

Managerial and Technological Skills for LIS Professionals: A Survey

Suresh Jange*
Sujatha**

ABSTRACT

Enormous changes have been taking place in the entire gamut of information industry and this calls for acquiring skills both traditional, technological and managerial skills to keep pace with time for rendering need based services to the users. The main purpose of the study is to explore the current challenges faced by library professionals in managing the libraries, technological skills required and leadership qualities needed for present and future Library Professionals to effectively render need based information services to the user community. Survey method using questionnaire is used to elicit research data from library professional and Non-library Professional working in Bangalore city with 206 questionnaires duly filled out of 312 distributed. The results reveal that managerial incompetence of librarian, Co-operation and Team work within Library and Communication Skills & Commitment of library staff are Current challenges faced by Library Professionals in managing the Libraries and calls for Sound Knowledge of Library information science, Internet and Databases searching skills. The study concludes for developing effective leadership with a view to develop and build better qualitative libraries towards service motto and image building of library profession.

Keywords: Library Leadership, Library Skills, Soft Skills, ICT Traits, Managerial Skills, Technological Skills, LIS Professionals

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are social agencies and they exist to serve specific needs in our society. Today's librarians will work in a broad spectrum of libraries and information centers, and must be able to understand and interpret an increasingly complex information environment; they must be able to collaborate effectively with other information professionals; they must be able to articulate the value of the knowledge

and skills of librarianship in a rapidly changing information environment; and they must be competent managers capable of innovation, efficiency, and leadership as they meet the demands of their clientele. The societal, organizational, and competitive changes affecting academic libraries point to the need for effective leadership and the identification of an important component of such a statement of leadership competencies (Krishan Gopal, 2006) [1].

To keep pace with the present changing information and academic environment, Leadership should be legitimately exercised at multiple levels and by staff throughout the organization at all levels of library hierarchy. This activity cannot rest solely with one individual. It is desirable that a variety of people in different situations exercise leadership regarding their departmental goals as well as broader mission

Author's Affiliation: *Deputy Librarian, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga - 585 106, Karnataka, India, **Librarian, Government Degree College, Gurmitkal, Karnataka, India.

Reprint's request: Dr Suresh Jange, *Deputy Librarian, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga - 585 106, Karnataka, India, E-mail: suresh_jange@rediffmail.com

(Received on 08.07.10, Accepted on 23.07.2010)

and goals of the library professionals to demonstrate leadership “regardless of their positions. Although the practice of shared leadership is not new in libraries, it has to occur only informally because there are always individuals who are willing to exert leadership within and beyond their specific position assignment.

The leader who can take role of a facilitator blends his or her role of visionary decisive leader with that of listening and empowering leader. As a facilitative leader he or she involves followers as much as possible in creating the group’s vision and purpose, carrying out the vision and purpose, and building a productive and cohesive team. Facilitation can be seen as a leadership approach (Rees, 1998) [2]. Distributed leadership also means a departure from staff expecting that all decisions rest with the administrative staff to expectations that they will share in and accept responsibility for the directions and results of specific goals and the over all mission of the library. It might be helpful to consider shared leadership in relation to the concept of participatory management. Participatory management is based on the view that management responsibilities could be shared that is how organization implements what is envisioned for the future through planning, allocation of resources and policy development could and should involve staff than those in library management positions. In contrast shared leadership suggests that multiple people have value to contribute is shaping what the library will become by identifying innovative and imaginative services, building and maintaining sound relationship on campus, and taking personal responsibility for the overall mission and vision of the library.

An attempt has been made to identify and explore the significance of Leadership roles among Library and Information Science professionals in Bangalore City that can be leveraged as a strategic asset to attract staff, create favorable assessments by administrators and founders, and cast library institutions in a positive light for independent media and accredi-

tation bodies. These are uniquely relevant to the growth and success of libraries can provide current and future library leaders with guidance, models, and intellectual resources to enhance personal and organizational success.

Literature Review

Fitsimmons, Gary (2009) [3] discussed that managing skill sets plays in practicing the performance standard of managing people effectively. The findings are that individuals are more productive when they have the chance to use their unique skill sets rather than having to do tasks for which they have little or no skills simply because those tasks are part of a larger function. The study by Pors, Niels Ole (2008) [4] is based primarily on a comprehensive leadership survey conducted in Denmark in 2007 and on a qualitative study based on extensive interviewing of directors and staff members from 24 public libraries. Some supporting material from earlier leadership surveys. Findings - The main findings supports some of the newer theoretical literature concerned with isomorphism, translation and diffusion of standards and recipes, namely that the variation is great and that some of the processes are heavily influenced by the organizational culture in which leadership plays an important role. It is also important that the paper emphasizes that management tools, whether performance measurement instruments or technological devices, possess both a technical and a symbolic aspect. Adams, Jean and Morgan, Gareth (2007) [5] developed the concept of “second generation” e-learning as a new paradigm for thinking about online learning. Whereas “first generation” approaches have been effective for developing technical skills, the same approach has not proven effective for developing management soft-skills. It is also argued that current technology standards appear to be locking the industry into a “first generation” mindset - at the expense of the pedagogical exploration and learning design innovation required for effective soft-skill development. Webb, Jela (2006) [6] discussed the Concept of Leadership

and Outlining the Key Skills Required of a Chief Knowledge Officer. Winston (2005) [7] addressed the issue of leadership competencies as a part of defining the nature of effective leadership, the leadership qualities and areas of knowledge needed by those who contribute to organizational success, and the educational preparation needed by leaders.

Arora (2004) [8] highlighted leadership skills and personal traits that were used successfully for transforming a traditional library into a hybrid library in precarious circumstances and conditions that exist in some of the organizations in India. It describes the management techniques, skills and personal traits of a leader that were used to motivate staff members to computerize the library, to improve library services and to transform a traditional library into a hybrid library. Unaeze (2003) [9] focuses on the dynamics of leadership and management of academic library reference services and what is expected of the reference department head of the 21st century. It explores the changing roles of reference librarians and those of their leaders or department heads. It examines the leadership skills, traits, and competencies and attributes expected of the department head of reference in the new millennium. Needham (2001) [10] stresses several important leadership roles to play in creating an environment to nurture a successful transition of libraries into the new roles they will play. Among these roles are helping to create standards and protocols, advocacy, mentoring, creating heroes, and underwriting leadership training for new members of the profession. The willingness to take a leadership role presents several potential traps which must be avoided diligently, through humility and vision.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are

- Determine the current challenges faced by Library Professionals in managing the Libraries
- Identify the Information and Communication Technology Skills required for present and future Library Professionals.
- Understand Leadership Qualities Needed for Library Managers and
- Find out the barriers in building leadership mind set for Library professionals.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire method has been employed to collect research information from library professional and Non-library Professional working in Bangalore city keeping in view of the objectives of the study. To elicit the research information pertaining to the essence of leadership qualities among library professionals, a total of 312 questionnaires were distributed library professionals and Non-library Professionals in Bangalore city working in academic and corporate sectors, out of which 206 questionnaires are duly received i.e. Library professionals (68.9%) and Non-library professionals (31.1%) with a response rate at 66%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majority of respondents of the study are Male (78.61%) followed by Female respondents (21.4%). Thus the majority of respondents covered in the study are male respondents than female respondents. This is also depicted pictographically in Fig-

Table 1. Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	162	78.6	78.6
Female	44	21.4	100.0
Total	206	100.0	

ure 1.

It is observed from table 2 and figure 2 that majority of respondents covered in the study Library and Information Science professionals accounting to 68.9% and non-Professionals accounts to 31.1%. Thus the proposition of respondents covered in the

It is observed from the table3 that about 45.6% of respondents are having work experience between 1 and 5 years. 16.5% possess experience between 6 and 10 years and 32% respondents are having work experience in the range between 11 to 15 years. Only 5.8% are having work experiences of 16 years and

Figure 1. Gender of the respondents

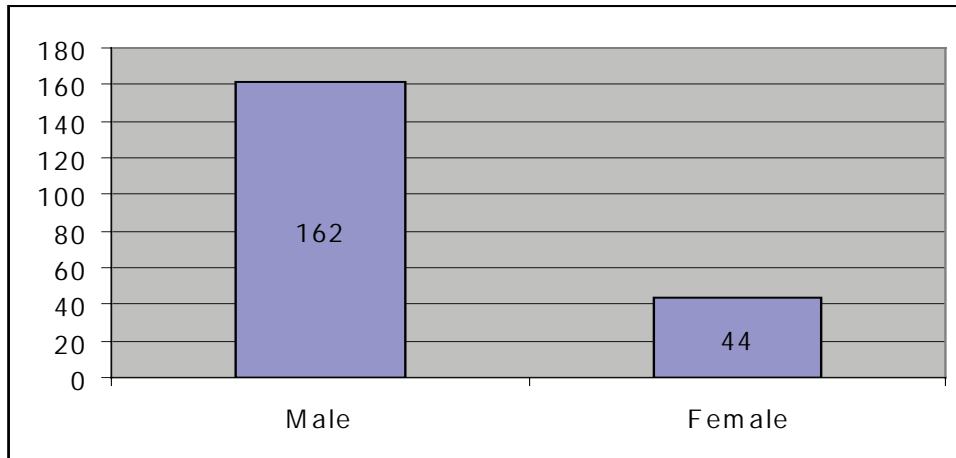


Table 2. Category of Professional and Non- Professionals

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Professionals	142	68.9	68.9
Non-Professionals	64	31.1	100.0
Total	206	100.0	

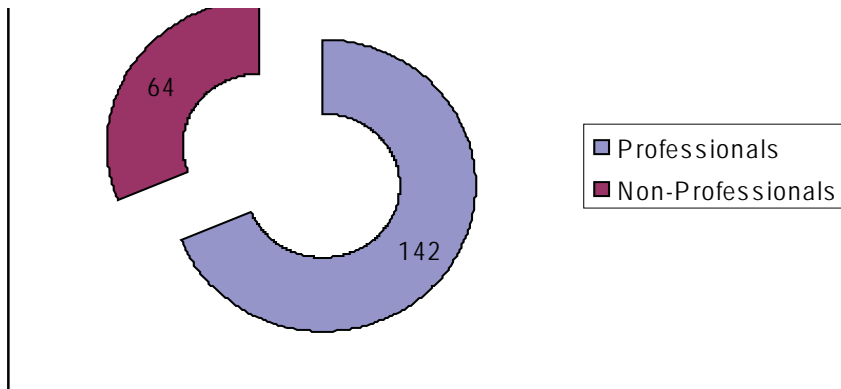


Figure 2. Category of Professional and Non- Professionals

study of library professionals is higher than non-Professionals.

above. Thus nearly half of the respondents are having work experiences from 1 to 5 years.

The results indicated in table 4 that current challenges faced by library professionals in managing libraries to a greater extent is Communication Skills & Commitment of library staff (58.3%), followed by Library Automation - a must? (57.3%), Need for practical Research and Innovations for better ser-

Table 3. Experience-wise distribution of Respondents

Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5 Years	94	45.6	45.6
6-10 Years	34	16.5	62.1
11-15 Years	66	32.0	94.2
16 years and above	12	5.8	100.0
Total	206	100.0	

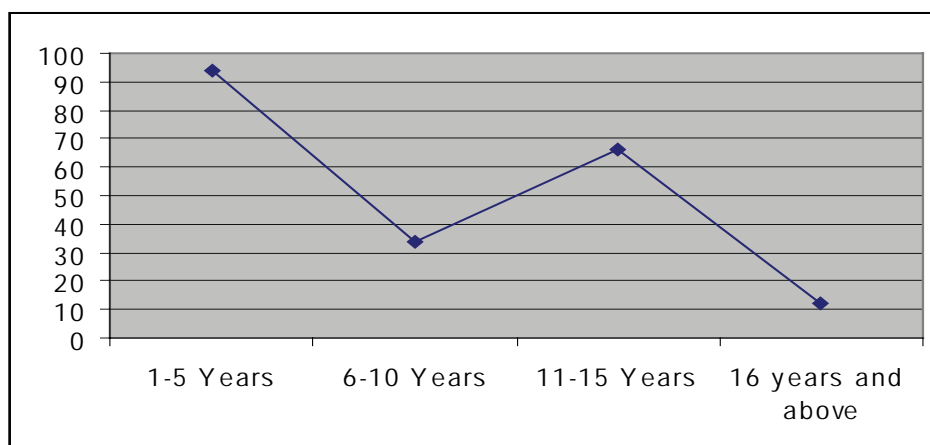


Figure 3. Experience of respondents

Table 4. Current challenges faced by Library Professionals in managing the Libraries

Current Challenges faced by Library Professionals	Not sure	To a Little Extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a greater extent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning Information Technology Skills	8 (3.9%)	2 (1.0%)	48 (23.3%)	80 (38.8 %)	68 (33.0%)	3.9	0.97
Image of Librarianship	6 (2.9%)	6 (2.9%)	48 (23.3%)	88 (42.7%)	58 (28.2%)	3.9	0.94
Building better Leadership Qualities	10 (4.9%)	10 (4.9%)	60 (29.0%)	92 (44.7%)	34 (15.5%)	3.6	0.97
Managerial incompetence of Head Librarian	12 (5.8%)	18 (8.7%)	42 (20.1%)	62 (30.1)	70 (43.0)	4.0	3.19
Co-operation & Team work within Library	4(1.9%)	28(13.6%)	106(51.5%)	68(33%)		4.15	0.72
Budget for Libraries	6(2.9%)	12(5.8%)	36(17.5%)	112(54.4%)	40(19.4%)	3.8	0.91

Support from Teaching Library staff and Practicing Librarians	10(4.9%)	18(8.7%)	46(22.3%)	48(23.3%)	84(40.8%)	3.8	1.1
Higher Education required to manage Library	2(1.0%)	6(2.9%)	60(29.1%)	68(29.1%)	70(33%)	3.9	0.9
On Job training and Continuing Education	8(3.9%)	12(5.8%)	36(17.5%)	64(31.1%)	86(41.7%)	4.0	1.0
Lack of Initiation from Professional Library Associations	18(8.7%)	12(5.8%)	60(29.1%)	64(31.1%)	52(25.2%)	3.5	1.1
Marketing Concepts for better utilization of library resources	14(6.8%)	6(2.9%)	44(21.4%)	58(28.2%)	84(40.8%)	3.9	1.1
Communication Skills & Commitment of library staff	4(1.9%)	16(7.8%)	32(15.5%)	34(16.5%)	120(58.3%)	4.2	1.0
Motivation and Promotional Benefits	2(1.0%)	12(5.8%)	48(23.3%)	54(26.2%)	90(43.7%)	4.0	0.99
Strength of professional staff and Information Technological infrastructure	4(1.9%)	14(6.8%)	44(21.4%)	90(43.7%)	54(26.2%)	3.4	1.0
Lack of Total Quality Management Certification/ Library Standards	16 (7.8%)	28 (13.6%)	30 (14.6%)	116 (56.3%)	16 (7.8 %)	4.06	1.00
Need for practical Research and Innovations for better service	2 (1.0%)	12 (5.8 %)	50 (24.3%)	48 (23.3%)	94 (45.6%)	4.06	1.00
Development of Customer Oriented Services	8 (3.9%)	4 (1.9%)	42 (20.4%)	116 (56.3%)	36 (17.5%)	3.8	0.88
Library Automation - a must?	8(3.9%)	8(3.9%)	16(7.8%)	56(27.2%)	118(57.3%)	4.3	1.0
Inactive Library Professional Associations in India	28(13.6%)	6(2.9%)	94(45.6%)	44(21.4%)	34(16.5%)	3.2	1.1

vice (45.6%), Motivation and Promotional Benefits (43.7%) and others.

While the current challenges faced by library professional in managing the library to a moderate extent is Development of Customer Oriented Services (56.6%), Budget for Libraries (54.4%), Building better Leadership Qualities (44.7%), Strength of professional staff and Information Technological infrastructure (43.2%) and others. How-ever just more than half of the respondents to some extent state that, team work within library (51.5%) is a challenge faced today by library professionals in library set up.

Thus the average mean value indicated that the current challenges faced by Library Information Science Professionals are in the scale of 4 and plus that indicates to a moderate extent i.e. Need for Library Automation [4.3], communication skills and communication of library staff (Mean = 4.2) cooperation and team work within library ($x=4.15$).

The result indicated in Table 5 that, the technological Skills required for present and future Library Professionals libraries to a greater extent are Service Motto (72.8%), Sound Knowledge of Library information science (65%), Internet and Databases

Table 5. Technological Skills required for present and future Library Professionals.

Skills required by Library Professionals	Not sure	To a Little Extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a greater extent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Information and Communication Technology Literacy	6(2.9%)	6(2.9%)	20(9.7%)	94(45.6%)	80(38.8%)	4.1	0.92
Management Skills	6(2.9%)	2(1.0%)	18(8.7%)	78(37.9%)	102(49.5%)	4.3	0.89
Leadership Ability	4(1.9%)	4(1.9%)	22(10.7%)	98(47.6%)	78(37.9%)	4.1	0.84
Sound Knowledge of Library information science	8(3.8%)	8(3.9%)	22(10.73%)	34(16.5%)	134(65%)	4.5	1.0
Effective Public Relations, Communications Skills	4(1.9%)	6(2.9%)	46(22.3%)	78(37.9%)	72(35.0%)	4.0	0.93
Service Motto	12(5.8%)	4(1.9%)	10(4.9%)	30(14.6%)	150(72.8%)	4.4	1.0
Internet and Databases searching skills	4(1.9%)	2(1.0%)	14(6.8%)	76(36.9%)	110(53.4)	4.3	0.81
Marketing Strategy Skills to promote information resources	6(2.9%)	4(1.9%)	38(18.4%)	124(60.2%)	34(16.5%)	3.8	0.81
Professional Commitment	10(4.9%)	10(4.9%)	24(11.7%)	94(45.6%)	68(33%)	3.9	1.0
Research Bent of Mind	10(4.9%)	12(5.8%)	26(12.6%)	76(36.9%)	82(39.8%)	4.0	1.0

searching skills (53.4%), Management skills (49.5%) and others.

While, the current technical skills required for present and future library to a moderate extent are marketing strategy skills to promote information resources (60.2%), Leadership ability (47.6%), Professional commitment (45.6%), Management skills (37.9%) and others.

Thus the average mean value indicated that the technical skills required for library information Science professionals are in the scale of 4 and plus indicates to a moderate extent the need for various skills stated in the table for managing the libraries effectively.

The result indicated in Table 6 that, the Leadership qualities needed for library managers to a greater extent are Innovative, creative, Imaginative, visionary committed (25.2%) and then developing team spirit; adapts change; open to new ideas (24.3%), Result oriented; high professional morale, self-confidence, and credibility (21.4%) and others. While leadership qualities needed to moderate extent as opined by respondents are to develop team spirit, Adapts change, Open to new ideas, Articulate (60.2%) and result oriented; High professional morale; self-confidence and credibility (60.2%) and others.

Table 6. Leadership Qualities Needed for Library Managers

Traits	Not sure	To a Little Extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a greater extent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Innovative; creative; Imaginative; and Visionary Committed	14(1.9%)	12(5.8%)	96(46.6%)	42(20.4%)	52 (25.2%)	3.6	1.0
Professional; Have strong and timely decision power. Build shared plans	42 (20.4%)	58(28.2%)	56(27.2%)	46(22.3%)	4(1.9%)	3.5	1.1
Develop team spirit; Adapts change; Open to new ideas; Articulate;	2(1.0%)	8(3.9%)	20(9.7%)	124 (60.2%)	50 (24.3%)	4.0	0.78
Result oriented; High professional morale; self-confidence; Have and credibility	4(1.9%)	2(1.0%)	32(1.0%)	124 (60.2%)	44 (21.4%)	3.9	0.95

(1- Not sure 2 - To a Little Extent, 3 - To some extent, 4 - To moderate extent 5 - To a greater extent)

Thus from the above and the mean value reveals that developing team spirit to adapt change (mean=4) and result oriented (Mean=3.9) are the major leadership qualities needed by library managers in Internet era.

The result indicated in Table 7 that, the barriers in building leadership mind set for Library professionals to a greater extent are that, Librarians have not developed themselves as a professional community (39.8%), followed by undemocratic environment and ban on student union (34%), Political rivalry among professionals (34%), Low Status among Public (15.5%), Low esteem (15.5%) and others. Similarly barriers in building leadership mind set to a moderate extent are low Status among other Colleagues in the Same University/Colleges/Sectors (52.4%), Low profile of profession in society (48.5%), Inactive role of library professional associations (47.6%), low Status among Public (42.7%) and others.

Thus, the average mean value indicate that the barriers in building leadership mind set for Library

professionals are in the scale of three stating the barriers to a some extent.

INFERENCE

It is quiet evident from the results that Communication Skills & Commitment of library staff and achieving Library Automation has been the challenges faced by library professionals in managing libraries to a greater extent. The study also emphasizes the need for acquiring ICT skills i.e. sound Knowledge of Library information science, Internet and Databases searching skills and leadership qualities mainly innovative, creative, imaginative, and visionary and then developing team spirit and adapts change to the situation. This also gives to a concern that, does there is a need to revamp the present LIS education system to update the curriculum to suit the changing needs so that library professionals can be prepared to face the challenges of the new millennium.

Library and Information Science is a multi-disci-

Table 7. Barriers in building leadership mind set for Library professionals

Current Educational Curriculum	Not sure	To a Little Extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a greater extent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teaching & assessment methods of current education system	20(9.7%)	16(7.8%)	98(47.6%)	44(21.4%)	28(13.6%)	3.2	1.0
Inactive role of library professional associations	14(6.8%)	14(6.8%)	48(23.3%)	98(47.6%)	32(15.5%)	3.5	1.0
Low Status Among Public	4(1.9%)	16(7.8%)	66(32%)	88(42.7%)	32(15.5%)	3.6	0.9
Low Status among other Colleagues in the Same University/Colleges/ Sectors	2(1.0%)	18(8.7%)	60(29.1%)	108(52.4%)	18(8.7%)	3.5	0.80
Have developed low self esteem	16(7.8%)	16(7.8%)	108(52.4%)	34(16.5%)	32(15.5%)	3.2	1.0
Lack of commitment on the part of educationists and professionals	18(8.7%)	18(8.7%)	94(45.6%)	58(28.2%)	18(8.7%)	3.1	1.0
Lack of leadership training ... we produce subordinates and not leaders	4(1.9%)	14(6.8%)	110(53.4%)	50(24.3%)	28(13.6%)	3.4	0.87
Low profile profession in society	24(11.7%)	6(2.9%)	54(26.2%)	100(48.5%)	22(10.7%)	3.4	1.1
Political rivalry among professionals	28(13.6%)	24(11.7%)	28(13.6%)	56(27.2%)	70(34%)	3.5	1.4
Vested interests & self - centered attitude	22(10.7%)	12(5.8%)	52(25.2%)	98(47.2%)	22(10.7%)	3.4	1.1
Librarians have not developed themselves as a professional community	16(7.8%)	26(12.6%)	32(15.5%)	50(24.3%)	82(39.8%)	3.7	1.3
Demoralized and depoliticized mindset	28(13.6%)	18(8.7%)	42(20.4%)	98(47.6%)	20(9.7%)	3.3	1.1
Undemocratic environment and ban on student union	36(17.5%)	32(15.5%)	38(18.4%)	30(14.6%)	70(34%)	3.3	1.5
Substandard education system at public schools and colleges	22(10.7%)	20(9.7%)	106(51.5%)	44(21.4%)	14(6.8%)	3.0	1.0
Competent professionals are engaged in making extra money by engaging In double jobs or/ and serving as library consultants	26(12.6%)	18(8.7%)	46(22.3%)	98(47.6%)	18(8.7%)	3.3	1.1
Followers of employer's policies and not leaders.	30(14.6%)	18(8.7%)	56(27.2%)	76(36.9%)	26(12.6%)	3.2	1.2

plinary subject as it deals with information, which is applicable to all the subjects and the impact of subjects particularly, management, Psychology, Information Technology, Information Science on library and Information Science is much higher. This calls for library professionals not only basic skills but develop proficiency in managerial, technological and psychological skills in addition to sound librarianship. Thus, integration of LIS Education with respect to practicing Librarianship by means of user sensitization and continuing educational programs to suit market employability is the need of the hour. Hence, prepare the LIS professionals for the new millennium, which needs to be practiced rather than mere proclamation for better image building and survival.

Library leadership and proficiency in ICT has been the most sought skills in the current environment and in fact this is a greatest challenge being faced by the library professionals in the country. Although the universities offer management courses to impart skills need for managing libraries and they also have ICT subject but still these areas needs to be strengthened for effective handling of the situation to manage and render better services to the users.

REFERENCES

1. Krishan Gopal (2006). Leadership in Academic Library of the Present Century. *ILA Bulletin*, 42 (3), 2006: 13-17
2. Rees, F (1998). *The facilitator excellence handbook: Helping people work creatively and productively together*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 1998
3. Fitsimmons, Gary (2009). *Library Leadership Column: Resource Management: People: Skills Management*. Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances. 22(2): 52-54
4. Pors, Niels Ole (2008). *Management Tools, Organisational Culture and Leadership: An Explorative Study*. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*. 9(2): 138-152.
5. Adams, Jean and Morgan, Gareth (2007). *Second Generation" E-Learning: Characteristics and Design Principles for Supporting Management Soft-Skills Development*. *International Journal on E-Learning*. 6(2): 157-185.
6. Webb, Jela (2006) *Leadership in Km and the Role of the Cko*. *Legal Information Management*. 6(4): 267-270
7. Winston (2005). *Ethical leadership: professional challenges and the role of LIS education*. *New Library World*, 106(5): 234-243.
8. Arora, Jagdish (2004). *Transforming a Traditional Library into a Hybrid Library: Use of Leadership and Managerial Skills at the Central Library, IIT Delhi*, *Science & Technology Libraries*, 23(2-3): 5-15.
9. Unaeze, Felix E (2003). *Leadership or management: expectations for head of reference services in academic libraries*. *Reference Librarian*, (81): 105-117.
10. Needham (2001). *The concept of leadership in technology related organizations*. *Journal of Library Administration*, 32(3/4): 133-44.