

# Factors Influencing Career Advancement Activities of Women Library Professionals in Universities of Kerala: A Study

A. R. Dhanyasree<sup>1</sup> and B. Mini Devi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, <sup>1&2</sup>Department of Library and Information Science  
University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India  
E-Mail: dhanyasaju8@gmail.com, drminidevi1968@gmail.com

**Abstract** - The present study is aimed to examine the factors influencing the career advancement activities of women library professionals. It encompasses two universities ie, Kerala University and Mahatma Gandhi University. The population consists of women library professionals are permanently working in these Universities. About 78 permanent women library professionals are working in these Universities, Data is collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is distributed among 68 respondents out of which 62 were returned. The analysis is conducted by SPSS. Factors such as the professional, personal, the influence of professional associations, influence of ICT & social media, barriers faced on career progression were analyzed. The study revealed that professional factors & ICT were positively influenced the women library professionals career advancement activities. Gender discrimination is the main obstacle faced in career progression activities.

**Keywords:** Career Advancement, Women Library Professionals, Influencing Factors, Social Media, ICT

## I. INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women is a must for uplifting every field of life in the contemporary world. Especially career advancement is offering a new ladder to library and information science professionals in these modern libraries. Library professionals are willing to change and change themselves. So career advancement activities are needed for their upgrades in career life. Especially women library professionals act as multi-faceted for their professional and personal life. Career advancement is not easily accessed in the case of women library professionals. Various factors influence their career progression ie, their hard-working, knowledge and capacity development, academic development political and social relationship, associations, research and publication activities, family support, Information technology handling skill, social media usage, etc. are empowering the women librarians for their career progression activities. Many hurdles or obstacles faced on their way of career enrichment activities.

The problems that the women are facing on their workplace & chances of their promotion are remaining an oasis of the desert. If women have to come forward through their career, they have to face many problems both professionally & personally. A critical analysis is necessary about the growth of their career and factors influencing it. There must be a predominant consideration about the fact that women

librarians are getting through strength and support for their career growth and also it must be made sure about the obstacles & barriers facing on their professional path. Their technological knowledge, social media awareness, support of family members, the help of professional associations, educational qualifications, etc. must be seen by an observation about the progression in their career using the above-mentioned factors.

## II. KERALA AND MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The Kerala University Library (KUL), established in 1942, is the oldest and biggest university library in Kerala. It stocks over 3, 50, 000 books (growing at 5000 titles annually) and subscribes to nearly 500 journals/ periodicals/ magazines. It also offers digital information services such as UGC Infonet. Among its special collections, the Kerala Studies is a unique one. The special collections also include Women's Studies, Government Publications, General Biographies, UN and World Bank Publications, bound volumes of newspapers and journals and rare books. It is the only library in Kerala which serves as a depository of UN and World Bank publications. The library is currently in the process of digitizing its rare collections. The Kerala University Library is complemented with a number of specialized Department Libraries and also Campus Library at Karyavattom and Study Centre Libraries at Alappuzha, Kollam, and Pandalam. The University Institutes of Technology (UITs), University Teacher Education Centres (UTECS), and University College of Engineering (UCE) also have specialized libraries. (<https://www.kulib.in>) [1]. The Mahatma Gandhi University Library (MGUL) is situated in the main campus of the University at Aithirampuzha. The University Library was started in 1989. MGU Library and Information System consist of University Central Library, more than 30 libraries of the departments/schools and 4 study centers situated on different campuses. The Library is a member of the INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad (INformation and LIBrary NETwork), an Inter-University Centre of the University Grants Commission. INFLIBNET Centre support has enabled to improve the quality and relevance of University Information services. The University Library is a fully automated system using the Open Source Software Koha for the In-house Management. It is also an

Institutional member of the DELNET (Developing Library Network, New Delhi). As a member of these networks, the library provides access to the resources of other major libraries in the nation to its users. The Mahatma Gandhi University was one of the first fifty Universities to come under the UGC-Infonet Programme. Through UGC-Infonet E-journals Consortium, the Library has access to more than 7500 e-journals and databases including SciFinder Scholar and Web of Science. The Library also has access to major online databases such as ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, Oxford Scholarship Online, Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), J-Gate Plus, etc and back volumes of the journals published by major publishers like Sage Online, Wiley International, Cambridge online and Springer online. The Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU) has won the State IT award during the year 2009 in the e-learning category for its University Online Theses Digital Library. With the launching of the Mahatma Gandhi University Online Theses Digital Library, it has become the first Indian University to adopt Open Access of its Doctoral Research theses to the academics worldwide through [www.mgutheses.in](http://www.mgutheses.in). The University Library has a collection of 57,350 books, 2,500 e-books, 2,050 theses and 7,500 bound volumes of journals. In addition to this, the library subscribes 253 current Indian (169) and Foreign (84) journals, 4 Online Databases, and 4 Online Journal Archives. (<http://library.mgu.ac.in>) [2]. Kerala University and MG University stand top in the scoring rate of academic standard. Libraries play a prominent role in higher teaching, learning, and research. The service of library professionals is very accountable. A number of about one hundred and thirty library professionals working there both in University libraries and department libraries, most of them are women library professionals. If we go through the history of Kerala university library, it can be seen very clearly that most of the university librarians were females. The university librarians (in charge) of Kerala & Mahatma Gandhi University are still females.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objectives of the study are,

1. To find out factors that attract in LIS profession.
2. To examine the influence of the associations in the career advancement activities.
3. To identify factors for career advancement to women library professionals.
4. To find out the ICT & Social media helps their career progression activities.
5. To find out the most influencing factors of career enrichment activities.
6. To know the obstacles faced by career progression activities.

### IV. SCOPE & LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study helps to find out the career advancement activities, influencing factors, obstacles faced to career progression activities of women library professionals. This

study may help to take up a decision in the career advancement activities of women librarians in Kerala & Mahatma Gandhi universities. This study may also help to take up proper guidelines to adopt positive working atmosphere that ensures mutually benefits of subordinates & organizations keep good career advancement of women library professionals. An innovative professional has an eye on creativity. This study restricted to two universities only. There are 15 universities in Kerala. The researcher collected the data from two major Universities only.

### V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lijina in (2016) [3] examined the impact on mass media on the empowerment of women librarians. The questionnaire, interviews, and observation were used to collect data from 420 women library professionals working in various libraries of Kerala. Results showed that the good number of women librarians read 1 to 3 newspapers and 2 magazines regularly, while radio, television, & internet were the most used mass media. The media such as newspapers, magazines, TV & internet were much significant contribution towards the empowerment of women library professionals.

Uma (2016) [4] investigated the role of women library professionals in the digital era in Chennai. She investigated career profile & experience, computer literacy level, inhibiting factors faced on women librarianship, job satisfaction level of women library professionals in colleges in Chennai. She circulated 450 questionnaires for women library professionals in colleges in Chennai. This study found that women library professionals had very good computer exposure and work in the digital library. Women librarians migrated a traditional library to e-world. Chengbin (2013) [5] investigated and analyzed of career development of female librarians in college libraries. This study discussed that the occupational development of female librarians in college library through questionnaire method of data collection and carried out from four perspectives ie, traditional notations of gender culture, sex segregation occupation, gender stereotype. Suggested to eliminate the barriers for career development.

Swartz (2002) [6] explored the career advancement of women librarians in South African institutions of higher education. The study pointed out the low status of female librarians that have been noted in libraries in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of women librarians in certain tertiary institutions regarding the following points gender discrimination affect what extent on the career positioning of female librarians and obstacles impeded the career advancement of female librarian.

### VI. METHODOLOGY

A survey is conducted to collect data from the women library professionals of Universities in Kerala. The two

universities namely University of Kerala and Mahatma Gandhi University are taken for the study. The questionnaire was administered to collect primary data. A survey among the women LIS professionals those who are working in department libraries & university central libraries. The questionnaire method of collection of data is found suitable for gathering data, particularly from professional respondents. About 73 permanent women

library professionals working in these Universities, 68 questionnaires were distributed among the respondent from the libraries, out of which 62 were returned.

### VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table I shows that 68 questionnaires distributed for women library professionals out of which 62 were returned.

TABLE I DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY UNIVERSITIES

| Respondents          | No. of questionnaire distributed | No. of questionnaire received |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| University of Kerala | 43                               | 40                            |
| MG University        | 25                               | 22                            |
| Total                | 68                               | 62                            |

TABLE II RESPONDENTS DESIGNATION WISE

| S. No. | Designation         | Number | Percentage |
|--------|---------------------|--------|------------|
| 1      | Deputy Librarian    | 2      | 3          |
| 2      | Assistant Librarian | 17     | 28         |
| 3      | Reference Assistant | 11     | 18         |
| 4      | Technical Assistant | 22     | 35         |
| 5      | Library Assistant   | 10     | 16         |

In University library sector library professionals following under six categories, ie, Library Assistant, Technical Assistant, Reference Assistant, Assistant Librarian, and Deputy Librarian. So designation wise analysis is an inevitable factor. Table II shows that it is clear that more than 35 % of respondent belong to technical assistant level and 28% from assistant librarian 18% belongs to reference assistant,16% as a library assistant and only 3% as deputy librarians.

TABLE III QUALIFICATION WISE

| S. No. | Qualification | Number | Percentage |
|--------|---------------|--------|------------|
| 1      | MLISc         | 53     | 86         |
| 2      | Mphil         | 4      | 6          |
| 3      | PhD           | 5      | 8          |

Education creates ability, skill, knowledge, attitude, etc. and it influences towards overall aspects of career life. Better educational achievement may lead to better placement & career advancement. Table III displays qualification wise analysis was done and it is found out that among the total respondents' majority i.e., 53(86%) had the qualification of post graduation in the library and information science and 5(8. %) respondent had Ph.D. qualification, Only 4 (6%) had M Phil degree.

The success of any career depends on how it attracts recruits, motivates and retains the human resources. Librarianship is a good job in Kerala, a number of females are increasing every year getting this profession. In LIS career respondents attract in many factors.

TABLE IV FACTORS TO ATTRACTING LIS PROFESSION

| S. No. | Factors              | Number | Percentage |
|--------|----------------------|--------|------------|
| 1      | Interest in field    | 58     | 94         |
| 2      | Parents compulsion   | 3      | 5          |
| 3      | Job security         | 58     | 94         |
| 4      | Social status        | 62     | 100        |
| 5      | Financial attraction | 0      | 0          |
| 6      | Any other            | 0      | 0          |

Table IV reveals that all respondent 62 (100%) preferred social status is the main factor of attracting the LIS profession. Majority of respondents 58(94%) secondly preferred two factors, ie, interest in the field and job security, only 3(5%) as its parent's compulsion.

TABLE V MEMBERSHIP OF ASSOCIATION

| S. No. | Membership | Number | Percentage |
|--------|------------|--------|------------|
| 1      | Yes        | 62     | 100        |
| 2      | No         | 0      | 0          |
| 3      | Total      | 62     | 100        |

Membership of professional associations is the indicator of career progression activities. Table V shows that 62 (100%) women librarians are members of professional associations.

TABLE VI WAYS OF SUPPORTING ASSOCIATIONS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

| S. No. | Ways  | Yes (%) | No (%)  |
|--------|---|---------|---------|
| 1      | Mentoring   | 32(52)  | 30 (48) |
| 2      | Improve leadership quality                        | 18(29)  | 44(71)  |
| 3      | To solve problems in the working environment      | 56(90)  | 6(10)   |
| 4      | Achievement Motivation                            | 61(98)  | 1(2)    |
| 5      | Support network for career progression activities | 52(84)  | 10(16)  |
| 6      | Helps to promotional activities                   | 58(94)  | 4(6)    |

Associations help in various ways to improve career progression activities in women library professionals, it acts a major role in supporting and enhancing awareness in career progression activities. Table VI shows that majority 61(98%) of respondents prefer achievement motivation is the main way for support of professional association for career progression. 58(94%) of respondent reveals association helps to promotional activities, 56(90%) preferred to solve the problems in the working environment, 52(84%) reveals association helps to support network for career progression activities, 32(52%) reveals association help to mentoring, only 18(29%) opined improve their leadership quality through associations.

TABLE VII PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

| S. No. | Courses            | Participated | Organized |
|--------|--------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1      | Orientation        | 17(27%)      | 0         |
| 2      | Refresher          | 22(35%)      | 0         |
| 3      | ICT based training | 60 (97%)     | 0         |
| 4      | Seminar/conference | 62(100%)     | 4(6%)     |
| 5      | workshop           | 62(100%)     | 2(3%)     |

The factors related to the professional development of women librarians are very useful for career progression activities and associated with their job satisfaction, commitment, and scope of further advancement in the library profession. Table VII shows that distribution of women librarians 27% attended orientation course, 35% attended a refresher course, 97% attended ICT based training, 100% attended seminars & conferences and 100% participated workshops. 6% respondents organized seminars & conferences and only 3% organized workshop

TABLE VIII PUBLICATIONS

| S.No. | Particulars             | Yes     | No      | Total |
|-------|-------------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1     | Journal articles        | 8(13%)  | 54(87%) | 100%  |
| 2     | Book chapters           | 5(8%)   | 57(92%) | 100%  |
| 3     | Conference proceedings  | 13(21%) | 49(79%) | 100%  |
| 4     | Any other literary work | 3(5%)   | 59(95%) | 100%  |

Nowadays publications have become an essential part of career progression activities. Women library professionals

TABLE X ICT USE AND HANDLING ABILITY FOR LIBRARIES

| S. No. | ICT Technologies   | Excellent | Very Good | Good    | Poor    |
|--------|--|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| 1      | WINDOWS operating system                                     | 27(44%)   | 12(20%)   | 18(28%) | 5(8%)   |
| 2      | Library automation software                                  | 25(40%)   | 22(36%)   | 15(24%) | 0       |
| 3      | Digital library software                                     | 0         | 12(20%)   | 28(45%) | 22(35%) |
| 4      | Library 2.0 tools (social media, wiki, blogs etc.)           | 12(20%)   | 43(69%)   | 7(11%)  | 0       |
| 5      | Web page design  | 0         | 14(22%)   | 11(18%) | 37(60%) |
| 6      | Able to handle & conduct MOOCs platform based SWAYAM courses | 0         | 0         | 10(16%) | 52(84%) |

must be engaged in various publication activities for their career enrichment. Table VIII reveals that 21% of respondent published conference proceedings or seminar volumes, 13% women librarians published journal articles, 8% published chapter in books and only 5% published other type of literary work.

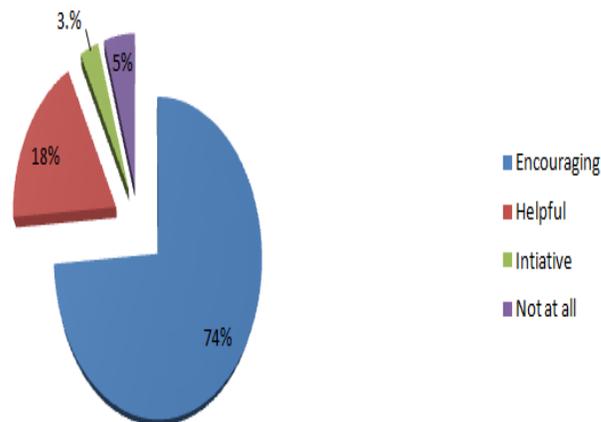


Fig. 1 Family attitude of career advancement activities

The supporting system of the family is an important factor, the attitude of family members influence their advancement of career-related activities. Fig. 1 shows that the majority of respondents (74%) opined encouraging, 18% for helpful, and only 3% for opined by not at all.

TABLE IX AWARENESS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

| S. No. | ICT awareness | Percentage |
|--------|---------------|------------|
| 1      | Yes           | 62(100%)   |
| 2      | No            | 0          |
| 3      | Total         | 62         |

Technological skill is positively supported & is necessary for women library professionals in the emerging knowledge-driven society which is continuously changing. Table IX shows that all respondents 62(100%) are aware and use of ICT in libraries.

Table X shows that handling ability of ICT technology in libraries out of the total respondents 44% reveals that windows operating system handling ability as excellent, 20% as very good, 18 & 5 as good and poor respectively. Library automation software, one of the other ICT technology used for libraries, 40% respondent excellent and 36% as very good only 24% replied good .20% respondent point out very good handling ability for use of digital library software, 45% reveals good & 35% as poor. In case of library 2.0 technologies handling ability 20% respondent opine as excellent, 69% respondent points out very good & only 11 % as poor in the handling ability of above technologies, 22% respondents opine webpage design ability as very good, 18% as good & 60% as poor. Majority of respondent 84% point out poor for able to handle online courses, & only 16% as good.

Table XI shows that 94 % opined that social media helps to career progression activities.

■ Face book ■ Watsapp ■ Blogs ■ Instagram ■ Tweeter ■ Linkdin

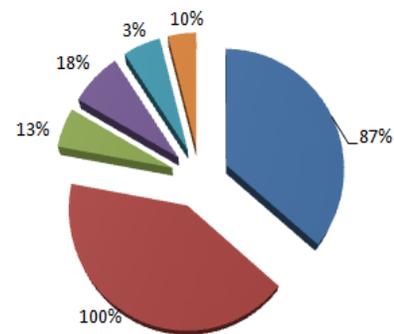


Fig. 2 Usage of social media

TABLE XI SOCIAL MEDIA AS A CAREER PROGRESSION AGENT

| S. No. | Opinion | Number | Percentage |
|--------|---------|--------|------------|
| 1      | Yes     | 58     | 94         |
| 2      | No      | 4      | 6          |

Social media provide a better opportunity to library professionals to reach their modern user community, target specific users and give them the chance to interact with their library.

Many social media tools are common today. These social media helps to extremely easy for online communication technologies can enhance interpersonal cooperation among library professionals. Figure 2 shows what types of social media usage of women library professionals 100 % respondents used WhatsApp, 87% used Facebook, 18% used Instagram, 10% used LinkedIn and only 3% used Tweeter.

TABLE XII PURPOSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

| S. No. | Purpose of social media   | Number | Percentage |
|--------|---|--------|------------|
| 1      | Interaction with friends  | 62     | 100%       |
| 2      | To create career progression activities forums                                | 47     | 75%        |
| 3      | Sharing images, videos, voice clips for professional developmental activities | 59     | 95%        |
| 4      | Enrich profession related discussions   | 58     | 94%        |

In the present scenario, social media is influencing factor of career progression activities in women library professionals. This is also helpful in research & learning. Table XII shows that 100% respondents used the social media for interaction with friends & 94% reveals social media enhanced the

profession related discussion .95% respondents need to obtain sharing images, videos, voice clips for professional development activities. Only 75% used to create career progression activities forum.

TABLE XIII INFLUENCING LEVEL OF FACTORS ON CAREER ADVANCEMENT

| S. No. | Factors                  | Extremely influential | Very influential | Somewhat influential | Slightly influential | Not at all influential |
|--------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1      | Organizational factors   | 58(94%)               | 4(6%)            | 0                    | 0                    | 0                      |
| 2      | Professional factors     | 62(100)               | 0                | 0                    | 0                    | 0                      |
| 3      | Relation with colleagues | 0                     | 0                | 31(50%)              | 26(42%)              | 5(8%)                  |
| 4      | Educational              | 43(69%)               | 8(12%)           | 12(19%)              | 0                    | 0                      |
| 5      | Social                   | 7(11%)                | 13(21%)          | 5(8%)                | 21(34%)              | 16(26%)                |
| 6      | Economical               | 3(5%)                 | 8(13%)           | 18(29%)              | 26(42%)              | 7(11%)                 |
| 7      | Political                | 0                     | 0                | 3(5%)                | 2(3%)                | 57(92%)                |
| 8      | Health                   | 45(72%)               | 0                | 0                    | 14(23%)              | 3(5%)                  |
| 9      | Family                   | 59 (95%)              | 0                | 3(5%)                |                      |                        |
| 10     | ICT's                    | 62(100%)              |                  | 0                    | 0                    | 0                      |
| 11     | Social media             | 58(94%)               | 4(6%)            | 0                    | 0                    | 0                      |

Table XII shows the influencing factors wise analysis for career progression of women librarians. It is clear from the table that the organizational factors 94% extremely influential for career progression activities, 6% extremely influential, 100% respondents reveal professional factors is extremely influential for their career progression activities. 50% respondents point out relation with colleagues as somewhat influential, 42% & 8% point out slightly influence & not at all influential respectively. 69% of respondents reveal educational factors are extremely influential, 12% very influential & 19% somewhat influential for their career development activities. Social factors extremely influencing in below 11%, 21% very influential, 8% somewhat influential, 34% & 26% by slightly influential & not at all influential respectively. Economical factors 5% extremely influenced, 13% very influential, 29% somewhat influential, 42% slightly influential, 11% not at all influential for their career progression activities. Majority of respondent 91% reveals politics has no influence for career progression activities, majority 72% reveals health is extremely influential factors, 23% slightly influential only 3% not at all influential. The majority (95%) of respondents reveal family factors extremely influence the career progression activities, only 5% point out somewhat influential. 100% respondents reveal ICT is extremely influential for their career advancement activities. 94% opined social media as extremely influential and only 4% very influential for career progression activities.

TABLE XIV BARRIERS FACED CAREER ADVANCEMENT ACTIVITIES

| S. No | Barriers                                    | Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---|-------------|------------|
| 1     | Insufficient ICT training                   | 46          | 74         |
| 2     | Lack of authorities support                 | 52          | 84         |
| 3     | Work-family conflict                        | 23          | 3          |
| 4     | Lack of personal career progression agenda  | 37          | 60         |
| 5     | Lack of support from experienced colleagues | 22          | 35         |
| 6     | Gender discrimination                       | 59          | 95         |

While the way of career progression activities the women librarians have to face many barriers. Table XIV revealed that majority (95%) of the respondents indicate gender discrimination as the major problems while facing career progression activities. The respondents also face obstacles like lack of authorities support (84%), insufficient ICT training (74%), lack of personal career progression agenda (84%), work-family conflict (37%), lack of support from experienced colleagues (35%).

### VIII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Most of the women library professionals i.e. 35% have the technical assistant in universities.
2. Majority (86%) of women librarians qualifying only MLISc Degree.
3. 100% of respondents have chosen this profession to innovate their social status.

4. 100% of women librarians are members of professional associations.
5. A majority (98%) of women librarians pointed out that the associations enhanced the achievement motivation.
6. Women librarians are actively taking part in various professional development activities, 27% respondents attended orientation courses, 35% attended refresher courses, 100% attended seminars/conferences, 100% attended the workshop and 97% attended ICT based training.
7. Women librarians have less actively participated in publishing work, 8% women librarians published either chapter in books, 13% published papers in journals and 21% in conference proceedings & only 5% published other types of literary work.
8. It is seen that the majority of women librarians are using social media for career progression activities.
9. Majority of the respondents are using social media as what's App.
10. 100% of women librarians revealed an interaction with friends is the main purpose of social media
11. ICT & professional factors extremely influenced the career progression activities for women library professionals.
12. Majority of women librarians ICT handling capacity is excellent.
13. Majority of women librarians indicated that gender discrimination is the main barrier of their career progression activities.

### IX. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that women library professionals have achieved a moderate level of career progression. The factors such as personal, professional, social media, ICT are making significant affection towards the career progression of women library professionals. The authority of the library has to take necessary actions for the positive atmosphere to improve the career progression of the women library professionals in universities of Kerala. Women empowerment is the major compartment for the development of the nation.

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