

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Growing Needs of the Users: Do Library Professionals Really Care?

**Pansngiat Passah**

Research Scholar, DLIS, NEHU, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

**Dr. Bikika Laloo**

Associate Professor & HOD, DLIS, NEHU, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

### **Abstract:**

*This paper aims to bring about the efforts undertaken by the library professionals of the Universities in India, to come at par with the growing need of the users and serve them better. Data was collected from the library professionals working in the five Universities, in five zones of India viz. north, south, east, west and northeast. The data shows the level of participation of these library professionals in the Professional Development Activities (PDAs) and their reasons for participation. Some suggestions were also jotted down to improve the knowledge/ skills of the library professionals.*

**Keywords:** Library professionals, professional development activities, universities

### **1. Introduction**

“Professional development is a lifetime learning process”, this statement given by Pan and Hovde (2010) stands fit especially for a dynamic profession of librarianship. There is no room for ignorance and stagnancy in this profession. Therefore, the library professionals are keeping no stones unturned to educate and train themselves in order to do justice with the responsibilities and duties which they are bestowed upon with. However, this cannot be possible without any means to help them achieve that. Participating in PDAs is one of the ways which can keep the library professionals updated. Thus, PDAs can be called as the polishing agent who polishes the library professionals so that they can shine in their profession and provide best services to the users.

#### *1.1. Objectives*

- i. To evaluate the participation level of the library professionals of the five Universities in India
- ii. To find out the reasons for participation in pdas by the library professionals of the five Universities in India
- iii. To list out the suggestions to improve the knowledge/skills of the library professionals

### **2. Methodology**

The present study is limited to the University libraries of India. However, the area is further divided into five zones i.e. North, South, East and West along with Northeastern region of the country. One University is chosen from each zone and these are as follows:-

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| → Delhi University -                     | North Zone |
| → Calcutta University -                  | East Zone  |
| → Madras University-                     | South Zone |
| → Pune University -                      | West Zone  |
| → North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) - | Northeast  |

#### *2.1. Data Collection*

Data was collected from the University library professionals in India through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the above mentioned sample. However, the study confines its scope only to the PDAs performed by the University library professionals in India from the years 2000 to 2010. The concerned librarians were contacted for permission to survey their staff. The list of eligible library professionals was then obtained from the library. A total of 86 library professionals were identified in the survey, out of which 72 responded forming 61.92 per cent of the total number of respondents. The lists of the respondents are as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the Institution	Total Number of Library Professionals	Total Number of Questionnaires Received
1	Delhi University	21	14
2	Calcutta University	16	12
3	Madras University	8	6
4	Pune University	23	23
5	North Eastern Hill University (NEHU)	18	17
	Total =	86	72
Total Percentage of the Questionnaire Received = <b>61.92%</b>			

Table 1: Total Number of Respondents.

The above table shows the number of library professionals to whom the questionnaires were distributed. In table 1 the total number of library professionals refers only to those professionals who are permanent and those who have minimum qualification of B.L.I.Sc. Also, those professionals have been excluded, who joined after the year 2010, in keeping with the time frame of this present study.

### 2.2. Data Analysis

The data collected from the above population, for the present study, were entered and processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). For the different graphical representation of the data, Microsoft-Excel 2010 was used.

### 3. Results and Findings

The results and findings have been divided into various sub-headings which are as follows:

#### 3.1. Survey of Library Professionals

Following are the details of analysis and interpretations of the data collected from the library professionals with the help of structured questionnaire. The study includes the permanently employed library professionals of the central libraries in the main campuses of the five Universities included in the survey.

#### 3.2. Response Rate

The table below gives the response rate of the library professionals in the five Universities covered in the present study. Questionnaires were distributed to eighty six library professionals out of which seventy two (61.92 %) responded to the survey. In Delhi University 66.7% responded to the survey, Calcutta University (75%), Madras University (75%), Pune University (100%) and NEHU (94.4 %).

Sl. No.	Name of the Institution	Total Number of Library Professionals	Total Number of Questionnaires Received	Response Rate
1	Delhi University	21	14	66.7%
2	Calcutta University	16	12	75%
3	Madras University	8	6	75%
4	Pune University	23	23	100%
5	North Eastern Hill University (NEHU)	18	17	94.4%
	Total =	86	72	61.92%

Table 2: Response Rate of the Respondents

#### 3.3. Types of PDAs Carried out by the University Library Professionals in India

From the data collected for the present study, it is seen that there is a large number of library professionals working in different universities in India, who dedicate their time in taking part in different PDAs. The following tables and graphs represent the types of PDAs carried out by the university library professionals in India:

Institution	Zone	Paper Publication				Total
		Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	
Delhi University	North	4	11.1 %	10	22.2 %	14
Madras University	South	3	8.3 %	3	6.7 %	6
Calcutta University	East	2	5.5 %	10	22.2 %	12
Pune University	West	10	27.7 %	11	24.4 %	23
<b>NEHU</b>	Northeast	6	16.6 %	11	24.4 %	17

Table 3: Participation of the University Library Professionals in PDAs - Paper Publication

The table above (Table 3) shows that the highest participation in paper publication is in Pune University (27.7%). NEHU comes second in the list, having 6 participants and forming 16.6 per cent. Delhi University has 4 participants forming 11.1 per cent whereas, Madras and Calcutta seems to be lagging behind with just 8.3 and 5.5 per cent of participants, respectively.

Institution	Zone	Attending Seminar/Conferences/Workshop				Total
		Yes	%	No	%	
Delhi University	North	10	24.4 %	4	20 %	14
Madras University	South	5	12.2 %	1	5 %	6
Calcutta University	East	8	19.5 %	4	20 %	12
Pune University	West	10	24.4 %	11	55 %	24
<b>NEHU</b>	Northeast	17	41.5 %	0	0%	17

Table 4: Participation of the University Library Professionals in PDAs - Attending Seminar/Conferences/Workshop

As far as attending scholarly meetings is concerned, there seems to be active participation among the library professionals of all the Universities. The highest participation is seen in NEHU with 41.5 per cent of participants. Delhi and Pune Universities share the same number of participants, forming 24.4 per cent each. Calcutta University bears 19.5 per cent whereas the lowest percentage is concentrated in Madras University with only 12.2 per cent of library professionals taking part in scholarly meetings.

Institution	Zone	Attending Refresher Courses				Total
		Yes	%	No	%	
Delhi University	North	3	16.7 %	11	21.1 %	14
Madras University	South	2	11.1 %	4	7.7 %	6
Calcutta University	East	0	0 %	12	23.1 %	12
Pune University	West	8	44.4 %	13	25 %	23
<b>NEHU</b>	Northeast	5	27.8 %	12	23.1 %	17

Table 5: Participation of the University Library Professionals in PDAs - Attending Refresher Course

As far as refresher courses are concerned, there is minimum participation by the library professionals of all the Universities. Thus, the lowest level of participation among respondents is found in this type of activity. The highest participation is concentrated in Pune University where 8 numbers of participants exists forming 44.4 per cent. There seem to be no participation in Calcutta University resulting in 0 per cent of participants. In other Universities, the level of participation is very nominal containing 27.8, 16.7 and 11.1 per cent in NEHU, Delhi and Madras Universities, respectively.

Institution	Zone	Higher Degree/Training				Total
		YES	%	NO	%	
Delhi University	NORTH	3	21.4 %	11	19.6 %	14
Madras University	SOUTH	1	7.14 %	5	8.9 %	6
Calcutta University	EAST	1	7.14 %	11	19.6 %	12
Pune University	WEST	4	28.6 %	17	30.3 %	23
<b>NEHU</b>	NORTHEAST	5	35.7 %	12	21.4 %	17

Table 6: Participation of the University Library Professionals in PDAs - Higher Degree/Training

This type of professional development activity relates to those activities such as attempt for higher degree, taking part in training programmes or diploma courses related to the field in which a particular library professional works. The assessment of this activity in the Universities shows that it is not considered an activity of prime importance, which is why the level of participation is lower than in the other activities. However, among all the Universities taken, NEHU has the highest number of participants which is 5 and this forms 35.7 per cent of the total strength who participate in this activity. The second highest level of participation is observed in Pune University with 4 of library professionals taking part forming 28.6 per cent. The rest is distributed among three Universities namely Delhi, Madras and Calcutta Universities. Delhi University has the percentage of 21.4 per cent, whereas, Madras and Calcutta Universities share the same number of participant i.e. 1 which forms only 7.14 per cent.

Institution	Percentage
Delhi University	50 %
Madras University	33.3 %
Calcutta University	41.7 %
Bombay University	39.1 %
<b>NEHU</b>	17.4 %

Table 7: Participation of the University Library Professionals in PDAs – Enrolment in Library Association

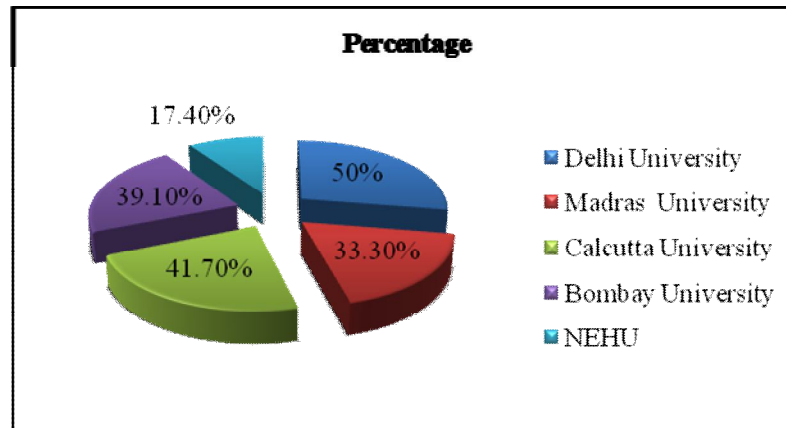


Figure 1: Participation of the University Library Professionals in PDAs - Enrolment in Library Association

From the above table and figure it is clear that the participation level in library associations is very limited. The only University with the highest number of participants is Delhi University where 50 per cent of the respondents are members of library associations. The other Universities record minimal participation with Calcutta University holding the second place with 41.7 per cent respondents, Pune University with 39.1 per cent, Madras University with 33.3 per cent and the lowest participation is seen in NEHU with only 17.4 per cent.

#### 4. Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs

There are various reasons for the library professionals' participation in PDAs. Some do it out of their interest or for personal satisfaction, whereas some do it out of compulsion. The introduction of Academic Performance Indicators (API) in the academic field, have brought the concept "publish or perish" to life. This is one example due to which many professionals take part in the PDAs, just to earn some points. However, there are several other factors both intrinsic and extrinsic, due to which the library professionals participate in PDAs. These factors have been elaborately explained along with the tables as follows:

Institution	For Promotion				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	21.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	28.6%
Madras University	16.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	50.0%
Calcutta University	66.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Pune University	8.3%	20.8%	4.2%	8.3%	8.3%
NEHU	11.8%	5.9%	5.9%	17.6%	47.1%
<b>Average</b>	<b>24.98%</b>	<b>5.34%</b>	<b>2.02%</b>	<b>5.18%</b>	<b>28.46%</b>

Table 9: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: For Promotion

From the above table it is seen that the average figure shows that there is a very close tie between the percentage of those who strongly agree (28.46%) and those who least agree (24.98%) that they participate in PDAs for 'promotion'. The opinions of groups at both ends of the spectrum are significant. The institution with the highest percentage in the 'least agree' slot is Calcutta University with 66.7 per cent.

Institution	To Contribute to Knowledge				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	64.3%
Madras University	33.3%	.0%	.0%	16.7%	16.7%
Calcutta University	16.7%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	50.0%
Pune University	4.2%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	20.8%
NEHU	11.8%	5.9%	17.6%	23.5%	29.4%
<b>Average</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>5.18%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>36.24%</b>

Table 10: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: To Contribute to Knowledge

In the second category where the motivation for participating in PDAs is 'to contribute to knowledge', there is a clear cut prominence of the 'strongly agree' section (36.24 %). This means that majority of the library professionals agree that they do participate in PDAs to contribute to knowledge.

Institution	To Publicize the Serving Institution/Organization				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	35.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	21.4%
Madras University	33.3%	16.7%	.0%	16.7%	.0%
Calcutta University	66.7%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Pune University	12.5%	16.7%	12.5%	4.2%	4.2%
NEHU	23.5%	17.6%	.0%	23.5%	17.6%
<b>Average</b>	<b>34.34%</b>	11.86%	2.50%	8.88%	8.64%

Table 11: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: To Publicize the Serving Institution/Organization

The above table 11 shows a clear cut majority of the percentage in the 'least agree' (34.34%) column. This confirms that the reason 'to publicize the serving institution/organization' hardly motivates the library professionals to participate in PDAs.

Institution	For Financial Reward				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	28.6%	21.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Madras University	50.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	.0%
Calcutta University	75.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Pune University	20.8%	16.7%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%
NEHU	35.3%	5.9%	17.6%	5.9%	17.6%
<b>Average</b>	<b>41.94%</b>	8.80%	7.70%	2.02%	4.36%

Table 12: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: For Financial Reward

Financial Reward also does not fascinate the library professionals; this is what the above table proves. This is why the average percentage of the "least agree" column the highest (41.94 %).

Institution	For Pleasure				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	21.4%	14.3%	7.1%	.0%	7.1%
Madras University	.0%	33.3%	.0%	.0%	33.3%
Calcutta University	41.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	33.3%
Pune University	16.7%	12.5%	4.2%	12.5%	8.3%
NEHU	35.3%	5.9%	29.4%	5.9%	5.9%
<b>Average</b>	<b>23.02%</b>	13.20%	8.14%	3.68%	17.58%

Table 13: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: For Pleasure

In this category most of the library professionals have least agree (23.02%) which means they do not participate in PDAs for the sake of getting pleasure.

Institution	For Professional Development				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	57.1%
Madras University	16.7%	.0%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%
Calcutta University	.0%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	66.7%
Pune University	.0%	12.5%	4.2%	4.2%	33.3%
NEHU	11.8%	11.8%	5.9%	11.8%	52.9%
<b>Average</b>	5.70%	6.52%	8.68%	6.54%	<b>45.34%</b>

Table 14: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: For Professional Development

The above option / motivation i.e. "for professional development" show a vast difference among the different columns' average percentage. The highest is the 'strongly agree' column with 45.34 per cent

Institution	To Keep Current With Skills				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	14.3%	.0%	.0%	7.1%	35.7%
Madras University	16.7%	.0%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%
Calcutta University	16.7%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	50.0%
Pune University	8.3%	12.5%	.0%	4.2%	25.0%
NEHU	17.6%	5.9%	17.6%	5.9%	41.2%
<b>Average</b>	14.72%	5.34%	10.18%	6.78%	33.72%

Table 15: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: To Keep Current with Skills

‘To keep current with skills’ is one among the major reasons for the library professionals to participate in PDAs. This is the reason why this option has scored a percentage of 37.75 per cent.

Institution	To Share Innovations				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	14.3%	.0%	.0%	7.1%	28.6%
Madras University	.0%	16.7%	.0%	16.7%	33.3%
Calcutta University	8.3%	16.7%	.0%	.0%	50.0%
Pune University	12.5%	12.5%	.0%	4.2%	25.0%
NEHU	23.5%	11.8%	11.8%	5.9%	29.4%
<b>Average</b>	11.72%	11.54%	2.36%	6.78%	<b>33.26%</b>

Table 16: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: To Share Innovations

‘To share innovations’ came out to be as one of the important reasons for the library professionals to participate in PDAs. This can be illustrated through the above table since the average of the ‘strongly agree’ column has the highest percentage of 33.26 per cent.

Institution	To Provide Better Services				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	.0%	.0%	.0%	14.3%	35.7%
Madras University	16.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	50.0%
Calcutta University	.0%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	66.7%
Pune University	12.5%	8.3%	4.2%	8.3%	16.7%
NEHU	23.5%	5.9%	.0%	11.8%	52.9%
<b>Average</b>	10.54%	4.50%	0.84%	6.88%	44.40%

Table 17: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: To Provide Better Services

That library professionals would admit to the noble factor of providing better services for attending PDAs is a foregone conclusion. The figures above substantiate that conclusion where the column ‘strongly agree’ manages to get the percentage of 44.40 per cent.

Institution	To Attain Faculty Status				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	42.9%	7.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Madras University	50.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	16.7%
Calcutta University	66.7%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Pune University	16.7%	8.3%	4.2%	8.3%	12.5%
NEHU	17.6%	17.6%	23.5%	5.9%	23.5%
<b>Average</b>	<b>38.78%</b>	8.26%	5.54%	2.84%	10.54%

Table 18: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: To Attain Faculty Status

Faculty status has always been a burning question for the library professionals everywhere. However, this very factor does not form a driving force for them to participate in PDAs. This is confirmed from the above table where the library professionals have agreed to its importance the least, forming 38.78 per cent.

Institution	To Enhance C.V.				
	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delhi University	42.9%	.0%	.0%	.0%	7.1%
Madras University	16.7%	33.3%	.0%	.0%	16.7%
Calcutta University	58.3%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Pune University	16.7%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	25.0%
NEHU	12.5%	31.3%	12.5%	12.5%	18.8%
<b>Average</b>	<b>29.42%</b>	12.92%	4.16%	4.16%	15.18%

Table 19: Motivational Factors / Reasons for Participating in PDAs: To Enhance C.V

'To enhance C.V.' is an option where the 'least agree' column is the highest (29.42 %). This indicates that the library professionals does not participate in the PDAs just to enhance their C.V.

### 5. Measures to Improve the Knowledge/ Skills of the Library Professionals through Participation in PDAs

To improve the participation of the library professionals in the PDAs, an attempt was made to find out some measures and these measures were provided in the form of options in the questionnaire to find out their significance. Various options were provided out of which the highest inclination was seen towards "Promotion" (59 %). This means that if promotion were given to the library professionals who take part in various PDAs then there is a fair chance of seeing the graph of participation in these activities mounting up. Another measure which seems to be prominent is "leave with pay" having 49.47 per cent. This indicates that the respondents feel that if certain rules were made for rendering leave to the library professionals along with pay then the level of participation of the library professionals in these activities might go up. The measure which gained least importance was the "faculty status" (28.43%) which depicts that faculty status does not draw much attention of the library professionals for which they would participate in the PDAs.

Institution	Provision of Funds	Leave with Pay	Promotion	Faculty Status	Enrolment in Professional Associations
Delhi University	35.7 %	14.3 %	35.7 %	21.4 %	28.6 %
Madras University	16.7 %	16.7 %	33.3 %	16.7 %	0 %
Calcutta University	33.3 %	33.3 %	25 %	8.3 %	25 %
Pune University	73.9 %	73.9%	65.2 %	65.2%	54.5 %
NEHU	11.8 %	41.2 %	88.2 %	11.8 %	35.3 %
<b>Average</b>	<b>39.67%</b>	<b>49.47%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>28.43%</b>	<b>38%</b>

Table 20: Measures to Improve Participation in PDAs

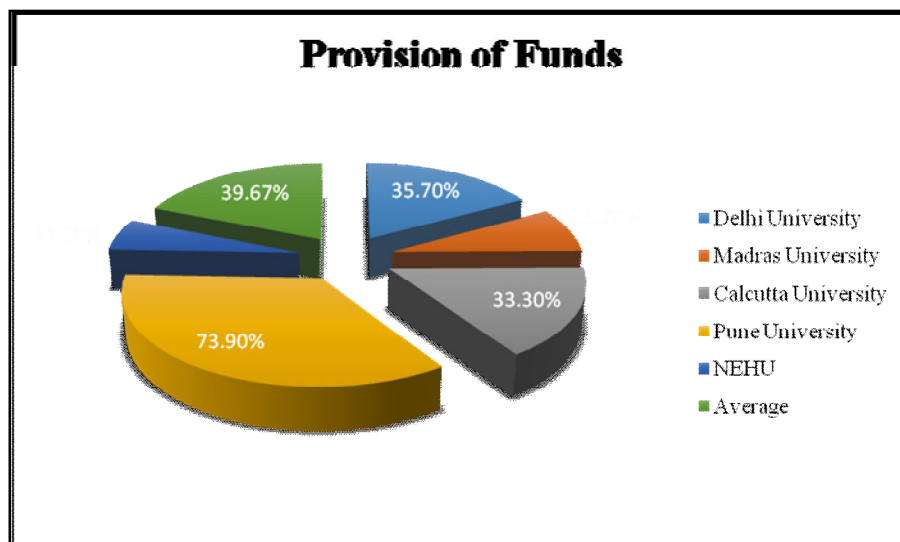


Figure 2: Measures to Improve Participation in PDAs

### 6. Conclusion.

Though this particular topic has gained importance in other countries, the scenario in India is still quite depressing as very few studies have been made in this direction. It was only while searching for relevant literature for the present study that this fact was realized. The question which arises here is that while we talk of bombastic terms such as digital libraries, cloud computing, mobile technologies, web-based applications, library portals etc. but we hardly think how much these concepts would be understood by all the

library professionals. Here, library professionals refer to all those working in different designations and not just those holding chief posts only. Perhaps participation in PDAs would alleviate the lacunae. When new technologies are introduced, the library professionals should be given an opportunity to know and learn the same. By participating in PDAs library professionals will be able to do so. Thus, taking part in PDAs is important but what is equally important is also that all the library professionals, having different designations get equal opportunity to participate. Despite its limitations, it is hoped that this study will be able to make the library professionals realize the importance of PDAs. Also, that the employing institutions would comprehend what major role they play in motivating the library professionals to participate in PDAs. It is also hoped that this study would be an eye opener to those who underestimate the status of the library professionals as this study proves that the library professionals also take part in the academic activities as faculty members do.

## 7. Reference

- i. Pan, J., & Hovde, K. (2010). Professional development for academic librarians: Needs, resources, and administrative support. *Chinese Librarianship: An International Electronic Journal*, 29. Retrieved from <http://www.iclc.us/cliej/cl29PH.html>.