

RE-DESIGNATION OF LIBRARIAN: EMPOWERING HUMAN RESOURCE

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Abstract *The designation is a name given purposefully to a person for his job and it is the term used for identification of a particular job. The status and cadre of librarian has been a controversial topic in the academic circle of our country. The designation of the post of “Librarian” should be reviewed in the present ICT Scenario. Other departments used to review and change the designation of various posts from time to time as per the need and demand on the basis of work, responsibility, nature of work, status, cadre etc. Article discusses that we are not meeting the demand of the hour and we are still behind the time. Person working anywhere is librarian whether it is a public library, school library, college library, university library, special library, research institution, digital library, e-library and so on. All the designations are “librarian and librarian”. A questionnaire is circulated and online survey method is adopted for observing the opinion of the library professionals, teachers, students, research scholars regarding changes in nomenclature of the “Librarian Post” at various levels i.e. schools, colleges, University and Public Libraries. The data is analysed in form of tables and charts. Suggestions are also given for empowering the human resources working in the libraries.*

Keywords: *Designation, Job Title, Nomenclature, ICT Era, Digital Library, Work Profile, Professional Association, Regulatory Body*

INTRODUCTION

The image of a profession is created in form of the judgment or perception of others by analyzing the nature of work, type of work, customer satisfaction, quality and quantity of the performance etc. Status come with appropriate nomenclature and designation of the post held by the person in his work place. There is common misconception in the society that every person working in the library is “Librarian”.

Designation is the name, description or title given to someone for his job and position he or she has. The term designation is used to identify the nature and responsibility of a job or work. It refers to someone’s position that are classified or designed on the basis of qualification, experience, type of work, job responsibility etc in a particular organisation.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Fisher (1988) study reveals that “that many people tend to misunderstood librarians, their skills and their work. They also have various misconception about image and status”.

According to Joshi (2008) “The image of librarian just like a clerk in the society and people think that his main work is only issue and return of the books. In society it is a common perception that librarian is store keeper and custodian of library. Image is a mental picture of a person, of what they are look like. Perceptions are formed by experience with the person or persons, in this process it is not necessary that

person does not come direct contact to him/her but make a perception about professionals through secondary sources like electronic or print media, friends, neighbors, films etc. This type of image perception is not a static feature and it changes over time and with each new experience.”

Prins and Gier (1995), concluded on the basis of International survey “the library profession has been facing image problems for a quite long time. Further they stated that there is no easy and fast solution to change the image of the library professionals. Librarians should find out new ways to sort out this very serious issue”.

Fagan, Ostermiller, Price and Sapp (2019), “conducted a study to know the Librarians’ image, role and work among the students and staff. The study reveals that students and faculty members have the limited views about the librarian. The study aims to investigate the following objectives such as identifying the prevailing images and stereotypes of librarians among the students.”

Ali, Yu and Amran (2018), “conducted a survey to analyse the image, skill and work of the librarian of public libraries. The findings shows that users have stereotype image of librarians in Malaysia.”

According to the survey conducted by Bickley and Corral (2011), “librarians were considered as unambitious people, although as a whole, they were perceived as inefficient, unintelligent, apathetic, and uncooperative”.

Vassilakaki and Moniarou-Papaconstantinou (2014) analysed “librarians perception, students perception and

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media perception about Library and information Science professionals. It was found that librarians were negatively perceived by both the wider public and the students. In the mass media “the old maid” image was dominant.”

The study conducted by Pachauri, NK (2020), reveals that “the image of a profession is created in form of the judgment or perception of others by analysing the nature of work, type of work, customer satisfaction, quality and quantity of the performance etc. Study covers the image of library professionals in cinema, commercial advertisement, comic books, and print media and in the society”.

Dike Chide and Nkechi (2014) discussed that, “change in designation of Teacher librarian will empower them and it will reflect in their new and changing roles in education. The research recommends that the designation of school librarian should Library and Media Specialist for effective utilisation of human resource.”

As per Bewick and Corral (2010) “In the present ICT era the role and responsibility of librarians as teachers has also developed significantly. They are showing their expertise into the online classrooms, institutional course management system, virtual learning and automated systems.”

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is conducted to know the opinion, perception related to re-designation of librarian at various levels like school, college, university, research institutions and public libraries. The study also analysed the cadre, status, recognition and promotional avenues of library professionals.

METHODOLOGY

Online survey method is the primary data collection instrument in this investigation. Google form was created and sent to students, teachers, research scholars, librarians, professors and other professionals via WhatsApp groups, email and social media groups. Data tabulated and analysed in form of charts and tables. Various designations are suggested for all the levels through a mix of closed and open ended questions for respondents. The suggestion column is also provided for recommendation and guidance.

DATA ANALYSIS

In the questionnaire various open ended questions were asked to know the opinion about the profession. Total 151 responses received from the professionals. As we may observe (Fig. 1) that the majority of respondent are from the library profession or librarian.

Out of 151 respondents 90.7% Librarian, 3.3% Professors followed by 2.6% students responded.

Question title: Profession. Number of responses: 151 responses.

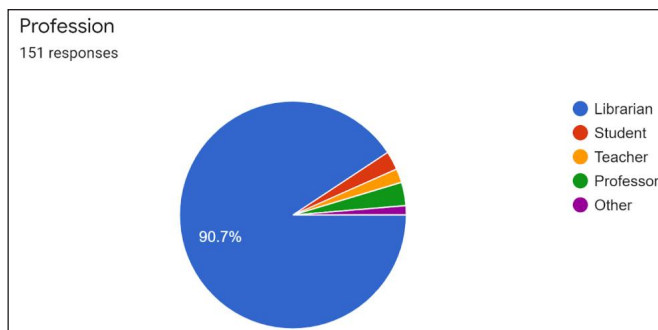


Fig. 1: Professional Area of Respondents

The topics for discussion were included in the questionnaire are as follows:

Review of Designation

The first question was related to review of Librarians’ designation. In the present ICT environment, we are on the web portal instead of manual register, using e-resource, creating blogs, using OSS and providing e-mail alert services, OPAC, online document delivery, e-services, open access, 24x7 services etc. Therefore, “Librarian” designation is not ideally suitable in this ICT scenario. The question is raised about review of the designation and 94% respondents were in favour of Re-designation of the post of librarian.

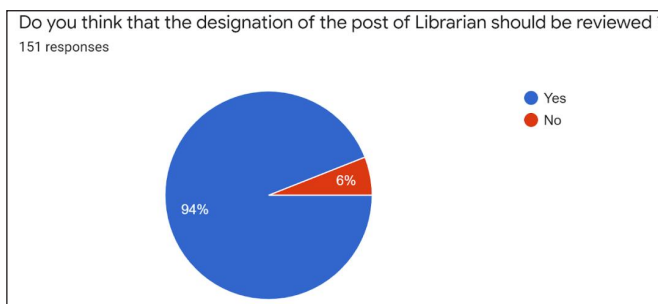


Fig. 2: Review of Designation

Re-Designation at All Academic Levels:

The librarian designation everywhere is the same. There is no differentiation of nomenclature of librarian in school library, college library, university library, research library and so on.

In this regard the question raised that whether the nomenclature of librarian should be the same for all the above

academic levels. 67.5% respondents strongly supported that the librarian designations should not be the same in all the academic institutes like school, college, university and research institutes.

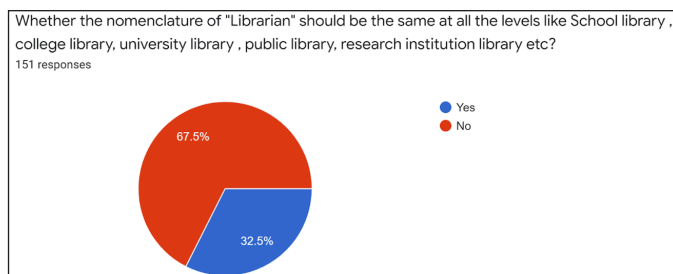


Fig. 3: Re-Designation at Various Academic Levels

Re-Designation of School Librarian

We may observe Fig. 4, that 90% respondents are in favour of Re-designation of the post of School librarian and among them 57% strongly support that designation of librarian should be PGT (LIS or Library) at school level. 19.9% are in favour of Teacher Librarian, 16.6% are in favour of Library teacher while only 10% respondents are saying that there is no need to re-designate the librarian post at school level.

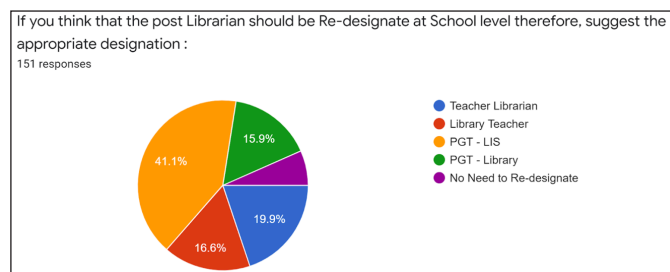


Fig. 4: Re-Designation of School Librarian

Re-Designation in Higher Education

In the higher education institutes the survey indicates that 93% respondents support to re-designate the librarian post at degree college and university level. 37.1% respondents want to change the nomenclature as Asst. Professor (LIS), 26.5% are in favour of Information Officer and 16.6% want to re-designate as Asst. Professor (Information and Resources). 15.2% respondents are in favour of Asst. Professor (Library) while only 7% professionals don't want to re-designate the post librarian in Higher education.

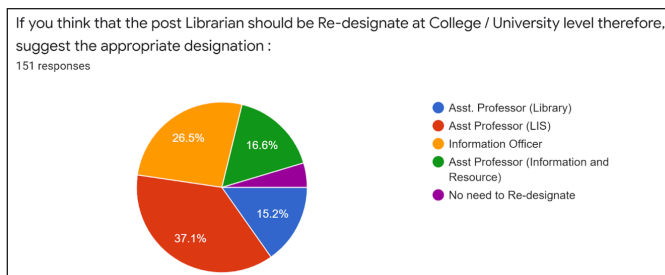


Fig. 5: Re-Designation in Higher Education

Re-Designation in Public Library

As per Fig. 6, out of 151 responses 94% professional strongly support that the post of Librarian in Public Library may be re-designated as Library and Information Officer, Library Manager and Information Officer. Only 6% respondents say that there is no need to re-designate the post of librarian in Public Libraries.

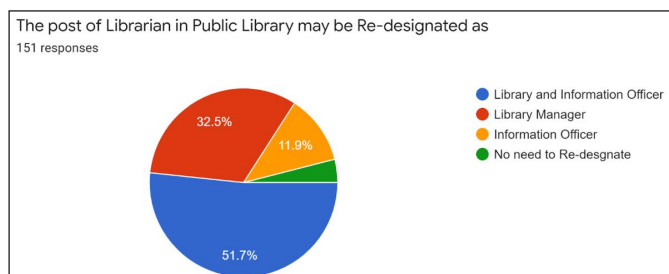


Fig. 6: Re-Designation in Public Library

Impact of Re-Designation on Career Advancement

Re-designation of the post of librarian at various level may provide the social status, cadre, career advancements, promotional avenues and more recognition not only in their parent organisation but also in the society.

It is observed that 88.1% professional think that re-designation will definitely provide them the career advancement, promotional avenues, status and cadre. 9.9% respondents are not sure that re-designation may increase more channels of recognition, promotion, career advancement and status for the librarians' in the organisation as well as in society. Only 3% professionals did not agree with the above said statement.

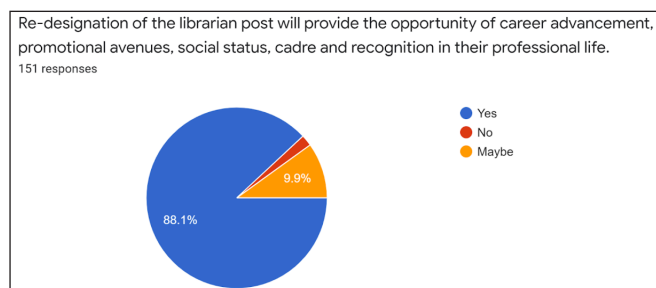


Fig. 7: Career Advancement

Do Designations Really Matter?

Designation is most important factor because it allows others in the institution and society members to know the type of work level, capacity and cadre do you have. An employee will be demoralized by experiencing that after completing 20 years of service as librarian he or she still is a librarian. On the other hand their colleagues who recruited at the same time are enjoying other higher post and designations viz. Education Officer, Dean, Director, HOD, Subject Expert, Principal and so on.

It is common perception in the society that every person working in the library is “Librarian”. Sometime designation also misguide the people, as layman don’t know the difference between the Librarian of a public library, school library, college library, university library, special library, research institution, e-library and so on. From the ancient time the social cadre and status of any person determined by his/her work in our society. Designation written on a visiting card decides your status and cadre. This is the bitter truth that designation always matters and provides the social status in our society to everybody.

It is an assumption that designation is also very important for marriage proposals. The designation is very significant for everyone in his/her professional life. Designation has the direct relationship with experience, seniority and hierarchy in the organisation. Therefore, designation must be used which may reflect his/her cadre, status, work profile position and pay structure in the organisation.

Re-Designation: Need of the Hour

The status of librarian has been a controversial topic in the academic circle of our country. The most probable reason seems to be the image of old librarian still lingers on in the present society. Library profession is insufficiently recognized in our society. In olden times, a person who is low educated could be considered fit to the work as a librarian. His/her main job was to take care of the keys of the

almirah and act as a custodian of the books. This image of librarian continued to persist because there were no training course nor did they do any special work like the modern time library professionals.

Presently the library profession is revolutionized in the ICT era and we are on the web clouds instead of manual register, using e-resources, providing online alert services, OPAC, online document delivery, open educational resources, institutional repositories, e-housekeeping services, open access, 24x7 services so it would not be wrong to say that re-designation is the demand of the hour. Librarians are equally qualified as the teachers. The minimum eligibility, qualification, selection criteria and responsibly are same as other teachers.

We should know that what are the factors still dominating the old image of librarians? As our educational system having different level like primary, secondary, higher secondary, Post-Graduation and Doctoral education similarly as designation of different level of library professional should be differentiated with the designation (not similar word ‘librarian’ can use). I strongly believed that the different level of librarian should be differentiated by different designation so that user community can easy to identify our different roles in the education system.

Let’s consider some other facts; some years back all the doctors were called simply doctors. As the intensity of work changed and specialized practices started in the medical fields like heart, bone, child, teeth, nervous system, skin etc. The terminology for the specialists changed like Cardiologist, Orthopedics, Pediatrics, Dentist, Neurologist, Dermatologist, Psychologist etc. They adopted new terminologies as per their specialization of work and to satisfy the need of the hour.

In the research Institutes all are scientists but they classify them according to their nature and responsibilities of the job and cader. They divided various specialist into various grades as Scientist – A, Scientist – B, Scientist – C, Scientist – D, Research Head and so on.

In our Educational system, the designation of Education Officers is changed to Deputy Commissioner (Academics)/ Assistant Commissioner (Academic), Director of Education etc. All the teachers from primary class to university are classified on the basis on their qualification and nature of institute like Primary Teacher, TGT, PGT, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, HOD, Dean etc.

In the Police department, in the present scenario the post of Daroga renamed as “Police Inspector” due to outdated term and changing the nature of work and responsibilities. The designation of the post of Driver in Railways changed to “Loco Pilot” because this term more exhaustive and differentiate and justify the work comparatively Truck

and Taxi Driver. The designation of the post of Collector is changed to “District Magistrate” to make the post more exhaustive. Nomenclature of clerk is obsolete nowadays and Senior Secretariat Assistant – SSO and Junior Secretariat Assistant – JSA word is using for clerks. The nomenclature of the post of Patwari changed to “Lekhpal”. BSF Academy Tekanpur changed the nomenclature of Librarian post as “Inspector (Librarian)”.

Let us take example from banking sector the post of Cashier is renamed as “Cash Officer” and even the designation of “Peon” is now obsolete. Earlier the post of Peon was re-designated as Group D and now it is called “MTS-Multi Tasking Staff”. There are many more examples in Government and Private sector of re-designation.

As we may observe that all the departments are changing the nomenclature of the post as per the work, demand, nature, changing environment, need of the hour, role and responsivity.

To keep the staff motivated the review of designation must be done from time to time and offbeat designations should be eliminated.

But still we are the “Librarian, librarian and librarian”. I think that we are not meeting the demand of the hour and we are still behind the time. Person working anywhere is librarian whether it is a public library, school library, college library, university library, special library, research institution, digital library, e-library and so on. All are the librarian and librarian, this is the root cause of the image perception about the librarians because a layman, shopkeeper and student could not differentiate between a Librarian of Public Library, School Library, University Library, and Research Library and so on.

In Uttar Pradesh the Librarians of Degree colleges are re-designated as Assistant Professor (Library) and now librarians are in the mainstream of the educational system. They are not only getting seniority benefits at par with the other subject professors but also they are getting promotion to the Principal post.

Role of Professional Associations

We should pay the homage to the father of Library Science Dr. S. R. Ranganathan because he was the person who gave us the teaching cadre pay scales at par with teachers. Being a member of UGC Committee Dr. Ranganathan did splendid job for librarians. One may imagine his vision that due to his herculean efforts the post of “Reference Librarian”, “Information Scientist”, and “Cataloger” may be created in higher education. He strongly raised the voice of library professional through library associations at various national platforms.

It is prime role and responsibility of library association to raise the voice about unemployment, promotion, re-designation, pay scales, cadre and status of library professional. Library association should write to higher authorities regarding above serious issues of the profession. There are number of learned professor, librarian and information scientist are the member of various high level commissions and committees, and they should come forward and put forth these serious issues at national level. ILA is the biggest and pioneer national association so, ILA should open the debates at regional and national levels for the same. This is the high time for submitting strong representations, recommendations and follow ups by the Library association to regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE, NCTE, CBSE, MCI, NCERT, Universities etc.

SUGGESTION

On the basis of survey some of the recommendation are listed to start the debates at various regional, national and international platforms to re-designate or change the nomenclature of librarian post. Various recommendation and suggestion given by the respondents about strengthening library profession and library services are listed below:

- Overall it is observed that the designation of Librarian is not appropriate in present changing ICT era as the role and responsibility of librarian is completely changed since last two decades.
- The designation may be PGT/TGT/PRT (LIS of Library) at the school library.
- The designation of librarian in higher education should be changed and designation should be similar as other subject teachers like Assistant Professor (LIS), Associate Professor (LIS) and Professor (LIS).
- Designation of Librarian of Public Library should be reviewed and the post may be re-designated as Library and information Officer, Library Manager and Information Officer.
- Re-designation of post will open the promotional avenues, career advancement, cadre, status and recognition not only within the organization but also it will provide the social status.
- Some respondents are also suggested that after re-designation the librarians may be allowed to apply and appear in the departments exams for Vice Principal, Principal, and Education Officer and other higher educational posts.
- It is also suggested that Information scientist word also suitable for research library and libraries may be renamed as Information Resources Center or Knowledge Resource Center.

- Change of designation will improve and boost the responsibility, image, status, and cadre of librarian.
- Some other relevant designations also suggested by the respondents like Knowledge manager, Information Researcher/Officer, Documentation officer, and Information Officer, Director of Library.
- Though nomenclature plays important role in the social status, but it is not only the criteria we have to prove ourselves state worthy.

CONCLUSION

Libraries are now called “Learning Resource Center” so there is no doubt that the designation of librarians must be changed. National Knowledge Commission clearly recommended to change the designation of the post of Librarian and the post should be re-designated as per the cadre and academic status of the institute. This is the high time to re-designate each and every cadre of librarian post to give them proper regard, social status, cadre and recognition in the society. Debates should be open at the various platforms to discuss the issues of library profession like status, cadre, pay scale, role, promotion, designation etc. Educationist, Policy Makers and Authorities should take these issues very seriously and act in a positive direction because library professionals’ image has been a matter of concern since the beginning of the library profession. This is the bitter truth that designation always matters and provides the social status in our society to everybody.

Therefore, it is high time to re-designate, the librarians at different institutions should be re-designated based on an analysis of their skill level, educational qualification, teaching/training abilities, research skills, communication skills, status and cadre.

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