CHAPTER-IV

PROFESSIONALISM
IN LIBRARIANSHIP
4.0 Introduction

Generally, ‘professionalism’ refers to the positive contributions, aims, qualities and conduct that characterized a particular type of job and the holders of that job. It is the professionalism that the society needs of that particular type of job and those job holders. “Research has succeeded to find out the positive characteristics of a profession including the manifestations of its self-consciousness in the field of professionalism. The characteristics of the professionals have been formulated by taking note of the manifestations of the positive qualities of some persons who are engaged in different recognized professions. Ultimately such a recognized person who possesses the positive characteristics of a profession has been recognized as an ideal professional by the society. The professionals set their work and service in order to achieve the professional goal. Their career, contributions, aims, qualities and conduct become the source of data for developing the concept of professionalism. S.R. Ranganathan has been one of such a personalities in the field of Library and Information Science”.¹
4.1 Profession

The term ‘profession’ refers to “a group of men pursuing a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service-no less a public service because it may incidentally be a means of livelihood”. It is an “occupation, one requiring advanced education and special training, e.g., law, architecture, medicine, accountancy”. S.R. Ranganathan said: a profession is a set of people, organized people of different ability, who are dedicated to do a particular service in a particular field. It is also defined as “a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation”.

Headicar looked a profession as “a body of people who carry on their duties in accordance with rules designed to enforce certain standards with two main objectives – the better protection of its members and the better service to the public”.

Abraham Flexner in 1915 took the profession as “intellectual operation coupled with large individual responsibilities”. The former President of the London Library Association, William B. Paton, finds in a profession “a standard conduct based on courtesy, honour and ethics which guides the practitioners in their relations with clients, colleague and the public”.

However, Kast and Rosenzurig, finds hard “to get any authoritative agreement on the definition of a profession”. In their opinion, “professionalisation is a process” and “may affect any occupation to a greater or lesser degree”. Every occupation in the society depends on human communication. The human communication reduces entropy, solves problems and helps to take decision for survival and enriches culture. The ‘profession’ communicates knowledge in such a way that “information would reduce personal and social entropy”. The responsibility of the professional method has to “put knowledge to use i.e. to make knowledge kinetic in the lives of the people”.
"Consultation, education, mass media and information retrieval" are the major professional methods of communication.¹¹ Let us know which profession has been involved with what category:¹²

- Professionals like medicine, law, engineering using method of consultation are "expected to bring knowledge to bear on the actual problems of people" until a solution is reached.

- Education profession "summarizes aspects of knowledge" and through training improve the thinking skills of the individual and the group.

- The mass media profession "provides a constant rain of information about the near past and current events as they unfold in the present".

- The information science profession makes it possible for people to obtain information from a source or as a coordinate product from two or more sources.

However, every profession, plays a very important role in the process of communication and transmits information from one individual or group to another individual or group and bring about some change in the second individual as receiver.¹³

4.1.1 Requirements of Profession

As identified by many scholars, some of the important requirements which normally constitute a profession are as follows:¹⁴,¹⁵

- a systematic theory;
- a level of authority;
- community sanction and approval
- a code of ethics;
- a culture; and
- orientation service.
Therefore, a profession, must have “a solid foundation consisting of a recognised body of knowledge essential to the well being of a society”. The framework which builds this foundation consist of the requirements mentioned above.\textsuperscript{16}

The profession is characterised by several considerations such as:\textsuperscript{17}

- associating with specialized work of noble cause;
- undergoing through rigorous and specialized preparations;
- agreeing to work along with the guidelines of ‘code of conduct’;
- performing the duties with freedom, responsibility and accountability.

Lifelong career involvements, social service, intellectual techniques, mastery of knowledge are the other facts of a profession.\textsuperscript{18}

\subsection{4.1.2 Basics of a Profession}

The basics of a profession, which are most commonly accepted by many scholars in present days all over the world are as follows:\textsuperscript{19}

- particularized knowledge (learning) and skill (practice);
- research and continuous in service updating of particularized knowledge;
- intellectual activity;
- social necessity;
- service to the society rather than personal profit;
- recognition by public and status in the society;
- standardised terminology;
- closely knit professional organisation having an altruistic behaviour; and
- stability of the profession through permanent membership.
4.1.3 Conditions of a Profession

What are the important conditions of a ‘profession’? In answering this question Bhattacharyya,\textsuperscript{20} finds in some conditions “developed on the basis of the world-wide consensus”. The principal condition for a profession as per his findings is “taking up a calling and practicing it”. He explains the term “calling” as “the activities for which the performance has every moral and legal rights to demand payments; and if he or she ask for it, he or she must be paid”. Again he continues, all professions are “calling”, but all callings are not professions. Further, he explains a ‘calling’ attains the status of a profession by qualifying itself with the mastery of the knowledge about:

- the methodology of acquiring necessary and sufficient knowledge of the host discipline or subject on which the professional information work and service are to be carried out;
- the essential contents of the professional discipline designed; and
- the self-learning techniques for life-long education.

The another important conditions for a profession is “professional behaviour”. It should be guided by a code of professional ethics ordained by the professional group as a body and accepted by the professionals as their guiding principles so far as their professional performance and conduct are concerned.\textsuperscript{21}

4.1.4 Status of a Profession

‘Professional image’ and ‘professional identity’ make the status of a profession. Apparently, while the ‘image’ is viewed, the identity is entirely mental perception of the professional. Pamela J. Cravey\textsuperscript{22} defines: while the ‘occupational image’, is the collective perception of what a person is in the occupation’, the ‘occupational identity’ is self perception. The impact of occupational image is felt in areas such as recruitment and occupational status and prestige. On the other hand, occupational identity determines how a person
see himself or herself in relation to his or her profession in connection with his or her functions in the organisation and supported to the clientele.

As sociologist Kingsley Davies, 23 has noted, two basic criteria for judging professional status:

- duration and rigor of training required to acquire the necessary expertise; and
- utility of the profession for the survival and development of the society.

However, the status of a profession is decided by its relative use to the society. The social status of any profession is ascertain by the extent to which a profession provides the services to the needs of the society and the extent to which the society depends on the profession for satisfying its requirements. The status and authority of the professionals are required to be defined clearly and have "legal sanction under the provisions of law, degree, and ordinance" to direct the profession towards effectiveness. 24

4.1.5 Organisational Obligation and Professional

Organisational obligation for a professional is defined as "the relative strength of an individuals identification with an involvement in an organisation". Three factors are supposed to exist in such commitment, as noted by Steers. 25

- "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation’s goals and values;
- a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation; and
- a strong will to maintain membership in the organisation".

According to Neal, 26 there are three types of interrelated commitment i.e. continuance, cohesion and control commitment. He has described, "continuance commitment is based on the member’s dedication to the survival
of the organisation. Cohesion commitment is an attachment to social relationships in an organisation that enhance group cohesion and develop psychological attachment to the organisation. Control commitment is a member’s attachment to the norms of the organisation that encourages the formulation of self conception in terms of organisational values”.

4.1.6 Must for a Profession

The responsibilities and liability of the professionals are dynamic. Because ‘change’ always occurs in the environment, so these are subject to change. Therefore, it is required for a professional to act as environment demands from time to time.

A professional should be aware of the importance, demands and responsibilities of the profession and be prepared for and committed to the fulfilment of the same. This contemplates the whole range of duties, responsibilities and behavioural requirements, the moral and social as well as legal and realistic.27

Frequently, professionals do not care for obvious wrong. They are also not aware of an accepted standard of practice and are not ‘living upto the moral code’ expected from the professionals.28

Therefore, Windal and Corley,29 have described “those individuals who consider themselves to be a professional should study not only professional ethics, responsibility and liability but also make go forward in connection with their professional field”. They should aware and work according to their professional demands with a strong commitment”.

Professionalism should be displayed by a member, in such a way that by 30
demanding extensive training and further education more than what are available;

- absorbing oneself to 'standardize practices' and conduct "theoretical analysis of work";

- not entertaining "low standards, bad workmanship and indifferent handling of clients";

- establishing "co-operation and co-ordination among the practitioners";

- raising the voice against the attempt of derecognising for the profession; and

- nursing a faith "in the emergence of a new and different discipline with wide application".

4.2 LIS Professionalism

The LIS Profession is a complex of the methods and standards which are acquired by the study of librarianship at an advanced level as amplified by the practice of those methods and adherence to those standards.\textsuperscript{31}

Bhattacharyya finds,\textsuperscript{32} both the teachers and practitioners in Library and Information Science are professionals because:

- "contents of this discipline consists of specialised knowledge and skills essential to perform professional information work and to render professional information services" like "other professional disciplines" of medicine, engineering and law;

- like other professional disciplines, professionals qualifications of "Library and Information Science" are awarded at master degree and Ph.D. level;
- teachers in 'library and information science' are "taking the responsibility of teaching library and information science to develop manpower at professional/semi-professional level both in working and teaching (as LIS teacher) areas"; and
- librarians as information scientists perform professional information work and render professional information services, and for this purpose, they have to achieve basic knowledge about host discipline or subject".

The subject matter of LIS is certainly concerned with the criteria widely accepted for professionalism. In LIS the body of knowledge has been observed in the educational programmes of the universities and the other agencies offering courses and degrees in LIS. This knowledge is needed by the society. Rushing to the LIS course from college graduates is a clear evidence for fulfilling the well being of society. In educational process LIS is also established very well. A sizeable number of government or non-government or autonomous academic institutions have been conducting the course at undergraduate, postgraduate and Ph.D. level (both in regular and correspondence system).

Various organisations or universities have been conducting a number of short-term courses, refresher courses, and orientation programme for updating the knowledge as a part of continuing education. In academic institutions a formal examination after completion of the course is compulsory. It is same in LIS course also. In the LIS system, the sense of responsibility to society has been observed through the nature of their services, i.e. supporting academic programme right from bottom level, supporting research, educating people, providing right information at right time to right person at different service-packages.
Krzys, et al.,\textsuperscript{36} point out “the growth of librarianship is a response to the growth of knowledge and humanity’s need for information; as knowledge increases, and as humanity’s need for information increases, so too will librarianship continue to develop”.

The existence of association is another component for a ‘profession’. Various associations is attached with LIS functions right from local (state) to international level (e.g., Bengal Library Association, Indian Library Association, International Federation of Library Association). Associations are also formed at different wing of the LIS (e.g., IATLIS – Indian Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science; IASLC (Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Science); Medial Library Association, India; Public Library Association, India, etc.).\textsuperscript{37}

The another important characteristics of a profession is ‘code of ethics’. The code ‘is not a mere presentation of moral issues’. It intends to develop a professional philosophy for libraries, which can be applied to the librarians in every type of the library, to emphasize the mutual foundation common to all the librarians, and to assist in making libraries a useful organ in the society. “We are disclosing to society our common goal, our effort to reach that goal, and our criteria of judgement and behaviour as members of the library profession” by the publication of the code.\textsuperscript{38}

LIS profession is “one of the world’s oldest and most successful professions”, Miriam A Drake, finds some aspects in librarianship which are similar to other professions. A law or a medical professional “observes client actions and behaviour, queries the client about the problem and circumstances of the problem, gathers data, synthesizes information, and recommends a course of action”. A library-practitioner just like that –
- queries a user;
- learns his or her problem, context of the problem and expected solution;
- synthesizes and analyses the data;
- delivers information, software/instruction; or
- recommends a course of action to the client.

As stated by Miriam “the professional-client relationship does not involve handling a readymade product over the counter; rather it involves a process of learning, analysing and responding to the individual. And, as a result “the process will yield greater value of service”.39

4.2.1 Educational Backdrop for LIS Profession

The requirements of manpower in libraries and information centres should be changed in order to provide the changing needs and demands of the readers/users. At the early stage of development in LIS the expectation from library personnel was accessioning, processing, maintenance, circulation and preservation services at a very crude level.40

A fairly competent faculty is required for a fresh direction to the education courses in different parts of the globe, in order to train and produce such a specialised manpower. The faculty should have thorough and adequate acquaintance with the related subject and should be acquainted with the latest pedagogical methods and techniques and should properly understand the professional character of the LIS courses. Such a vocational or professional course has not only to impart necessary theoretical knowledge on the subject but also must train the learners properly and sufficiently in the skills required, like courses in engineering, management and medicine etc.41
In general, a clear conceptualization of LIS education programmes and their faculty requirement in particular demands explicit and precise answers to: Who to teach, What, How and Why? This self-evidently simple question, involves a number of complex but pertinent questions.

With a specialised area of human training, the LIS education is considered as a professional course. The objectives of the LIS education are: (i) to produce prospective faculty, academicians and researchers; and (ii) to produce/train prospective human resources for library institutions and information resource centres.

According to Bhattacharyya, LIS education is a ‘mission oriented scientific discipline’. The mission is the “utilisation of existing information for the betterment of the society by overcoming as far as practicable, the barriers that stand in the way of implementing the principle of right information for the right users at right time”. This is like other applied scientific discipline where there is the profession of librarians and information scientists and which is capable of producing manpower for the profession.

4.2.1.1 Influence of Information Technology

With the advancement of information technology in tremendous speed and complexities of information requirements of the users, challenges for the library practitioners have become more and more complicated. At the same time library profession becomes new information profession. It is now more of computer world, hardware, software and all that. In order to meet such challenges and complexities, the professionals, as suggested by Inamdar, has to

- internalise the Information Technology (IT) in librarianship;
- exploit modern technology;
- realise, foster and promote the organisation/library by all means; and
– act as a pressure group to safeguard the professional interest.

4.2.1 LIS Profession at Different Phases

In order to achieve the objectives of LIS profession, a professional has to go through several stages in his/her career, viz., before-studentship-during studentship – after studentship i.e. practionership stage at diverse level and status. Each and every stage is complex and critical and hence needs appropriate discussion. There are some factors like sincerity, effort, guidance, involvement, efficiency and creativity that each stage demands. The different phases is shown in Figure 4.1.

In this figure, the ‘polygon symbol’, is used for various activities, ‘diamond’ symbol is used for decision making, ‘rectangle’ is used for single work, ‘arrow’ is used for movement of process, and ‘oval symbol’ is used for starting and ending of the process. All these symbols are taken from IBM flow chart.
Fig. 4.1: Different Phases in the Career of LIS Professional
4.2.2.1 Background of the Students

Like other professionals, the life cycle of library professionals starts when the individual enters into the LIS world as a student and ends when the individual retires either as an educator or as an expert/authority. LIS profession is a system consisting of many components like users, juniors, seniors, colleagues, and authority etc. by acting and interacting with each other. Each component in a system is unique in itself and they are performing their particular duties according to the needs and conditions of the entire system as a whole. To become a successful individual, he or she must understand the system. The success or failure of any programme of LIS education depends on its understanding of the system, various components and its preparedness to meet their requirements.

The students of an LIS course does not have any preliminary ideas about the subject in their degree level unlike their counterparts in other disciplines when they join the course. In addition, the background of the students varies with regard to the level of education, the different socio-economic and cultural aspects. The important variable as on the basis of preliminary observations are presented in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1

STUDENTS’ BACKDROP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a] Educational Background</td>
<td>Social Sciences, Humanities, Sciences etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b] Level of education</td>
<td>Graduate, Honours Graduate, PG, M.Phil., Ph.D. etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c] Gender Background</td>
<td>Male, Female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d] Age Background</td>
<td>Aged, Young etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e] Socio-economical Background</td>
<td>Rich, Poor, Rural, Urban, Service holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Library and non-library), unemployed, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f] Motive Background</td>
<td>Pass-timers, opportunistics, motivated by others, preference for peaceful and easy and better job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g] Disadvantage Background</td>
<td>Handicapped, ST, SC, OBC etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2.1.1 At the Beginning

The students are important basic input to the library and information system for its development. So, it is necessary to examine them particularly in three areas – viz., Who are they? What is their base? And, why do they prefer the course? This study will help us to know their academic background, academic status, caste, sex, academic maturity, socio-economic background, age group etc. and also their views about the profession at the initial stage. However, it is well known that quite unlike the input to the other educational programme the students admitted to the LIS course have had no prior exposure to the subject. And the background of the students is not similar as it is found in other discipline.47
4.2.2.1.2 During Studentship

At the primary stage, the students are just like raw ingredients in the system of LIS profession. The students are feeling uneasiness, confusion and resistance in their new subject due to not having any preliminary ideas and knowledge beforehand at their degree level. Almost of them looks at the classroom as simply a one way traffic of ideas and information from teacher to student and not vice-versa and for preparation of term and terminal examinations.

The next stage (i.e., intermediary) is one that the students becoming familiar with their subjects slowly and steadily. Due to development of knowledge in their subject field, they build up some amount of psychological confidence, which enables to overcome the uneasiness, confusion and bewilderment of the primary stage.

The situation matures in the final stage. The students are expected to be acquainted with at least the basic theoretical aspects of LIS at this stage.\textsuperscript{48}

The study programme provided to the students are based on the following main themes:\textsuperscript{49}

- understanding the requirements and behaviour of the user of the service under various situations and the art of encountering them with dignity;
- having thorough acquaintance with various modern sophisticated technologies in connection with acquisition of materials, dissemination, storage and retrieval;
- knowing how management is to be creative with limited resources i.e. money, manpower and material;
4.2.2.1.3 After-Studentship

It is the last stage in which the students completed their course of study and started to enter the LIS professional or staff. It may be contradictory in hearing but actually real learning begins at this stage. New teachers have to learn how to impart the knowledge they have achieved to the consecutive batches of students. And, fresh personnel or a staff has to learn how to work and apply their knowledge to different tasks assigned to them. This is the stage of maturity, confidence and tells how and whether the raw ingredients have been processed. However, in reaching such a stage, the time span differs from one person to another person.\(^50\)

The teachers become educators and educational planners and the personnel become experts or authorities towards the end of their career in the profession. The pre-requirements for an individual in reaching this stage are creativity, update knowledge of all disciplines, research oriented mind, hard and sincere labour, a strong commitment, dedication, devotion, strong common sense, vision and imagination, foresightedness, capability for original interpretation, adaptability, practical knowledge, awareness of the fast changing behaviour of the users and their requirements, technical advancement in the field, leadership qualities etc.\(^51\)

4.2.3 Working Women in Library and Information Science (LIS)

Slowly and steadily women have taken to the field of library and information work. Although they constitute a large component of the professionals in the LIS, they are vastly underrepresented in management roles. In the history of library, at the beginning stage, library practitioners were “predominantly men”. During nineteenth century, women started
entering into the profession. It was happened due to the ‘rise of the library supported from public funds especially in United Kingdom and United States, and the case of paying women less than man for any given task. Some researchers have revealed that

- since Islamic Society is “male oriented” and male dominated most librarians in the Middle East are ‘men’;

- in Western European countries, though women have outnumbered their male counterparts in public libraries, scholarly position in academic libraries much less than men;

- women do not occupy a corresponding proportion of administrative position, although they held the majority of jobs in world librarianship through the world.

- throughout the world, the contribution of women librarians unfortunately have not apparently been rewarded professionally;

- Librarianship is one of the few professions with a history of hospitality for women. In western countries, it is more true. In the United States 82 per cent of citizens reporting their occupation in the libraries were women.

- educated women, while meeting resistance in other more established professions, flooded into library work during the last quarter of the 19th century for a variety of reasons;

- a systematic investigation of ‘women and librarianship’ was justified and the following points needed to investigate that
  i) the shortage of staff in libraries;
  ii) whether there was a reservoir of qualified married women wishing to re-center librarianship;
  iii) whether there were any steps that could be taken to assist and encourage their return.
It is also observed by the researchers that "social and economic situation in which women work" are mainly responsible for such situation.⁵⁴

Edward Evans,⁵⁵ has reported after studying "hundreds of books and articles" that "unlike full professionals, most semi-professionals are female". The issue has looked upon by him from organisational point of view: "until relatively recently, the assumption seems to have been that women are manageable more in an organisational sense, that women are less conscious of status and that they generally have less education than men". He recorded that in most countries, the ratio of men to women librarians is somewhere between 1:3 and 1:4. However, the ratio of men to women directors and assistant directors in almost the complete reverse”. Sometime, somewhere “90% or more of top management positions in libraries were filled up by men”.⁵⁶

Krzy and Evan have reported about the economic status of the women practitioners. They remarked: “As in other fields, there are significant differences in the salaries paid to men and women librarians. Even at the initial stage, male librarians’ salaries tend to be higher than those of females in spite of they do the same work. Situation changes, but higher pay for males is still found.”⁵⁷

In an investigation Pamela J. Cravey has admitted "historically, professions with a numerical dominance of women have been segregated from a power base”. Why it is so? She identifies “two of the traditional explanations i.e. the ‘service relationship to the clientele’ and the ‘lack of life death decision-making requirements’.⁵⁸

Robert and Taylor,⁵⁹ too, have observed that ‘the issue of women as manager’ is hotting up admitting that the profession is a female profession (at
least in numbers) and, the majority of top management positions are held by males, mostly white males.

4.3 Situation in India

The situation of professionalism in Library and Information Science of India is quite different from other countries. There is no division of library work based on sex. However, it is fact that women have taken to librarianship slowly and some of the better ones that could earn a name, had to relinquish the job to develop a home, after getting married. It is because of the social life in which women are placed. In almost all the library schools opened by the universities in India, where the majority of candidates getting into library science courses are women. Female candidates have outnumbered their male counterparts in almost all the schools. But only this development has not made the librarianship a women’s profession. Kaula says: “It is certainly a male dominated and male operated profession. The top positions hardly go to women. We have about 180 universities in the country and only three of them have got women librarians at the top. Women and women’s movement are not meant to be portrayed as saviours of librarianship. However, a process of defining and working towards a realisation of feminist values should be applied to provide better, warm and helpful services in libraries”. ⁶⁰

4.3.1 Status of LIS Professionals

A “National Seminar” on Status and Authority of Library Professionals was conducted at the Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centres (IASLIC) in 1990. In this seminar, a number of professionals from different regions of India has identified various factors caused for the low status of the library professionals in India. ⁶¹ Some factors are noted below:
- negative impact of under qualified librarians on qualified academic librarians;
- poor performance of some academic librarians;
- poor academic programmes;
- unacceptability in academic community;
- absence of the place of librarians in the present hierarchical structure i.e. librarians do not have any control over the finance, appointment, reward, transfer, release and decision-making;
- lack of proper importance in the library laws and rules of different states in India;
- handling of information (storage, retrieval and dissemination) by non-librarians also as effectively as librarian;
- inability to project the library services in national development; not having parliamentary/legislative lobbies for promoting the cause of libraries, failure to use media for library publicity;
- lack of definition of role of librarians, lack of licensing of registration of professionals by the associations like those of medicine, law, etc.
- absence of intellectual content of its knowledge base, the rigour of its educational requirements, the extent of its authority and the strength of its code of ethics.

To determine the status of the profession there are two issues, i.e. the extent of social dependence to the profession and the social satisfaction on the professional service. For example, a doctor has a better status than many others because society always depends on him for its requirements. Whereas in case of librarianship, only a small portion of the society depends on information. In a country like India this percentage is very low, where the percentage of illiteracy is very high. Like this, the status of librarianship is not high in the society.
4.3.2 LIS Professionals in Manipur

In Manipur, the library profession is the recent development like other states of the country. It is because of the fact that the numbers of libraries are very few in the state before 1970. There was no educational centre in the state, which could train and educate the people for this professional course. The people were not aware about this profession. There was no status for library workers in the society. Library workers are looked only as ‘record keepers’. However, the concept has been changed slowly after 1970, particularly when a number of libraries have been set up in association with different colleges. Meanwhile, the progress of formal education with the establishment of the university and other institutions has also been advanced. The importance of libraries in the areas of education, information and research has slowly been gained.

In Manipur, so far no comprehensive study has been found on the subject or library professionals though there are a sizeable number of professionals. The state has a number of educational institutions at different levels – Central, State and private, where libraries are attached or established. Special libraries are also in existence in different organisations or institutions. The state has one State Central Library, six district libraries and 124 RRRLF (Raja Rammuhon Roy Library foundation) funded libraries run by voluntary organisations. In these libraries, there are qualified and trained professionals in LIS are engaged. Moreover, Manipur University has been producing would be professionals with BLISc, and Ph.D. degree since 1984. IGNOU, Manipur University Study Centre, has also been producing BLISc and MLISc degree holders since 2000. Manipur University has been introduced MILSc course since the academic session 2004-05. Therefore, there will be more master degree holders in library science in the state. Both the professionals working in different Institutions and the unemployed professionals at threshold are
involved in and associated with a number of professional organisations or associations. They are also active in different professional work and have regularly been contributing research papers in professional journals. Attending seminars, conferences etc., has become their regular practice.

4.3.2.1 Working Women in LIS in Manipur

The participation of women in the library profession is a recent trend in the library history of Manipur. There are very few libraries in the state before 1970. There was no awareness about the LIS-profession. The professional course has been popularised particularly to the women section at the time when Manipur University opened the Library Science Course at PG level (1986). From the inception of this centre, the women section has outnumbered its male counterpart in undergoing this course. Students’ input in LIS course in Manipur University has been studied by Lahiri in 1996. It has been found that:

- the number of women applicants are higher than that of their male applicants in every session;
- women candidates are more in number in appearing entrance test and in getting selection in all sessions, and
- the women section has developed a kind of affinity towards library profession from the student life itself.

Though, the women segment has been frequently outnumbered its male counterparts at the threshold of the profession (i.e., in studentship), it has been failed to dominate the profession either in getting employment or in getting professional status. In a preliminary survey, it reveals that

- 29.13 % of 161 working professionals at 32 academic libraries are women,
- 48.39% of 31 professionals working at 06 special libraries are women,
- 25% of 32 working professionals at 03 public libraries are women,
- 32% of the total 224 working professionals at 41 different types of libraries are women; and
- at least 50% of about half a dozen persons engaged in teaching LIS are women.

The LIS profession is said to be a women dominated profession. But, the women representation in the leadership of the profession is found poor in the state. Only a few women professionals are associated themselves with the activities of Manipur Library Association (MALA), Indian Library Association (ILA), Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centre (IASLIC), etc. for the growth and development of library movement in the state. The women’s contributions to the LIS publications and their participation in conferences, seminars, convention etc. are also not very significant. Most of the responsible posts in the field of LIS are found to be occupied by men. University teaching department of LIS is however leading by women, which is a good trend in this profession.

4.4 Observation

The key areas identified in the above description are:

➢ The core characteristics of a ‘profession’ includes — specialized knowledge and training given in formal institution, social recognition and acceptance, uniform practice in reality, service orientation, a set of ethical codes and a formal association to protect and to promote its interest;
‘Librarianship’ (Library and Information Service) is a profession like law and medicine because it is based on all qualities/characteristics of a ‘profession’ cited above;

There are a number of stages in LIS profession, professionals have to cross all the stages to achieve the mastery over the profession;

In every country, including India, the women section takes keen interest in this profession and finds the profession suitable as her career; and

Women professionals, at every country, though dominate the profession in number, but fail to dominate in status and in leadership. Same has been observed in India including Manipur.

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