

## A CASE STUDY ON THE CHANGING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LIBRARIANS IN CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL WORLD

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### ABSTRACT

*The word librarian is generally associated with datadissemination. Because librarians manage and distribute knowledge with the help of different types of library process like, classification, indexing, cataloguing etc. Although, with the emergence of digitization, roles of librarians have changed but, their significance is still the same. Earlier, librarians used to sit and wait for users to come for collecting information. Now, the roles and duties of libraries have expanded and included not only subscribing and managing e-services and information, electronic publications etc. but also scanning old print materials, managing hardware and software of computers, designing web pages, e-publishing, marketing of library products etc. Thus, the main objectives of this work are to: critically analysis the varying roles and responsibilities of librarians in this digital world; to scrutinize how much they are managing with their expanded roles and duties; and what types of problems they are facing in accomplishing their responsibilities. Therefore, to do so, the work has conducted a survey on 100 librarians of different colleges, universities, and other libraries in the Churu district of Rajasthan, India. For conducting the study, quantitative method of research has been used which is analytical and exploratory in nature. The respondents were asked questions based on the questionnaire only which included both open- and closed- ended questions. The work found that the majority of librarians are facing problems to fulfil their extended roles and responsibilities. The work also found that there is need of a proper training to the librarians to deal with these problems.*

**KEYWORDS:** Digital World, Library, Librarians, Roles, Responsibilities, and Technology.

## INTRODUCTION

Technology is becoming an increasingly significant aspect in academia. It has not only affected the teaching learning process but has changed the role of librarians too in this digital world. Earlier, librarians used to sit and wait for users to come for collecting information (Baviskar 2002). That time has gone when the librarians were known and considered as the “caretakers of books”. Now, their profile has changed and they are known as the library professionals whose responsibility is to not only manage the library but also assist the faculties and students too. The new age digital librarians now offer public PC's furnished with CD-ROM drives, scanners, DVD drives, Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) etc. (Rao & Babu 2001). Melchiona (2004) argued that the roles and responsibilities of librarians have enhanced to that of collaborators and educators. Although in this digital era, the functions of librarians have been changed rapidly, their role is still significant and based on the basic principles of Dr. Ranganathan's *Five Laws of Library Science* (Rajpurohit, R. S. 2016). These are the 5 Rules (a) Book is for usage; (b) Every individual has his or her own book; (c) Every manuscript has its booklover; (d) Value reader's time; and (e) Library is a living entity keep advances (Ranganathan 1931). These characteristics provide an interpretative explanation of the provable findings of practice and innovation relevant to library resources and services (Bhattacharya 1988).

Electronic information presents both obstacles and opportunities for the community of library. Today's librarians are more than just a building with books, in fact, now e-libraries spread beyond the physical boundaries. Libraries have evolved into networking libraries, and counselors' roles have altered as well. Librarians must use technology gaps to provide the greatest access and operations. Sources of news, distribution, and access have all altered as a result of mobile phones. Electronic advancements displaced older systems and completely transformed the library. Key developments ushered in modern ideas not just in library employment, but also in librarianship. In the recent age, multimedia has made tremendous development. Librarian science departments are already adopting a variety of new approaches and divisions to support the super-fast activity of banks. For offering users with information,

universities are currently using modern technologies such as weblogs and 2G, 3G computer systems. Computers and its tools shifted librarians from librarians to cyberians. Multimedia applications expand the scope of information management. A librarian's education is critical. The librarian takes great pride in using modern technical instruments. The librarian must quickly absorb and implement new methodology. All subjects and matters connected to libraries were studied & extremely knowledgeable by library experts(Sarasvathy, Nambratha & Giddaiah 2012).

At present, for managing modern libraries and information center's in this digital world, librarians are vital for: setting up and developing digital libraries; providing the users,both on and off campus,with a 24 hours digital reference services; providing e-publishing works; using social media platforms to converse with the users; providing blogging or WordPress podiumfor current issues; providing gateway remote access to its users;detering plagiarized works with the help of various anti-plagiarism tools;choosing and purchasing electronic-books, electronic-journals, and databases etc.; providing trainings and orientations to the users to improve the use of collection and services of digital library; etc. (Kaur & Sharma 2018; Singh 2019).

But there are a number of library professionals who are facing issues while fulfilling their duties. Though, a few of them can handle the technology rest of them can't. That is why, it is essential for them to be trained to handle their new roles and responsibilities. Because now it is essential for them to accept and adopt new techniques and systems to pursue their jobs(Sun, et. al 2010). Therefore, the mainconcerns of this work are to: critically analysis the changing roles and responsibilities of librarians in this digital world; to scrutinize how much they are managing with their expanded roles and duties; and what types of problems they are facing in accomplishing their responsibilities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study the quantitative method of research has been used. The objective of adopting a quantitative method is to collect numerical data from respondents through questionnaire, based

on their set of options. This method helps to understand how librarians are handling their changed and expanded roles and responsibilities. The constructed questionnaire includes both open- and closed ended questions, and is used to analyse respondent's perspective on their changed roles and duties. The first part of the questionnaire consists of respondents' personal queries. And the second part includes questions to make the respondents to open up about themselves and give more explanations and narratives about their perspective on the concerning topic. The survey has total 100 respondents from different libraries of colleges and universities along with other libraries of Churu. After collecting the entire data from the questionnaire, it has been quantitatively analyzed, summarized, and then after shown in tables, lists, and graphs.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As per Table 1, the majority of respondents (72 out of 100) agrees that they are in favour of digitization of libraries and they do recognize the significance of digitization in this contemporary world. Though the survey recorded 16 responses against the emergence of digitization of libraries and 8 response for can't say. Besides, the survey found 4 blank responses (for details see Table 1).

**Table 1: Responses of Respondents on Digitization of Libraries**

Response Question	Yes	No	Can't Say
Are you in favour of digitization of libraries?	72	16	8

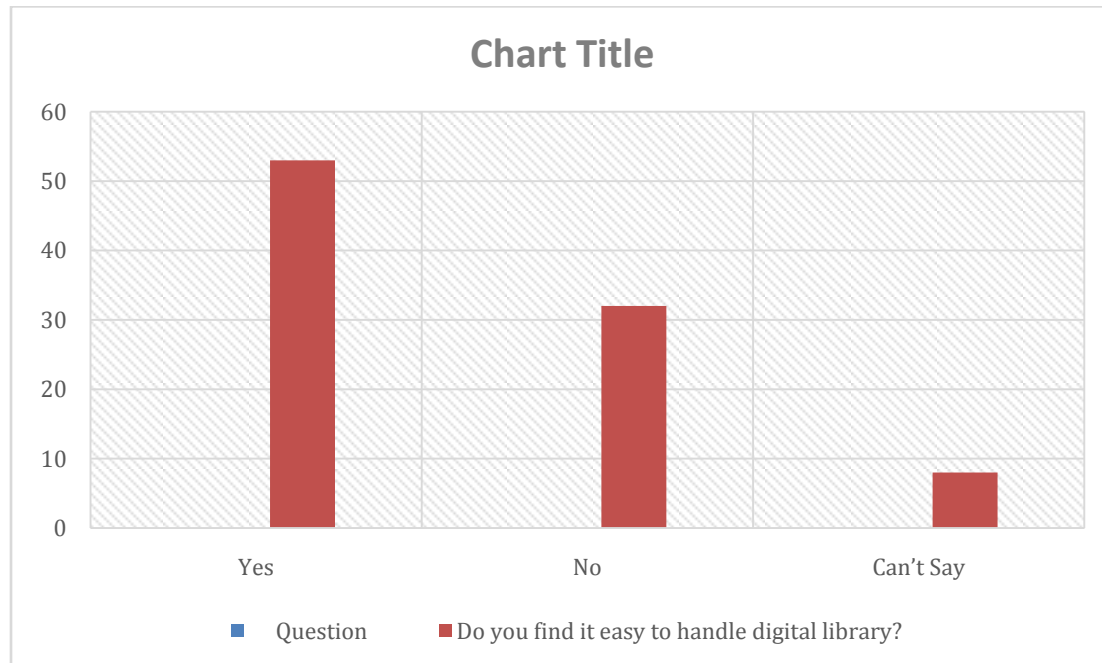
When asked that whether a respondent find it easy to handle digital library, the survey recorded maximum 53 responses in "yes", whereas, 32 respondents answered for "no". While assessing the survey records, it has been found that old library professionals finding it difficult to handle the

digital libraries. Moreover, the survey recorded 8 response for “can’t say” (for details see Table 2 or Figure 1).

**Table 2: Responses of Respondents on Handling Digital Libraries**

Response Question	Yes	No	Can't Say
Do you find it easy to handle digital library?	53	32	8

**Figure 1: Diagrammatic Presentation of Table 2**



Further, when asked about their increased work burden because of digitization of library, the survey recorded 82 responses in favour of “yes”, whereas 10 responses for “no”, and 4 for “not really” (for details see Table 3).

**Table 3: Responses to check the Increased work Load of librarians**

Response Question	Yes	No	Not Really	Can't Say
Do you feel that digitization has increased your work burden?	82	10	4	2

Moreover, the respondents were asked whether they face problems in performing their duties or not, the survey recorded 73 responses for “yes”, whereas 19 respondents ticked the column for “no”. And the survey recorded only 3 responses for can't say (for detail see Table 4).

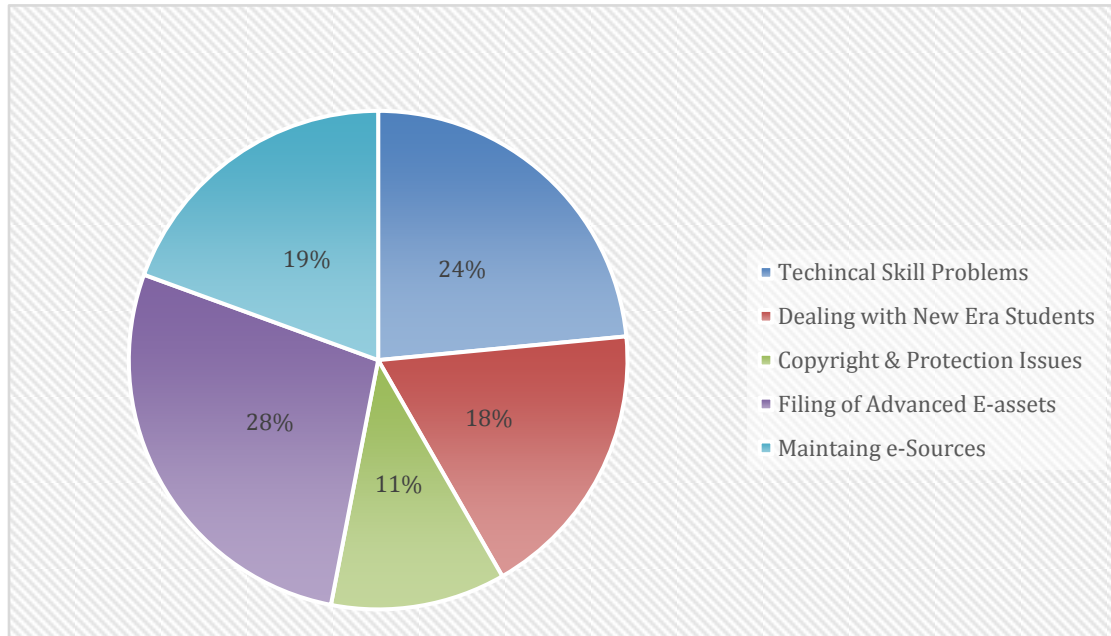
**Table 4: Responses Against the Problems that Librarians face**

Response Question	Yes	No	Can't Say
Do you face any kind of problem while performing your responsibilities?	73	19	3

Furthermore, the next question was asked for the types of problems librarians face on daily basis. The survey recorded that majority of librarians are facing technical skill issues; then the next

problem they usually face is to deal with new era students; after that, they face problems related to filing of advanced e-assets and then maintain e-sources (*for details see Figure 2*).

**Figure 2: Percentile Representation of Types of Problems Librarian Faces**



And at last, when asked how they can resolve these problems, majority of respondents agreed that proper training can help them to tackle these issues (*for details see Table 5*).

**Table 5: Responses for Proper Technical Training**

Response Question	Yes	No	Can't Say
Do you think that proper technical training can resolve these issues?	89	6	2

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this work demonstrated that majority of librarians agreed that their roles and responsibilities have increased with the emergence of digitization of libraries. The survey recorded that majority of librarians are facing problems like, technical knowledge issue; dealing with new era students; maintaining e-sources; filing advanced e-assets; copyright issues, etc. Therefore, to resolve these issues, the work also claimed that there is a need of a proper training to the librarians to deal with these problems.

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