

A Study on Career Aspirations of Women LIS Professionals in Academic Libraries of Telangana

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Abstract:- The proportion of women in workforce in India is very less compared to men. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) the female work participation for the year 2020 is 23.8% as against 66% for men. Participation of women in all fields is possible only through empowering women and educating them to understand the life in the contemporary world. This study examines the career aspirations of female librarians working in academic libraries of Telangana state. This research paper aims to understand the counter-productive elements that adversely affect the achievements of female professional librarians. The research investigates into factors like socio-economic status, factors that influence the career choice, barriers in reaching top level jobs for women LIS professionals. Findings indicate that career choice of respondents is influenced by husband (40.65%), parents (21.95%), friends (19.51%) and self-interest (17.89%). Further analysis also reveals that low confidence levels; lack of networking skills are the major barriers that hinder women LIS professionals in attaining the top-level positions.

Keywords:- LIS Professionals – Women; Career Aspirations – Women LIS Professionals; Women LIS Professionals – Telangana State. India.

I. INTRODUCTION

The proportion of women in workforce in India is very less compared to men. The Periodic Labour Force Survey Conducted by National Statistical Office (NSO) (Mohan, 2021¹) for the years 2019-20 reveals that female work participation for the year 2020 is only 23.8% as against 66% for men. Participation of women in all fields is possible only through empowering women and educating them to understand the life in the contemporary world. Career advancement is akin to climbing the ladder to reach greater heights in terms of leadership positions in the career. Career aspirations are needed for up grading and advancement in the careers. Especially women are challenged with the dual / multiple roles in their professional and personal life. Several pressures in the form of family responsibilities, career opportunities, working hours and work environment etc influence the career choice of women. In addition to these, a variety of other factors, including academic growth, political and social relationships, associations, research and publication activities, family support, information technology

handling skills, social media usage, etc., have an impact on the career advancement of women in the field of library and information science. They encounter numerous challenges or roadblocks while they pursue professional enrichment activities.

This study offers insight into the goals of Telangana state's female librarians who work in university libraries. This study is the result of primary research and is based on a survey that highlights the perspectives of working women in Telangana state academic libraries. In order for women to fulfil their goals as they get more educated, it is critical to connect their talents with the labour market, assure safety, and provide dependable, comfortable public areas. The influence of family particularly that of parents, husbands, and in-laws, which determines how far women will go in their education and reach heights in their employment, is a barrier to them fulfilling their aspirations.

An individual's direction toward a chosen professional objective in ideal circumstances is represented by their career aspirations. Career goals, to put it more succinctly, "give information about a person's interests and hopes, unrestricted by reality" (Hellenga, Aber, & Rhodes, 2002, p. 2002; Rejewski, 1996). Gender, financial class, race, parents' occupation and level of education, as well as parental expectations, all have an impact on people's career goals.

'Career Aspirations' denote the desire and interest or wish to progress from one lower position to a higher position. Present study focuses on the ambitions of the women Librarians and the extent to which these ambitions changed over a period of past five years. Study analysed the Challenges and Barriers of women LIS professionals in attaining top-level positions.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Akhtar, Gulnaz & Soroya, Muhammad Sahid (2021)³ in their article "Factors Influencing Career Routes of Female Librarianship: A Literature Review" emphasised the barriers to female librarians' professional advancement. Deductive reasoning and epistemological realism are the methods used in the paper. The study examines key elements such as gender discrimination, marriage, children, career breaks, mentoring, support from family, organisational structure, and policies to determine their impact on the advancement of female librarians' careers.

Chaturvedi, Gitanjali & Sahai, Garima (2019)⁴ in their paper entitled “Understanding Women’s Aspirations: A Study in Three Indian States.” investigated the aspirations of women and girls in three Indian states. The study is a by product of primary research that emphasises the voices of women in remote rural districts and tribal areas who want work, security, savings, education, and a happy life. The primary research was based on focus group discussions and interviews. In order for girls to fulfil their goals as they advance in their education, it is critical to connect their talents with the labour market and to guarantee safe and dependable public transportation.

Uma (2016)⁵ In Chennai, it was looked at how women librarians are coping in the digital age. She looked into the experience and professional background of women librarians working in colleges in Chennai, as well as their computer literacy level, barriers to their careers, and degree of job satisfaction. This study is based on the responses to 450 questionnaires distributed to female librarians working in Chennai institutions. According to a study, women who work in libraries are quite familiar with computers and have access to digital collections. As they transitioned from a traditional library to an electronic library, women librarians acquired new abilities.

Swartz (2002)⁶ examined the advancement of female librarians in South African higher education institutions. The study drew attention to the low standing of female librarians that has been observed in libraries around the world, including those in South Africa. This study investigated the opinions of female librarians working at specific tertiary institutions regarding how gender discrimination affects female librarians' career placement and barriers to their professional growth.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study is to examine the career aspirations of the Women LIS professionals working in Academic Libraries of Telangana State. The specific objectives of the study are to -

- Analyse demographic details of LIS professionals
- Identify the factors contributing to career choice of women LIS professionals
- Study Career ambition of women LIS Professionals
- Examine the barriers and challenges faced by respondents in attaining top level positions

IV. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This study is restricted to Engineering colleges and Degree colleges of Telangana State only. There were 220 engineering colleges 1159 degree colleges in Telangana state. In all, 123 women library professionals are working. A survey is conducted to collect data from the women library professionals with the help of a structured questionnaire. The responses were analysed and presented in the form of tables and figures for clear understanding and interpretation.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Demographic Details:

Demographic data of the respondents is presented in Table No.1. From the table, it is evident that nearly half of the 49.59% of the respondents are in the age-group of 31-40 years, 22.76% of them belong to the age group 21-30 years, 16.26% of them are in the age group of 41-50 years age-group and 11.38% are above 51 years.

More than half of the (52.85%) of the respondents are married women, 23.58% of respondents are unmarried, 12.20% are divorced and 11.38% are widowed women library professionals.

In case of social category, 39.84% of the respondents belong to OBC category, 36.59% of them belong to OC category, 12.20% are in SC category, and 11.38% of the respondents belong to ST social category.

More than half of the (65.04%) respondents have permanent employment, 17.07% are working full time jobs, 11.38% are in part-time employment, and only 6.50% of the respondents are in temporary employment.

Nearly half of the respondents (47.14%) have 11-20 years' experience in the profession followed by 35% have 1-10 years of experience and remaining 17.88% have experience of 21-30 years. Only 8% of respondents have 31-40 years of work experience.

Table-1: Demographic details of the respondents

Age-group	Total	%
=< 20 years	Nil	Nil
21-30 years	28	22.76
31-40 years	61	49.59
41-50 years	20	16.26
51-60 years	14	11.38
Marital Status		
Divorced	15	12.2
Married	65	52.85
Unmarried	29	23.58
Widowed	14	11.38
Social Category		
OBC	49	39.84
OC	45	36.59
SC	15	12.2
ST	14	11.38
Status of Employment		
Full Time	21	17.07
Part-Time	14	11.38
Permanent	80	65.04
Temporary	8	6.5
Work Experience		
1-10 years	43	34.9
11-20 years	58	47.15
21-30 years	22	17.88
31-40 years	10	8
Above 40 Years	0	0
Total	123	100

Qualifications	Before Marriage	%	After Marriage	%
B.Sc./B.A./B.Com	110	89.43	13	10.57
PG	65	52.85	58	47.15
BLISc	90	73.17	33	26.83
MLISc	48	39.02	75	60.98
M.Phil./Ph.D./PGDLAN	36	29.27	87	70.73
Total				

Table-1 shows the education qualification of the respondents. One fourth of the (25.71%) respondents have BLISc degree and 25.27% of them has Under Graduation degree. (22.42%) of them have MLISc degree, (20.44%) of them have academic Post-Graduation degree, only (6.15%) of the respondents have some other qualification like PGDLAN etc.

B. Career Choice

Table-2: Career Choice of the Respondents

Parameter	Engineering College	Degree College	Total	%
Chance	19	26	45	36.59
Choice	27	51	78	63.41
Total	46	77	123	100

Table-3 illustrates the career preference of the respondents. Most (63.41%) of the respondents said that Library Science Profession is their choice and remaining (36.59%) said they came to the profession by chance.

Study by Ramesh Pandita (2018)⁷ also revealed similar finding. The study conducted on library professionals in Jammu & Kashmir State, finds that nearly 60% of women

professionals join the profession by choice and the remaining 40% by Chance. However, another interesting finding of the Study is that that male library professionals join the profession more by choice than their female counterparts. Study also find that the job satisfaction levels are high among those who joined the profession by choice.

C. Influence on the choice of career

Table-3: Influence of on respondents' choice of career

Influence	Total	%
Friends	24	19.51
Husband	50	40.65
Parents	27	21.95
Self Interest	22	17.89
Total	123	100.00

From the table-3, it can be observed that Spouse influence is profound in women LIS professionals. Leong (1995)⁸ suggested that career development and choice are influenced by multiple factors such as – personality; how individuals perceive themselves and the world; socialization; resources including social support, role models etc., occupational information availability, socio-economic status of parents, friends and peers. Jakada (1998)⁹ finds that intelligence, interest, aptitude and personality type have great effects on the type of career an individual aspires to. The employment status and undertakings of parents are found to influence the career choice of others in that family.

As can be seen from the findings, less percent of women joined the profession by self-interest and majority of women joined the profession under the influence of spouse or parents. Women who grew up in traditional Indian Family are subjected to the pressures of patriarchy and male dominance. They imbibe the values of patriarchy where men take the important decisions pertaining to family and women. Women who take major share in domestic responsibilities also would prefer jobs that involve low risk and flexible careers.

D. Factors contributing to choice of LIS Jobs

Table-4: Factors contributing to choose employment in library

Factors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Score	Average score %	Rank
Pay Benefits/ Salary	13	2	36	79	35	508	4.13	II
Job Security	14	3	3	72	43	516	4.19	I
Nature of Work	5	4	1	81	32	500	4.06	IV
Flexible working hours	5	4	1	92	21	489	3.97	VI
Non transferable job	12	6	5	51	49	488	3.96	VII
Lack of skills in other areas of work	11	5	3	34	70	507	4.12	III
Safety in the workplace	10	4	1	60	48	492	4	V
Others pl. Specify	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Table-4 reveals that the majority of the (4.8%) respondents pinioned that nature of work is factor that made to choose the job, (4.19%) respondents expressed their opinion about factors that made to choose job security and lack of skills in other areas of work, (4.13%) if them expressed pay benefits/salary, (4.07%) are said safety in the work place, (3.97%) are non-flexible working hours and remaining (3.96%) are said transferable job factor that made to choose the library job.

For women LIS professionals, Job Security is the primary factor that motivated them to choose LIS jobs. The second preference is given to “Lack of skills in other areas of work”. The finding is in line with the theory proposed by

Bandura (1997)¹⁰ where self-efficacy is said to be a determining factor in career development. Self-efficacy was defined as the ability of the individual to carry out desired task. Hackett and Betz (1998)¹¹ suggest that women who see themselves as incapable of performing certain tasks (low self-efficacy) limit their career mobility and restrict their career options. Similarly, Lent, Brown and Hacketts (1994)¹² conclude that individuals choose certain occupations because they feel confident in those areas.

Salary and Pay Benefits are ranked in the third position. Women take up jobs primarily to supplement the family income. Apart from these, safety in the workplace is the factor that women look for while choosing their careers.

E. Career Aspirations

Table-5:: Perceptions of respondents on Career Aspirations

Career aspirations statement	Total	Percentage %	Rank
I want to reach the top most position in the library	107	24.10	1
I consciously plan my career growth	90	20.27	3
I have specific goals in my career	98	22.07	2
I need more training and skills to become an efficient manager	90	20.27	3
Work life is more important than family	59	13.29	4
Total	444	100	

Table-5 shows the career aspirations of the respondents. One fourth (24.10%) of the respondents said ‘I want to reach the top most position in the library’, 22.07% of the respondents said ‘I have specific goals in my career’, 20.27% of them said ‘I consciously plan my career growth’ and ‘I need more training and skills to become an efficient manager’ and (13.29%) of them said ‘Work life is more important than family’.

Women LIS professionals aspired to attain the top most position in the library. They set their career goals and consciously plan their careers. Respondents felt that they need more training and skills to become an efficiently manage their libraries . Some research studies reported that there is no difference between men and women with respect to qualifications or effectiveness in holding top most positions (Goodman et al., 2003)¹³.

Table-6 Career Aspirations of the respondents at the time of joining the profession

Ambition	Total	%
To be committed to work and have a quiet, pleasant life	63	51.22
To have as high an income as possible	42	34.15
To be chief/university librarian or Institution.	18	14.63
Total	123	100

Table-6 illustrates the categories of ambitions at the time of joining the LIS profession. More than half of the (51.22%) respondents said ‘to be committed to work and have a quiet, pleasant life, (34.15%) of them said ‘to have as high an income as possible’, and remaining (14.63%) said ‘to be chief/university librarian or Institution.’

Table-7: Changes in career aspirations over the last five years

Opinion	Total	%
Yes	77	62.60
No	46	37.40
Total	123	100

Table-7 shows the changes in career aspirations changed over the last five years. Among 123 respondents, highest (62.60%) of the respondents said ‘yes’ and remaining (37.40%) of them said ‘no.’

Table-8: If yes, please mention the extent of change

Opinion	Engineering college	Degree college	Total	%
Least Extent	26	4	30	38.96
Some Extent	34	5	39	50.65
Large Extent	7	1	8	10.39
Total	67	10	77	100

It is evident from the table-8 that the half of the respondents (50.65%) expressed their opinion up to some extent changed in their career aspirations over the last five years. (38.96%) of them said there is no change, (10.39%) of them said large extent changes have made in their career.

F. Barriers to Career Progression

Table-9: Perceptions of women LIS professionals on the barriers to career progression to top level positions

Barriers	Total Score	Average Score	Rank
Men are better managers than women	258	2.09	3
Top managerial positions are not suited to women	236	1.92	5
Women are emotional hence not suitable for managerial positions	248	2.02	4
Women do not want to take risk like men	387	3.15	1
It is good to have men as superior than women	215	1.75	8
Teaching, Nursing and library jobs are well suited for women	227	1.85	7
Top level positions require good networking. Hence not suitable for women	371	3.02	2
Top level positions involve politics. Hence not suitable for women	230	1.87	6

It reveals the table-9 that 'women do not want to take risk like men' is ranked in the first position with an average score of 3.15 followed by 'top level positions require good networking hence not suitable for women', with an average score of 3.02 in the second position and 'men are better managers than women' with an average score of 2.09.

Several theories were put forward by social scientists to explain the factors that hinder women from ascending to the top most positions in their careers. Several research studies explored to answer the question as to whether men and women have same level of ambition (Sools, Van Engen, & Baerveldt, 2007¹⁴; Brescoll, 2011¹⁵; Hoobler, Lemmon & Wayne, 2014; Windett, 2014). Across the disciplines such as political science (Fox & Lawless, 2010¹⁶; Hall & Donaghue, 2013¹⁷; Jensen & Martinek, 2009¹⁸; Windett, 2014¹⁹); health (Love, Hagberg, & Dellve, 2011²⁰), and business (Martin & Barnard, 2013²¹; Schuh et al., 2014²²; Soils et al., 2007²³), studies have explored the impact of gender and ambition in relation to leadership. Findings have failed to demonstrate that women could not reach leadership positions because they lack ambition.

However, research shows that women's low levels of confidence impede their professional development. Women may write their resumes with less confidence, downplaying their accomplishments and successes (Davison & Burke, 2000²⁴). Moving up the job ladder may be slowed and affected indirectly if one lacks the courage to speak up in meetings and is less inclined to take risks (Lyness & Thompson, 1997²⁵; Lyness & Thompson, 2000²⁶).

The findings of the current study, which show that males are better managers than women and that women do not want to take chances in their careers, are consistent with past

studies' findings that women lack confidence and lack networking abilities. Networks are the creation and usage of contacts that are relevant to a career, particularly with high-ranking officials. Through these networks, significant strategic information about open positions, ongoing projects, and managerial choices is exchanged. According to a study, women have less opportunities to network and engage with influential people. Reduced access to these networks would decrease promotion opportunities and create the impression of a glass ceiling (Brass, 1985²⁷). Despite the fact that the majority of female LIS professionals desire to hold top managerial positions, very few actually do.

VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Study reveals several interesting findings. The demographic data reveal that majority of the respondents are in the age group of 41-50 years and are married. The representation of SC and ST women is observed to be very less. A large proportion of women pursued their PG, MLISc. and advanced study after marriage. Respondents opined that spouse influence is profound in pursuing their career. Less percentage (17.8%) respondents rated self-interest as a contributing factor in choosing their careers. Study reveals that respondents are attracted to LIS career mainly due to job security, pay and salary benefit and because they do not possess skills required for other professions. More than half of the respondents aspired to be committed to work and lead a pleasant life while contributing financially to their families.

Factors such as - women cannot take risk like men; women do not have the network that are required to reach the top most positions and men are better managers than women – are found to hinder the women from reaching the top most positions. The low self-esteem of women professionals, their

perceptions regarding the leadership qualities are acting as the barriers for their career progression and contribute to the glass ceiling. A number of factors such as differential treatment at workplace, organizational culture, interpersonal and situational factors contribute to glass ceiling. These fall out of the purview of this paper and needs to be explored in order to ensure equitable treatment to women and enable them to reach the top level positions breaking the shackles. Women LIS professionals should develop their skills, improve their social networking abilities and build confidence levels in order to fulfil their career aspirations and excel in their careers.

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