Attitude of Library Professionals towards Adopting New Skills and Professional Competencies: A Study

Deepak Sharma
Librarian,
Indian School of Hospitality,
Gurugram, Haryana

Abstract

Attitude of library professionals plays an important role in professional development of the organization and at the same time affects the organizations goals and targets. Learning new skills and becoming professionally competent is important requirement for library professionals. To ensure place in an organization and to provide users up-to-date information, it is necessary that professionals should continue learning new and latest skills. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a vital tool for maintaining the skills and expertise of staff, especially with regard to the use of Information and Communication Technology. The present paper is an effort to understand the attitude of professionals towards adopting new skills and professional competencies. An online survey has been created and shared on social media to get feedback from professionals. A total of 57 professionals responded. Being an online survey, feedback have been received from librarians from all types of academic and research libraries across the country. The results are shown through tables and figures. Some important aspects like average qualifications of professionals, their computer literacy skills, their capabilities on open source technology, services offered, factors affecting the librarians' capabilities etc. are presented in this paper. Authors are hopeful that this paper will help decision makers to know the librarians' point of view on various library related issues.

Keywords: Attitude, Behavior, Competencies, Open Source, Techniques, Technology and Perception.

Introduction

Technology is changing at a very fast speed. Just look at the short span of last twenty years and you will notice that technology has changed tremendously. Could somebody imagine that a black and white television of 1980's and 1990's would be replaced by a HD LED color television with Wi-Fi connectivity? In the same way, the e-commerce has revolutionized the concept and ways of shopping. Now, each and everything can be delivered to your home, and you need not visit stores.

Changing environment of academic libraries has impacted significantly on the knowledge, skills requirement and role of the library leaders, and how organizations can maintain and manage the changing nature of academic libraries as well as leadership while effective leadership is extremely required for the library leaders and organizations are concern about future scenarios.

These technological developments have also effected the collection of libraries and role of librarians to a great extent. The technological tools like Internet, Kindle, and digital content are giving challenge to professionals to become technologically competent. Venkata[1] described that there is an urgent necessity to learn a great variety of professional competencies to accomplish the role of professional librarian in the constantly changing and challenging web environment. Professional competences enable librarians to respond effectively and efficiently to the constant development of new technologies. It is the utmost responsibility of professionals to keep themselves updated with latest technologies. Cullen[2] opined that academic librarians have shown themselves to be adopted at adjusting to these changes, and been proactive in advancing research, scholarship and knowledge. In fact, professional librarians must take an active part in this development and offer new services in order to fulfill their roles as information providers.Wikipedia[3] defines competence as the ability

Sangita Garg
Librarian,
Lord Krishna College of Education,
Adhoya, Ambala, Haryana

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of an individual to do a job properly. Competency is a set of defined behaviors that provide a structured guide enabling the identification, evaluation and development of the behaviors in individual employees. Competency is also used as a more general description of the requirements of human beings in organizations and communities.

Review of Literature

Literature review is the most important activity which provides a researcher an opportunity to get the information about the various similar studies of this are a. Different authors have conducted diverse studies on various aspects of behavior and professional competencies.

Maesaroh &Genoni[4] investigated the continuing professional development practices in Indonesian academic libraries. They concluded that with the development of electronic resources for remote access, librarians have required skills to manage access through library website rather than through the traditional ways. Bhatti and Nadeem[5]studiedLISprofessionals' prerequisite for developing training programs in University Libraries of Pakistan.The results obtained show that LIS professionals need training related to troubleshooting network technologies, End note, data compression, Internet, social media such as Facebook, Blogger, Flicker, Twitter, and online data bases. Olaniyan & Ojo[6] conducted a study to examine how staff training and developmentcould effect on the organizational progress.In the study it was suggested that to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization, training and retraining programs should be made compulsory and that organizations should arrange workshops, conferences, and seminars for staff training and development.Tyson[7] stressed that with shaping of libraries, library staff should also be transformed to serve the present generation who need information anytime, anywhere. The skills of librarians should link to the technological infrastructure. Siddiqui[8] reports the use of information technology in seven university libraries of Saudi Arabia. The survey results show that information technologies used by the academic libraries are automation, networks, electronic mail, online searching, CD-ROM searching, and personal computers.

Pan and Hovde[9] posited that professional development (PD) is a lifetime learning process, which is both universal and individualized. It is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the library field and maintain professionalism. At the same time, it is an individualized experience that varies with the needs of specific work duties as well as resources available around one's working; social and academic environment. Janes[10]described that reference librarians with digital reference experience had more positive attitudes than them who had no experience. Nyamboga[11] also reported the results of a study of training opportunities for library and information professionals in India and how a selection of Indian university libraries isproviding information skills and information literacy programsfor their users. The author stresses the need for training students,

researchers and staff to make appropriate use of resources made available in libraries. Library and information professionals need continuing professional development courses as new ways of providing information resources are developed. Mathew, Baby and Sreerekha[12] in their study of technological skills for academic librarians among university libraries in Kerala, observed that ICT based services are being provided by a small group of trained library professionals or computer professionals and majority of the qualified library professionals don't get an opportunity to be familiar with ICT services or they are mostly unaware of the facilities in their own institution. Sivakuaren, Geethaand andJeyaprakash[13] examined the various attitudes of library professionals towards ICT in the libraries. The study found that the majority of library professionals have positive attitude on ICT and some of them were not able to update their knowledge and skills on ICT.Mathews and Pardue[14] conducted a content-analysis of randomly selected job ads from ALA online job list over a period of Oct. 2007-Mar. 2008. This study stressed on the substantial need for web development, project management, system development and system applications in the job requirements for librarians.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to explore the attitude of library professionals towards adopting new skills and professional competencies.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To explore and investigate the various competency skills of library and information professionals
2. To ascertain the attitude of library and information professionals for adopting new skills
3. To know the factors affecting behavior of library and information professionals
4. To know the competency level of ICT among library and information professionals
5. To ascertain the specific factors that tends to promote positive attitude of professional towards adopting new skills

Methodology

A structured online questionnaire was developed for the purpose of data collection and questionnaires were distributed personally among the professional librarians using Google drive. 57 professional librarians from different libraries filled the online questionnaire. The data retrieved from the participants were analyzed using MS Excel 2007 and presented through tables and graphs.

Limitations and Scope of the Study

This study is an effort to get the information about attitude of library professionals towards adopting new skills and professional competencies. This study will help the library professionals, decision makers, senior management to get information about various factors affecting the attitude and behavior of librarians.It was tried to get responses from all type of librarians but due to various factors like lack of professional communication, unavailability of contact details, this study is limited to library professionals working in academic and research libraries only. The questionnaire made using Google doc and shared

with professionals through social networks and different librarian groups. The respondents represent twelve different states of India. The respondents represent all categories of librarians i.e. Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Assistant Librarian and Library Assistant etc. filled the responses.

Analysis of Results and Findings
Qualifications of respondents

Table 1 shows that out of 57 respondents, 8 have PhD as their highest degree, 9 have M. Phil, 11 are NETqualified, and 25 respondents have Master's Degree in Library Science.Only 1 respondent has a Bachelor's degree in Library Science as highest degree. 3 respondents have not mentioned their qualification. Majority of the respondents have at least a Master's degree in Library Science.

Table 1: Qualifications of respondents

Qualifications	Respondents	
Doctorate of Philosophy	8	(14.04%)
Master of Philosophy	9	(15.79%)
UGC-NET	11	(19.30%)
Master of Library and Information Science	25	(43.86%)
Bachelor ofLibrary and Information Science	1	(1.75%)
Not mentioned	3	(5.25%)

How do you keep yourself updated?

Table 2 shows that 43 respondents (the highest value) mentioned that they keep themselves updated by attending seminars,conference and workshops. In one of the similar studies, Ernst[15] revealed that attending a conference is a professionally rewarding experience and it enables participants to socialize with colleagues from other institutions and also to converse with other researchers. 41 respondents told that they updated themselves through social media, followed by 28 respondents mentioning that they updated themselves through training programs. 18 respondents updated themselves by attending specialized courses and 6 respondents have chosen others option. It is clearly indicative that the most common way to keep updated is by attending seminars/conferences/workshops and through social media. These responses are indicative that conferences/seminars and other training programsare really helpful for professionals.

Table 2: How do you keep yourselfupdated?

Options	Responses
Through social media	41 (71.93%)
By attending seminars/conferences/workshops	43 (75.44%)
By attending specialized course	18 (31.58%)
By attending training programs	28 (49.12%)
By attending training programs	06 (10.53%)

Do you think by attending workshops/training programs, you are getting real time knowledge?

Table 3 indicates that 40 respondents said that they are getting real time knowledge from workshops and other training programs.Hankins,

Melgoza, Seeger and Wan[16]discovered that conference attendance enables the participants to share research findings, discuss emerging trends in the discipline, interact with experts in the fields, develop publishing and presentation opportunities and build networks.

Table 3: Do you think by attending workshops/training programs, you are getting real time knowledge?

Options	Responses
Yes	40 (70.18%)
No	4 (7.01%)
Up to some extent	10 (17.54%)
Other	3 (5.27 %)

Do you possess any computer qualification?

Table 4 shows that 40 respondents have computer qualifications. 14 have no computer qualification and 3 respondents have not replied to this question.It is indicative that majority of librarians possesscomputer qualifications to get expertise on information technology which is essential for today's world.

Table 4: Do you possess any computer qualification?

| Options	Responses
Yes	40 (70.18%)
No	4(7.01%)
No Reply	3(5.27 %)

Have you tried using any of the open source software's Library Management software in your library?

As sown in Table 5, 28 respondents have mentioned that they are using open source software based library management software in their libraries. 12 respondents said no while 13 mentioned that they are using commercial software for library automation. 4 respondents have not replied to this question.This information is very encouraging that librarians have started using open source based library management software, which is indicative that librarians have become technologically competent.

Table 5: Use of Open source LMS software in Library

Options	Responses
Yes	28 (49.12%)
No	12 (21.06%)
Using Commercial Software	13 (22.81%)
No Reply	4 (7.02 %)

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**Figure 1: Use of Open source LMS software in Library**
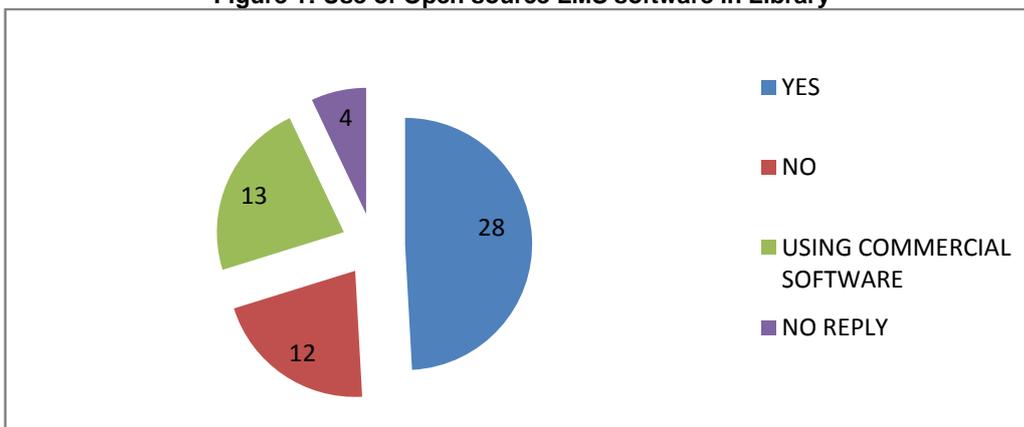
Those who choose Yes for previous question, please mention name of software

Out of 28 respondents who said yes to previous question, 16 are using KOHA software for library automation. 4 respondents are using E- Granthalaya and 4 are using Libsys commercial software for library automation. 4 respondents are using other software.KOHA is the most used software for library automation.

**Figure 2: Name of Open source LMS software used in Library**
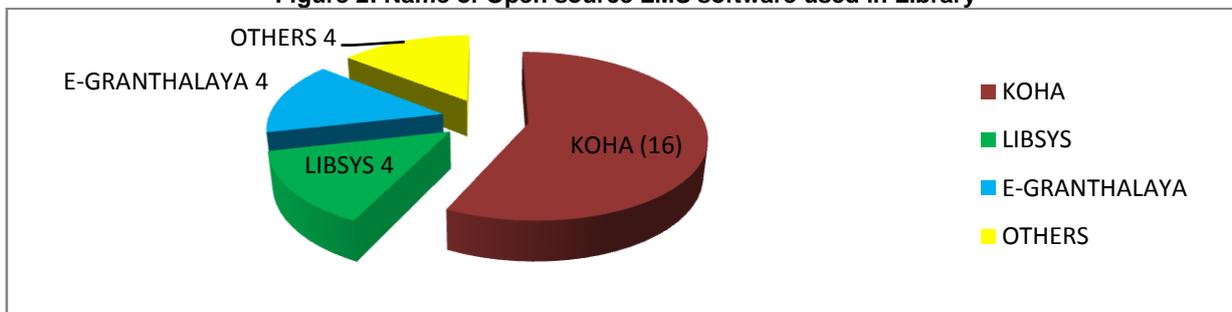
Have you tried to use any of the open source software's Digital Library software in your library?

20 respondents have mentioned that they are using open source software based digital library software in their libraries. 25 respondents said no and 6 mentioned that they are using commercial software for digital library. 6 respondents have not replied to this question.This is indicative that librarians are slowly moving towards digital library software installation as their first priority is to use library management software for library automation.

Table 6: Use of the open source software's Digital Library software in your library?

Options	Responses
Yes	20 (35.09%)
No	25 (43.86 %)
Using Commercial Software	6(10.53 %)
No Response	6(10.53 %)

Figure 3: Use of the open source software's Digital Library software in your library?
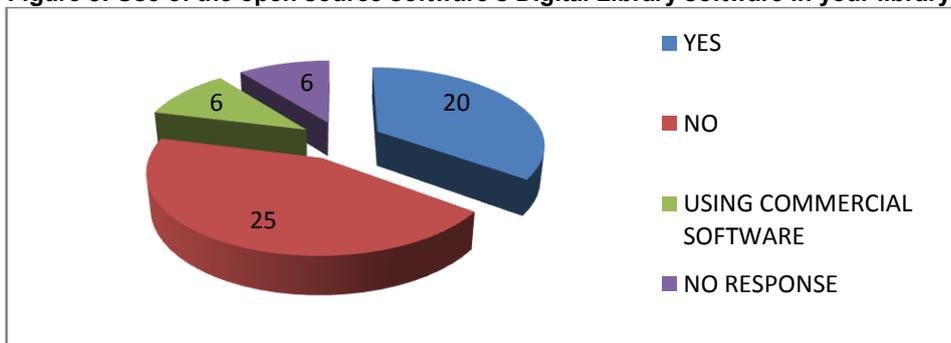

Those who choose Yes for previous question, please mention name of software.

Out of 20 respondents who said yes to previous question, 12 are using D-Space for digital library. 5 respondents are using Greenstone and 4 respondents are using other software. This figure is indicative that D-Space is widelyused software.

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**Figure 4: Name of open source software used for Digital Library**
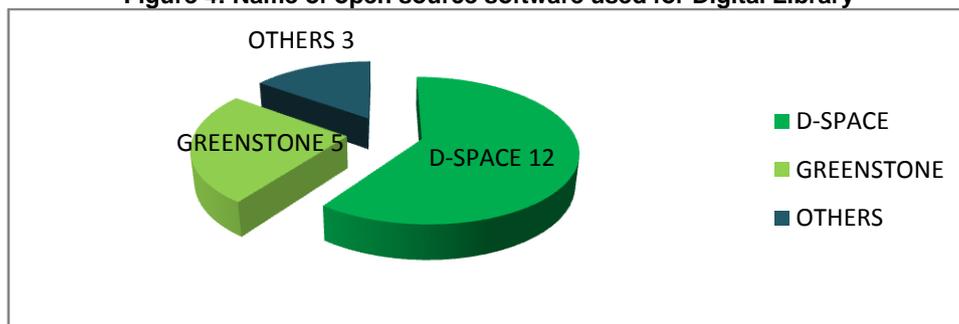
Are you using any of the below mentioned techniques in your library?

As shown in Table 7, 45 respondents said they are using library management software for library automation. 44 respondents said they are providing newspapers clipping service to their users. 40 respondents said they are providing reference services in their library. 37 respondents have their own library websites. 34 respondents are providing literature search facility and 33 respondents are providing inter library loan facility for users. 28 respondents are providing current awareness service to users and 25 respondents are using social media in their libraries. 18 respondents are using selective dissemination of services and e-newsletters services in library equally.17 respondents have digital library software. 12 respondents are providing abstracting and indexing services and 10 respondents are providing e-news bulletins to users. 6 respondents are providing information repackaging and consolidation service in library. 4 respondents are providing service of library notifications to users and 3 respondents are providing manuscripts in library. 2 respondents are providing translation service and patent and standard information to users equally.

Table 7: Are you using any of the below mentioned techniques in your library?

Techniques	Responses
Library Management software	45 (78.95%)
Library website	37 (64.92%)
Digital Library software	17 (29.83%)
Social media	25 (43.86%)
E-Newsletters	18 (31.58%)
Current Awareness Service	28 (49.13 %)
E- News Bulletins	10 (17.54 %)
Information repackaging andconsolidation	6(10.53 %)
Selective Dissemination of Services	18 (31.58 %)
Inter Library Loan (ILL)	33 (57.90 %)
Translation Service	2(3.51 %)
Abstracting and Indexing Services	12 (21.06 %)
Patent and Standard Information	2 (3.51%)
Newspaper clipping service	44 (77.20%)
Reference Service	40 (70.18 %)
Manuscripts	3 (5.26 %)
Literature search	34 (59.65 %)
Library notifications	4 (7.01 %)

Figure 5: Use of above mentioned techniques in libraries
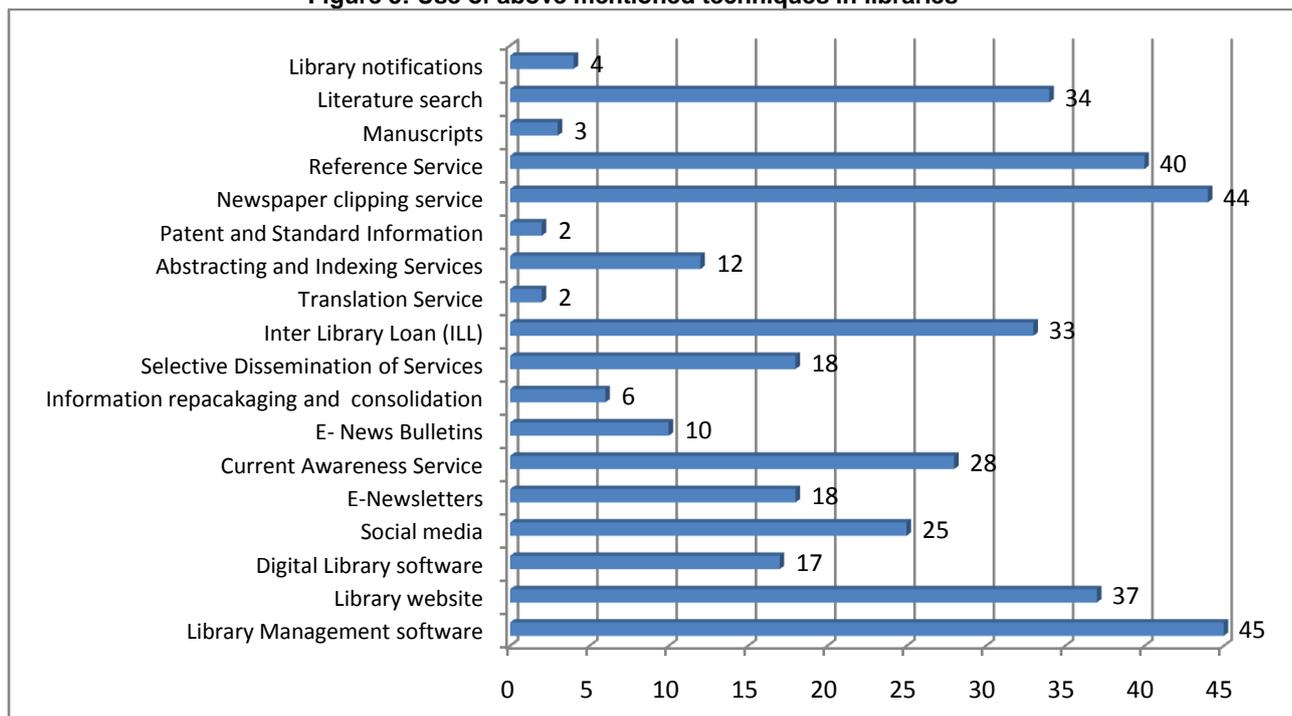
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What promotional activities do you organize to promote information products and services?

Table 8 shows that 42 respondents use e-mail alerts facility for promotion of information products and services. 35 respondents use personal contacts and 34 respondents use reference service. Exhibitions, posters, lectures and advertisement are used by 25, 20, 12, and 15 respondents respectively. It indicates that e-mail alerts are the common type of technique used by librarians followed by personal contacts and reference service.

Table 8: Use of promotional activities to promote information products and services

Options	Responses
E-mail alerts	42 (73.68 %)
Exhibitions	25 (43.85 %)
Posters	20 (35.08 %)
Personal contacts	35 (61.40 %)
Lectures	15 (26.31 %)
Reference Service	34 (59.64 %)
Advertisement	12 (21.05 %)
Others	2(3.51 %)

Figure 6: Use of Promotional activities to promote Information products and services?
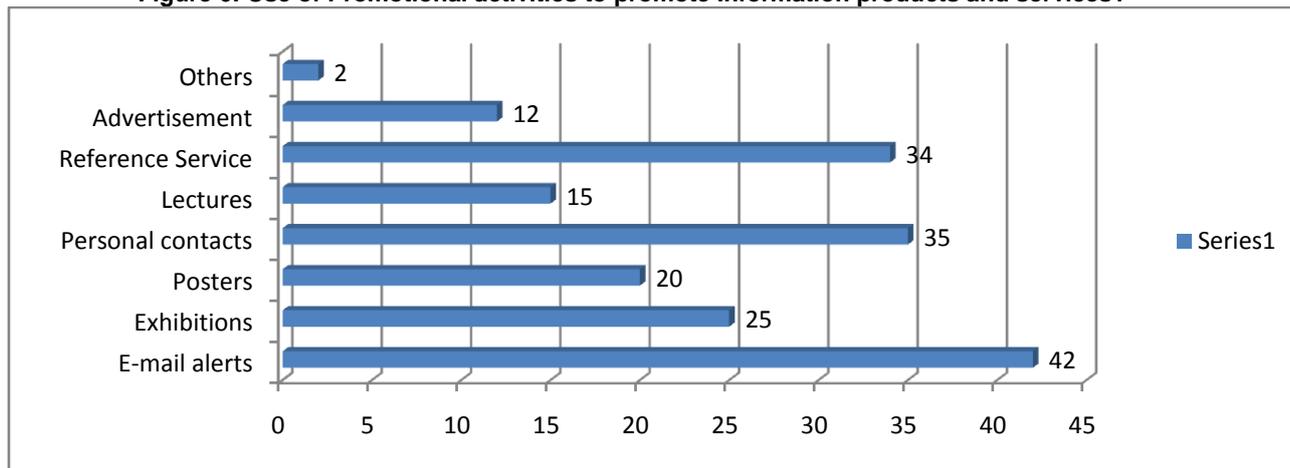

Does your organization show interest in adopting newer technologies in library and spend amount on the same irrespective of the cost?

36 (63.15 %) respondents said they are supported by organization to use newer technologies in libraries, while 16 (28.07 %) said no, 2 (3.51%) respondents have chosen others option and 3(5.26%) respondents gave no response.It is indicative that organizations are also taking interest to develop their libraries.

Table 9: Organizational Support

Options	Responses
Yes	36 (63.15 %)
No	16 (28.07 %)
Other	2 (3.51 %)
No Response	3 (5.26 %)

**Figure 7: Organizational support**
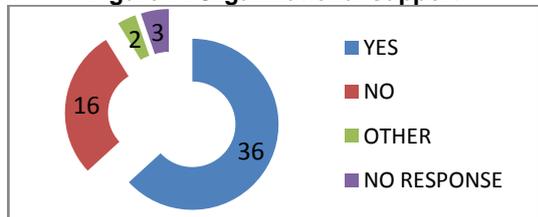
If answer is no for previous question, what are the probable reasons?

Out of 12 respondents who said no to previous question, 7 respondents think that reason for no organizational support is less importance to library while 6 said finance is not available with organization, only two respondents had the opinion that it is not required in library and 4 have chosen others option.

Table 10: Reason for no organizational support

Option	Response
Not required	2 (12.5 %)
Finance is not available	6 (37.5 %)
Less importance to library	7 (43.75 %)
Any other	4 (25.00 %)

Figure 8: Reason for No Organizational support
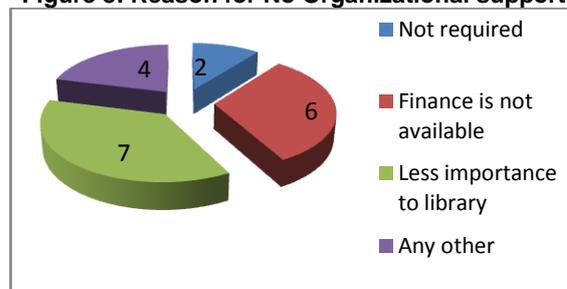
Findings and Suggestions

The different views and feedback provided by librarians have provided the authors some practical and feasible recommendations:

1. Majority of the library professionals are trying to keep updated themselves by attending seminars/conference/workshops.
2. Social media is an important tool for promotion of information products and services.
3. Most of the librarians are using open source software for library management. Open source digital library software is not used much and there exists a need for training and awareness.
4. Librarians should try to get into any course of computer science/information technology for getting expertise on computer applications.

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5. LIS professionals should attend training programs particularly on open source technology for getting expertise.
6. Different social networking tools should be used by professionals for promotion of library.
7. It is essential that professionals should come forward to convincethe higher authorities about any value addition in library.
8. Professionals should try to organize guest lectures and training programs time to time for users.

Conclusion

Attitude of professionals is most important if they want to get access to new and latest information and technology skills. This study has brought some excellent facts to light like professionals have positive attitude and majority of them have computer qualification. They have started using open source software for library automation. At the same time this study also indicates that most of the libraries don't have digital library software. Majority of librarians are providing only traditional services to users. There is a need to get training on newly developedservices and resources which will enable professionals to offer these services to users. This study is indicating that most of the professionals are getting full support of management for implementing new and value added services in libraries. Moreover, it is the duty of library professionals to come forward and try to learn the new skills and competencies for serving the users in a better way.

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