CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION
1.0 Overview

In the development process of any society, the status of women as seen across the world, has been key determining factor. This is because they (women) in their roles as mothers, daughters, sisters and daughter-in-laws are a crucial link in the family. It is said that “if you educate a man, you educate an individual whereas if you educate a woman, you are educating the entire society”.¹ Our former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, while addressing the All Indian Woman’s Conference on the 24th January, 1954, had rightly said: “No country could prosper when its women remained backward. Apart from being educated in schools and colleges woman should develop courage and self confidence”². The study of women is regarded, not a fad, but as a growing discipline and that should not be ignored.³ The 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. Librarianship was a new and fast growing field in need of low-paid but educated recruits.⁴
With the plentiful library jobs available, male librarians offered no proliferation of women library workers partly because women agreed the library work matched presumed feminine limitations. Melvil Dewey could predict that "most of the men who achieve this greatness will be women". There are certain vocations in which women do well than their male counterparts, which naturally help in the increase of productivity and efficiency. Long back, Cuba had declared librarianship a women's vocation. It is one of the few professions with a history of hospitality for women. It is more true in western countries. In the United States 82 percent of the citizens reporting their occupation in the libraries were women. As in UK and USA, in Australia, majority of the librarians are women.

The situation in India is quite different. There is no division of library work based on sex. However, as seen, it is a fact that women have slowly taken to librarianship and some of the better ones that could earn a name, had to relinquish the job to develop a house, after getting married. This is because of the special life in which women are placed. It is also not considered as a female profession in India. However, librarianship is one of the few professions with hospitality for women as seen in western countries. In Manipur, a large number of women at different age groups and backgrounds have already been in the profession.

1.1 Area Studies

According to P.N. Kaula, area studies is a concept which is well known to those who are working on various subjects studied in a particular area. Materials in such cases are collected, procured, preserved and made available covering a specific locality, region or state or the community itself. Local studies signifies that the material studied is oriented towards a particular city, town or region. Kaula, in such studies also observed that the tendencies of certain studies - science, mathematics, literature, languages, history,
economics, sociology, law - irrespective of any knowledge conveyed, is to enlarge the understanding, develop the critical faculty, quicken the sensibilities, refine the taste, and in general to strengthen the observations made in their analysis.

1.2 Women Studies

Women studies have been considered as one of the aspects of area studies. The same is found to be a neglected area which needs to make proper consideration and efforts. In this field, certain disadvantages occur because illiteracy is prevalent. The Report of the Committee on the status of women in India notes the “paucity of data” on important social and economic variables affecting the personal development and pattern of social behaviour of Indian women. A fresh perspective on women and social change was made on the occasion of the International Women’s year in 1976. This was done through empirical studies of the interaction between the traditional images of women and their new social roles in the family and the society. There is diversity of approach when we discuss the problems of urban and rural women in India. There is need to examine the “special case” of women when dealing with law, religion, social life, employment and culture.⁹

1.2.1 Scope of the Women Studies

Taking into consideration the areas in which women are gainfully employed, the scope of women studies can be enumerated as below.¹⁰

- Agriculture;
- Cultivation;
- Livestock, fishing, hunting, forestry, plantations, orchards;
- Mining and quarrying;
- Manufacturing, processing, servicing, repairs;
- Household industry;
- Construction;
- Education-teaching and non-teaching;
- Trade and commerce;
- Transport, storage and communication;
- Government and non-government offices;
- Medical services;
- Banking, insurance and co-operatives;
- Hotel and other vocations;
- Librarianship and information work; and
- Public services, politics, etc.

1.3 Status of Women

Social status of a person is determined by his occupation. One can raise the issue how do you determine the occupational status of a woman. National classification of occupations\textsuperscript{11} has put the librarians in a group of occupations with archivists and curators. It is a division of a broader group of "social scientists and related workers". However, in reality, dimensions like power, prestige and pay, play a major part in determining ones status. Other issues like 'visibility of profession' and nature of work performed and image in society are also important.\textsuperscript{12}

In India, the role of women has been undergoing transformation through the ages. In the Vedic age, women were given equal importance vis-à-vis men. Vedic mantras such as "Samrajni svasure bhava", "Samrajini svasrvam bhava" be empressed to the father-in-law, be empress to the mother-in-law, etc., show the exalted position accorded to a woman in the household. Female seers or brahmavadinis were at par with male seers and names like Ghosa, Apala and Visvavara are still remembered. But by the Middle Ages, women in India were relegated to an inferior position. Even today, incidents like dowry deaths, eve teasing and molestation of women are symptomatic of a
larger malaise where Indian women are not given their due position in society.\textsuperscript{13}

Several steps have been taken to uplift the status of women in Indian society. However, a well documented overview of the participation of women in the economy and their integration in the process of national development, participation in public life and promotion of sexual equality in the family, in employment and the wider society is considerably lacking. In the political sphere, the performance of women, measured by the level of political awareness and voting behaviour, has been disappointing. The promotion of equality between men and women, it is argued, requires not only that priority should be given to the economic and political participation of women but also to the complex problem of the redefinition of her role within the family and the wider society. Women living in different parts of the country have been victims of diverse social and religious customs which even affect their family life.\textsuperscript{14}

One of the directive principles of the constitution requires the state to secure equal pay for equal work for men and women. There is a provision in the constitution that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of sex, among other things but it permits the state to discriminate in favour of women. Women in India, though enjoy the constitutional and legal protection against discrimination and exploitation on the basis of sex, there is a body of social legislation which has attempted to implement the constitutional directives regarding the elimination of discriminatory practices against women in marriage, divorce, succession, employment, social life and so on.\textsuperscript{15}

Government has not so far, brought a “uniform civil code for citizens” as provided in Article 44 of the constitution so that all women could enjoy the benefits of equality and security in the country.\textsuperscript{16} Today many efforts are on to lift the social status of women in all affairs.
The position of women as compared against their male counterparts on different issues, can be understood from the studies made by central Statistical Organisation (GOI) during 2000, and National Literacy Mission (GOI). Some of such statistical information are shown in the annexure 1- 17. These tables have highlighted the (i) Unemployment Rate, (ii) Time spent on personal activities, (iii) Time used Statistics, (iv) Progress of Literacy, (v) Teaching occupation, (vi) House hold decision making, (vii) Women’s autonomy, (viii) Employment in government offices, (ix) In gazetted status,(x) Participation in decision making, (xi) Crime committed against women, (xii) Social obstacles, (xiii) Female literacy, etc.

Coming down to the state of Manipur, socially Manipuri women are very hard working. From the very beginning, in the blood of Manipuri women, there is always a quality of leadership, dedication and good administration as well. They have been playing a vital role in the economic life of the state.

1.4 Professionalism

The term “professionalism” refers to the positive contributions, aims, qualities and conduct that characterise a professional. For this reason, it is only professionalism what the society desires of a profession or of a professional. Research in the field of professionalism has succeeded to isolate out the positive characteristics of a profession including the manifestation of its self-consciousness. All these characteristics have been formulated by taking note of the manifestation of the positive qualities of some persons engaged in different recognised professions. Such a person in a recognised profession has ultimately been recognised by the society as an ideal professional. The point here is that such a professional sets his professional goal by himself and he leaves enough evidence of achieving that goal through his professional work and service. His contributions, aims, qualities and conduct in his professional career become the source of data for developing the concepts of professionalism. Prof. S.R.
Ranganathan has been such a personality in the profession of library and information service.\textsuperscript{17}

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.\textsuperscript{18} A profession as Headicar,\textsuperscript{19} noted in 1911 is “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”. In 1915, Abraham Flexner,\textsuperscript{20} look the profession as “intellectual operation couple with large individual responsibilities”. William B. Patan,\textsuperscript{21} finds in a profession “a standard conduct based on courtesy, honour and ethics which guides the practitioners in their relations with clients, colleagues and the public”.

Kast and Rosenzhrig,\textsuperscript{22} finds hard “to get any authoritative agreement on the definition of a profession”. They said: “professionalism is a process and may affect any occupation to a greater or lesser degree”. As such, 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”.\textsuperscript{23}

The profession of any type, however, plays a very important role in the process of communication and transmits information from one person or group to another person or group and bring about some changes in the second person as receiver.\textsuperscript{24}
1.4.2 Requirements of Profession:

Some of the important requirements which normally constitute a profession include \(^{25,26}\)

- a systematic theory;
- a level of authority;
- community sanction and approval;
- a code of ethics;
- a culture; and
- service orientation.

A profession, therefore, must have a solid foundation consisting of a recognised body of knowledge essential to the well being of society.

1.4.3 Basics of a Profession

The concept of a profession is based on several commitments such as: \(^{27}\)

- associating with specialized work of noble cause;
- undergoing through rigorous and specialized preparations;
- agreeing to work along with freedom, responsibility and accountability.

The other facets of this concept are: lifelong career commitment, social service, intellectual techniques, and mastery of knowledge.

The basics of a profession, which are most commonly accepted these days are: \(^{28}\)

- 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 profits;
- Recognition by public and status in the society;
- Standardised terminology;
- Closely knit professional organization having an altruistic behaviour;
- Stability of the profession through permanent membership (life career).

1.5 Library and Information Science (LIS) Professionalism

The LIS professionalism is a complex of the methods and standards which are acquired by the study of librarianship at an advanced level (normally as evidenced by the profession of an MLS) as amplified by the practice of those methods and adherence to those standards. Bhattacharya finds both the teachers and the practitioners in LIS system are professionals because

- "contents of this discipline consists of specialized knowledge and skills essential to perform professional information work and to render professional information services" like "other professional disciplines" of medicine, engineering and law;
- professional qualifications of "library and information science" are awarded at master degree and Ph.D. level like other professional discipline;
- teachers in "library and information science" are "taking the responsibility of teaching library and information science, to develop manpower" at professional or semi professional level both in working (as librarians or information scientist) and teaching (as LIS teacher) areas; and
Practitioners (i.e., 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.

Certainly, the subject matter of LIS (Library and Information Science) is concerned with the criteria widely accepted for professionalism. The body of knowledge in LIS has been observed in the education programmes of the universities and the other agencies offering courses and degrees in LIS. This knowledge is needed by the society.

Prof. S.R. Ranganathan was very much concerned with the professionalism in librarianship. To show how Ranganathan displayed his sense of professionalism as an individual number of the profession of librarians and information scientists, Bhattacharya 31, has identified the following attributes:

- Alertness of professional education;
- Introduction of theoretical analysis;
- Ambition for wider application;
- Introduction of standardization;
- Co-operation and co-ordination;
- Concern about law standards; and
- Protest against lack of recognition.

1.5.1 Drift Down Theory

Michael Gorman32, advocated “Drift Down Theory” for a clear cut division of tasks in ‘professional’ and ‘non-professional’. He feels this division a must to establish professionalism in LIS. As the theory goes:
- no professional should do a task which can be performed by a para-professional;

- no para-professionals should do a task which can be performed by a machine; and

- no human being should do a task which can be performed by a machine.

The clauses are undoubtedly, in favour of automation of libraries. But the implications of the theory, as the author claims, would certainly form the base of professionalism in LIS.

1.5.2 Influence of Information Technology

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

- internalise the IT in librarianship;
- exploit modern technology;
- realise, foster and promote the organisation or library by all means; and
- act as pressure group to safeguard the professional interest.

1.5.3 Women Professionals in LIS

Women constitute a major component in the professionals in LIS. However, they have taken to librarianship and information work very slowly and steadily. Since the beginning of library history, library practitioners were predominantly men. Women started entering the profession during the nineteenth century only. It was happened because of the raise of library
supported from public fund, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States and the case of paying women less than men for any given task. Different studies have revealed that

- "most libraries in the Middle East are men since Islamic society is male oriented and male dominated";
- in western European countries, women, though dominating their counterparts in number in public libraries, occupy scholarly position in academic libraries much less than men;
- in world librarianship women although ‘hold the majority of jobs’ do not occupy a corresponding proportion of administrative position throughout the world;
- the "contributions of women librarians, unfortunately have not apparently been rewarded professionally (promotion wise) throughout the world";
- "women has taken to librarianship and information work slowly but steadily. It is not considered a female profession in India. Their number is not quite large due to historical and social reasons. However, librarianship is one of the few professions with a history of hospitality for women. It is more true in western countries;"

- Librarianship in the west to include women to make it a women’s profession;
- A systematic investigation of "women and librarianship" was justified and that the following points needed investigation;
- The storage of staff in libraries;
- Whether there was a "reservoir" of qualified married woman wishing to recentre librarianship;
- Whether there are any steps that could be taken to assist and encourage their return.\textsuperscript{59} and

- "Educated women, while meeting resistance in other more established professions, flooded into library with work during the last quarter of the 19th century for a variety of reasons."\textsuperscript{40}

Edward Evan,\textsuperscript{41} reported that unlike full professionals, most semi-professionals are female. He has looked upon the issue from organisational point of view: until relatively recently, the assumption seems to have been that women are more manageable in an organizational sense, that women are less conscious of status and that they generally have less education than man". He also records that "Figures vary, but it is safe to say, that in most countries, the ratio of man to woman librarians is somewhere between 1:3 and 1:4. However, the ratio of man to woman directors and assistant directors is almost the complete reverse". Sometimes, somewhere 90% or more of the top management positions in librarians were filled up by men.\textsuperscript{42} Evans also remarks that "as in other fields, there are significant differences in the salaries paid to men and women librarians, male librarian's salaries, even at the beginning level, tend to be higher that those of females, despite the fact that they do the same work". Current studies, however, may not find such differences in economic status of women practitioners, though, the status of power structure still perhaps remain unchanged.

1.5.3.1 Situation in India

In comparison with the women professionals in the LIS of different countries, India's situation is quite different. There is no division of library work based on sex. However, it is fact that women have slowly taken to librarianship and some of the better ones that could earn a name, had to relinquish the job to develop a home, after getting married. That is because of the social life in which women are placed. In almost all the library schools opened by the universities in India like those in Punjab University, Delhi
University, Punjabi University, Kurukshetra University where the majority of candidates getting into library science course are women. In some other schools too female candidates have outnumbered male candidates. But this development has not made the librarianship a woman’s profession. It is certainly a male dominated and male operated profession. The top position hardly goes to women. Women and women’s movement are not meant to be portrayed as saviours of librarianship. However, a process of defining and working towards a realization of feminist values should be applied to provide better, warm and helpful services in libraries.\(^{43}\)

1.6 Library Professionals in Manipur

So far, no comprehensive study of has been found on the subject of library and information science in Manipur, though there is a sizeable number of professionals in the state. 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 organizations or institutions. The state has also one State Central Library, six district libraries and 124 RRRLF (Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation) funded libraries run by voluntary organizations. 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 1986. MLISc course has also been introduced since the academic session of 2004-05. IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University), Manipur University study Centre, has also been producing BLISc and MLISc degree holders since 2000. Therefore, there will be more master degree holders in LIS in the state of Manipur. In a study,\(^{44}\) conducted during Dec. 1997- Jan. 1998, there were 161, 31, 32 and 54 professionals working in 32 academic , 6 special, 3 public and 20 departmental libraries respectively. Among the professionals working in different institutions and even those trained but not working there are professionals who are involved in and associated with professional
organizations or associations. Also, there are professionals contributing research papers in professional journals, seminars, conferences etc.

1.6.1 Women Professionals in the Libraries of Manipur
1.6.1.2 Women Professionals in LIS

Preliminary studies of library science literature are to convey that since some research studies are made on women working in libraries. To name a few, Female Librarianship in Australia; the mentoring influence in the careers of women ARL directors, USA; Comparison of the publishing patterns between men and women Ph.Ds. in librarianship; women's studies collection development in academic libraries; status of women in Palestine and their rights before focusing on women in the library profession, etc. But, in India, the women library professionals have not got any significant place in the research studies.

In the state of Manipur, women section constitutes a major component of the professionals in LIS. In a preliminary survey, it has been revealed that:

- of the 161 professionals working in 32 academic libraries 29.13% are women components;
- of the 32 professionals of 3 public libraries, there are 25% women;
- 32% of the total 224 working professionals at 41 different types of libraries are women;
- 30% of the total 54 librarians working in 20 special libraries are women;
- at least 50% of about half a dozen persons engaged in teaching LIS are women.

Though the LIS 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 very few women professionals are associated themselves with the activities of MALA, ILA, 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, conventions etc. are also not very significant. Most of the responsible posts in the field of LIS are found to be occupied by men. University department of LIS, is however, leading by women, which is a good trend.

1.7 Need for the Study

In fact, no research studies have so far been taken up in Manipur about the women professionals in LIS. However, they constitute a major component of the profession. As such the need for study on the women professionals in Manipur has been felt to:

- examine the limitations and prospects of women professionals to increase the efficiency of library and information service;
- benefit the women professionals in knowing that occupational hurdles, grievances and other areas which are normally ignored;
- find out the avenues from the profession to overcome their limitations;
- improve upon the library services; and
- provide effective service to the user community of the state.

1.8 Aims and Objectives

The major important aims and objectives of the present study are:
- to find out the status of women library and information professionals in Manipur;
- to highlight the occupational image and identity of the women LIS professionals of the state;
- to record their problems and prospects in the profession;
- to identify their family and career values;
- to evaluate their professional roles in the society;
- to investigate the structural, cultural or attitudinal causes of gender discrimination or the obstacle that make the women invisible in the forefront of the profession with reference to the state.

1.9 Scope of the Study

Study on the women professionals in the field of LIS is a very big task requiring many parameters to be dealt with. However, keeping in view our set aims and objectives, the scope of the present work will be limited:

- on the study of occupational role played by the women professional in LIS in Manipur;
- to the achievements, frustrations and limitations of the professionals;
- through the analysis of some of the important components involved in their professional and personal lives;
- to the time period between 2000 to 2005; and
- to record the hopes, aspirations and frustration of the student components (pre-in-post stages of the studentship) who are just at the threshold of the profession.

1.10 Hypotheses

The present work is being carried with the object of verifying the following hypothesis drawn on the basis of preliminary studies that:

- the size of women professionals is quite substantial in small state like Manipur as compare to their male counterparts in various stages;
- though the women segment has been frequently outnumbered its male counterpart 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 (i.e. position, leadership). Neither they are able to put work in producing professional output (through leadership, publications, seminar, conferences, etc.);

- the family commitment stand very often against their career;
- they are more or less busy for personal life than their male counterparts;
- the occupational status of women professionals in Manipur is not what it would supposed to be; and
- the role played by the women professionals in society is significant.

1.11 Research Methodology

The following methods and techniques have been followed in the review of literature, collection and analysis of data for the present study:

- scanning of documentary resources viz., reports, professional journals, proceedings of seminars/conferences etc. and other bibliographical tools for review of related literature;
- visiting major libraries located in Manipur, Shillong and Guwahati to collect relevant literature;
- examining the admission forms for BLISc. course of LISc. Department of Manipur University to understand their contributions/status in the society, educational, social and economic background etc.
- questionnaire as a tool for collecting primary data from women working and non-working professionals in the field from the state.
— interviewing with schedule persons at different levels (both professional and non-professionals) whenever necessary; and
— using statistical methods and other qualitative techniques to analyse the collected data so as to make the study more empirical.

1.12 Chapterisation

The present work is being arranged in six chapters as detailed below:

Chapter-I Introduction: being denoted on various aspects of women professionals in LIS with special reference to Manipur highlighting need, aim and objectives, hypothesis, methodology etc. of the study.

Chapter-II Review of related literature: being focussed on studies in the field conducted abroad and in India chronologically.

Chapter-III Role of women in Manipur society: study on the role of women in various respects in Manipur from ancient past to modern society.

Chapter-IV Professionalism in Librarianship: this chapter is meant for professionalism in LIS giving much reference on women section in Manipur in different stages.

Chapter-V Women professionals in Manipur: analysis and interpretation of data – analysis has been done separately in two parts. Part-I: Beginners at the library profession; and Part-II: Working women in the library profession.

Chapter-VI Conclusion: Major findings of the study are being highlighted and concludes with practicable suggestions.
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