 listed preferred professional skills and only 2 (2.82%) in 2011. Most employers did not list specific professional skills. Only 1 (2.56%) ad in 1991 required cataloguing and classification skills and 2 (2.82%) in 2011 required cataloging skills.

Library administration is the skill essential for higher and middle-level positions. However, this skill was not required in the job ads in 1991 and only 2 (2.82 in 2011. Reference work, acquisition work, resource management, and record management were not listed as requirement in both years. Only 1 (2.56%) job ad in 1991 required skills in bibliography and typing.

Some other skills like "specialized in medical librarianship" and MARC are kept in the Others category. These were 3 (4.22%) in 1991 and only 1 (1.40%) in 2011.

Most job announcements did not define the nature and/or scope of the job to be performed as there were no indications of required professional skills.

8. Computer Skill Requirement

Table 9. Computer skills required

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Preferred	-	-	-	-
Not mentioned	34	87.18	65	91.54
Operating system	-	-	-	-
Programming language	-	-	-	-
Database	-	-	-	-
Spreadsheet	-	-	-	-
Automation	-	-	-	-
Digitization	-	-	-	-
Internet	-	-	-	-
Library database	-	-	-	-

MS Office	-	-	1	1.40
WINISIS	-	-	1	1.40
Computer typing	3	7.69	-	-
Others	2	5.12	4	5.63
Total	**39**		**71**	

In Pakistan, IT has been applied in library operations. However, this process is slow in all types of libraries except for special libraries. A list of computer skills is provided in *Table 9*. It shows that in 1991, 34 (87.18%) job ads did not mention any required computer skills. However, in 2011, 65 (91.54%) job ads listed computer skill requirement. The year 1991 did not remark the inception. The process of automation is somewhat highlighted since 2000. Still, job ads in 2011 did not require competencies in programming language, digitization, database management, etc. One reason for lack of requirement in job ads for computer skills is that the job description in government ads has not been revised for a long time. Nonetheless, in 1991, 3 (7.69%) job positions demanded computer typing skills and 2 (5.12%) in other categories, which included PC operator and A/V equipment operator whereas in 2011, only 1 (1.40%) vacancy demanded MS Office and 1 (1.40%) for expertise in WINISIS software.

Younger (2005) and Deekan and Thomas (2006) reported that ICT skills were the most required skills in the United Kingdom. Pamment (2008) also reported that ICT and technology application skills were highly sought by Australian libraries. Matthews and Pardue (2009) found in ALA's online JobLIST that 72% of job ads listed at least one IT skill requirement. Web development skill was the most required skill. Furthermore, project management and system development skills were also required.

9. Communication Skills

Table 10. Required Communication skills

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Not mentioned	38	97.43	69	97.18
Preferred	-	-	-	-
English	1	2.56	2	2.81
French	-	-	-	-
Sindhi	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	**39**		**71**	

Communication skill is a key element in the library profession. LIS is a service-oriented profession where librarians perform as key communicators. The success of the job mostly depends on communication skills. *Table 10* shows no remarkable change in both years. In 1991, 38 (97.43%) and in 2011, 69 (97.18%) job ads did not indicate a requirement for communication skills. With regards to language, only 1 (2.56%) job ad in 1991 and 2 (2.82%) demanded proficiency in the English language. Other languages such as French, Spanish, and regional

language Sindhi is not required in both years. In Pakistan, except English, other European languages are not spoken or communicated generally. Thus, they are usually not required.

10. Experience requirement

Table 11. Required Experiences

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Not mentioned	13	33.33	35	49.30
Preferred	8	20.51	5	7.04
Required	5	12.82	6	8.45
1-3	10	25.64	9	12.67
4-5	3	4.22	10	14.08
6-8	-	-	4	5.63
9-12	-	-	1	1.40
13-15	-	-	1	1.40
Total	**39**		**71**	

A professional with theoretical knowledge and experience performs best. As theoretical knowledge provides fundamental information, there is no substitute of learning through experience.

According to the findings as shown in *Table 11*, 8 (20.51%) jobs in 1991 and 5 (7.04%) jobs in 2011 preferred experience. Job vacancies which do not mention experience were 13 (33.33%) in1991 and 35 (49.30%) in 2011. In 1991, 5 (12.82%) jobs required experience but without indicating years of experience. Ten (25.64%) job ads in 1991 indicated a requirement of 1-3 years' experience while 9 (12.67%) in 2011. Three (4.22%) job ads in 1991 and 10 (14.08%) in 2011 required 4-5 years' experience. In 2011, one job ad (1.40%) required 9-12 years' experience and another one (1.40%) required 13-15 years' experience. Such long experiences were not required in job ads in 1991.

In comparison, Gerolimos and Konsta (2008) found out that 60% of job ads in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, and Australia required working experiences.

11. Types of Libraries

Table 12. Job openings by library type

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Not mentioned	11	28.20	8	11.26
Academic institute	2	5.12	3	4.22

University	1	2.56	13	18.30
College	2	5.12	8	11.26
School	5	12.86	25	35.21
Public	-	-	-	Nil
Special	18	46.15	12	16.90
Medical	-	-	2	2.82
Total	**39**		**71**	

Table 12 shows that special libraries advertised for 18 (46.15%) jobs in 1991 but only 12 (16.9%) in 2011, a significant decrease in percentage.

On the other hand, there was a remarkable increase of jobs in university and college libraries, from 1 (2.56%) in 1991 to 13 (18.3%) in 2011 and from 2 (5.12%) in 1991 to 8 (11.26%) in 2011 respectively. As Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has chartered many private universities, the number of jobs for library professionals in university and college libraries is increasing.

There was also a significant increase of jobs in school libraries, which offered 5 (12.86%) jobs in 1991 but 25 (35.21%) in 2011. Karachi is the largest city in Pakistan. There are many schools owned by private sectors in Karachi. The growing numbers of schools are creating more job opportunities for librarians.

12. Types of Employers

Table 13. Types of employers

	Year 1991		Year 2011	
	Freq n=39	**%**	**Freq n=71**	**%**
Not mentioned	4	10.25	1	1.40
Federal government	14	35.90	23	32.40
Provincial government	4	10.25	13	18.30
Semi-government	3	7.69	8	11.26
Private	14	35.90	26	36.61
Total	**39**		**71**	

Table 13 shows that most of the jobs (26, 36.61%) in 2011 were opened by private organizations. The federal government was the second largest employer, offering 23 (32.40%) of the jobs in 2011. Provincial government was the third with 13 (18.30%) job openings whereas semi-government employers advertised for 8 (11.26%) jobs.

Karachi is the hub of educational, business, trade, and social activities of Pakistan There are many institutions, offices, and business organizations under private ownership. That is why most jobs are offered by the private sector.

VII. Conclusion

There are no significant changes in the job market in twenty years in Pakistan. Job titles and skill requirements are more or less the same after twenty years. However, the number of job openings has increased, indicating that job opportunities are growing in Pakistan.

There are changes in job opportunities in different types of libraries. In 1991 mostly jobs were offered in special libraries whereas in 2011 school libraries opened more jobs.

As far as qualifications are concerned, library professional jobs do require BLIS/DLIS or MLIS whereas neither M.Phil. nor Ph.D. is required. However, the majority of the job ads did not specify desired professional skills, such as IT, communication, and management skills.

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