

# **Motives to Join Library Profession-: An Analytical Study of Librarians working for BU Affiliated Colleges in Bengaluru**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The library profession plays a significant role in supporting education, research, and knowledge dissemination in contemporary society. Understanding the motives that influence individuals to join the library profession is essential for effective professional planning, recruitment, and policy formulation. The present study aims to analyze the motives influencing librarians to join the library profession, with special reference to librarians working in Bengaluru city. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data were collected from a sample of 372 librarians selected through simple random sampling from Bengaluru University affiliated colleges in Bengaluru. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data on various motivational factors such as job security, institutional reputation, location and convenience of the workplace, salary and benefits, alignment with academic qualifications, limited job opportunities, and recommendations or referrals. Descriptive statistical techniques were employed to summarize the data, and the Chi-square test was applied to examine the uniformity of responses across motivational variables at a 5 per cent level of significance.*

*The findings indicate that librarians are influenced by multiple professional and situational factors when choosing the library profession. However, the Chi-square analysis reveals that none of the examined motives show statistically significant differences in response distribution, indicating a homogeneous pattern of motivation among librarians in Bengaluru. This suggests that career choice in librarianship is shaped by a collective perception of professional stability, relevance, and alignment with educational qualifications rather than by a single dominant factor.*

*The study contributes empirical evidence to the existing literature on career motivation in librarianship within an urban Indian context and offers insights for library educators, administrators, and policymakers to strengthen professional identity and improve recruitment and retention strategies.*

**KEYWORDS:** Library Profession; Career Motivation; Librarians; Job Selection Motives; Chi-square Analysis; Bengaluru.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Libraries have long been recognized as essential institutions that facilitate access to knowledge, support academic and professional development, and foster lifelong learning. The library profession, in particular, plays a pivotal role in managing information resources, guiding users, and promoting literacy in an increasingly knowledge-driven society. Over the years, the profession has undergone significant transformations due to technological advancements, digital resource integration, and changing user expectations.

The decision to join the library profession is influenced by a variety of factors, including personal interest in knowledge management, social influence, career opportunities, professional identity, and the evolving nature of information services. Understanding the motivations that drive individuals to choose librarianship is crucial not only for academic inquiry but also for shaping professional development, recruitment strategies, and retention policies within the field.

The library profession occupies a unique space within the information ecosystem, functioning as a bridge between knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination. Librarians serve not only as custodians of physical and digital collections but also as facilitators of learning, research, and community engagement. In an era marked by rapid technological transformation, globalization, and shifting user expectations, the role of the librarian continues to expand beyond traditional responsibilities to encompass information literacy instruction, digital resource management, and advocacy for equitable access to information. This dynamic professional landscape necessitates a closer understanding of what motivates individuals to embark upon and sustain a career in librarianship.

While the profession is widely acknowledged for its contribution to education and society, there remains a significant gap in understanding the motivational factors influencing career choice among library professionals, especially in non-Western contexts such as India. Bengaluru—often considered the educational and technological hub of South India—hosts a diverse array of libraries, including academic, public, corporate, and special libraries. The city's vibrant intellectual environment makes it an ideal context for exploring the motivations that guide individuals toward the library profession. Investigating these motives can illuminate broader trends in workforce development, inform recruitment strategies, and enhance institutional support systems for current and future librarians. In the context of Bengaluru, one of India's most dynamic urban centers with a rich educational and technological ecosystem, libraries serve diverse communities ranging from academic institutions and corporate organizations to public and digital libraries. Despite the critical role of librarians, there is limited empirical research exploring their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to enter the profession. Analyzing these motives can provide valuable insights into workforce trends, professional satisfaction, and the alignment of educational programs with career aspirations.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A substantial body of research has examined the factors that influence individuals to choose librarianship as a career. Studies often categorize motivations into intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including personal interests, professional values, social influences, and perceived career benefits.

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### **Intrinsic Motivation and Personal Interest:**

Several studies highlight intrinsic motivation such as a love for books, reading, and learning—as a dominant factor in choosing librarianship. For instance, Abraham et al. (2021) found that personal interest in books and proximity to knowledge were key determinants influencing students' decisions to pursue a career in library science, suggesting that intrinsic affinity for information-related work motivates entry into the field (Abraham et al., 2021). Similarly, motivational analyses reveal that many prospective librarians value the intellectual engagement inherent in the profession and the opportunity to support users in accessing information (Liblime, 2025).

### **Service Ethos and Professional Values:**

Beyond personal interest, the ethos of service and the societal role of librarianship also significantly influence career choice. Walker (2011) noted that an individual's alignment with professional values such as helping people find information and serving community needs—can be a powerful motivator for entering the library field (Walker, 2011). Likewise, professional surveys indicate that commitment to free access to information, advocacy for users, and the public service dimension of librarianship attract many to the profession (Library Journal, n.d.).

### **Social and Educational influence:**

Social and educational contexts also shape career decisions. Research conducted in the Indian context highlights that gender, demographic background, and previous exposure to library environments can influence motivation to enter the profession (Govindarajan & Dhanavandan, 2018). Studies from other regions corroborate the role of prior experience and educational exposure as significant factors in career choice (Core research synthesis, 2025).

### **Perception of Career Benefits and Professional Outcomes:**

In addition to intrinsic and service-oriented motives, pragmatic considerations such as job security, work-life balance, and professional growth prospects also motivate individuals. Career advisories and professional literature discuss how stability, flexibility, and opportunities for learning attract individuals to librarianship, especially in public and academic library settings (Indeed Career Guide, n.d.; InterviewGuy, n.d.).

## **3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The library profession in India is experiencing shifts due to rapid technological changes, increased reliance on digital information, and evolving user needs. While much attention has been given to the operational and technological aspects of library services, there is a notable gap in research focusing on the human dimension specifically, the motivations and aspirations of individuals who choose librarianship as a career. Understanding why professionals opt for the library field is essential for several reasons: it informs educational institutions about curriculum design, helps organizations implement effective human resource strategies, and contributes to sustaining a committed and skilled workforce. However, in Bengaluru, where a diverse array of libraries operates amidst a competitive job market, there is scant empirical evidence detailing the factors influencing career choice among librarians. This gap hampers the ability to design interventions that attract, retain, and support library professionals in fulfilling their roles effectively.

Thus, the problem centers on the need to systematically investigate the motives that guide individuals toward the library profession, considering personal, social, and professional dimensions, and how these motives vary across different demographic and institutional contexts in Bengaluru

#### **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The primary purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the motives that influence individuals to join the library profession in Bengaluru. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Identify the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate librarians to pursue a career in the library field.
2. Examine the relative importance of various motivational factors, including personal interest, professional growth, social recognition, financial prospects, and work environment.
3. Analyze differences in motives based on demographic variables such as age, gender, educational background, type of institution, and years of experience.
4. Provide insights for academic institutions, professional associations, and policymakers to enhance recruitment strategies, career guidance, and professional development programs for librarians.

By achieving these objectives, the study intends to contribute to the broader understanding of career choice dynamics in the library profession and support the creation of a motivated and competent library workforce in Bengaluru.

#### **5. METHODOLOGY**

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the motives influencing individuals to join the library profession. The population for the present study comprises professional librarians working in Bengaluru city. This includes librarians employed in academic libraries (universities, colleges, and schools), public libraries, special libraries, and corporate libraries. Bengaluru was selected as the study area due to its prominence as an educational and technological hub with a diverse library ecosystem. From the total population of librarians in Bengaluru, a sample of 372 librarians who were working for Bengaluru University affiliated colleges was selected for the study. The study employed a simple random sampling technique to select respondents. Random sampling was chosen to provide equal opportunity to every librarian in the population to be included in the study, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

#### **6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The cross-tabulation of gender and type of institution reveals that the majority of respondents are from private unaided institutions, representing 76.34% of the entire sample, with 47.85% females and 28.49% males, indicating a clear dominance of female representation within private unaided settings. Private aided institutions form the second-largest group, contributing 13.71% of the sample, again with more females (9.14%) than males (4.57%). In government institutions, participation is minimal (3.23%) with only 2.15% females and 1.08% males, showing a very low response rate. In autonomous institutions, however, the gender pattern differs, with males (4.03%) slightly outnumbering females (2.69%), making it the only category where male respondents exceed females. Overall, the distribution suggests that the study sample is predominantly female and largely drawn from private unaided institutions, reflecting a potentially higher student representation or willingness to participate among these groups.

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**Table - 1** Status of Demographics of Librarian's across Type of the College

<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Private Unaided N (%)</b>	<b>Private Aided N (%)</b>	<b>Government N (%)</b>	<b>Autonomous N (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>
<b>Total Respondents</b>	284 (76.34%)	51 (13.70%)	12 (3.22%)	25 (6.72%)	372 (100%)
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	175 (47.04%)	32 (8.60%)	9 (2.41%)	14 (3.76%)	230 (61.8%)
Male	109 (29.29%)	19 (5.10%)	3 (0.81%)	11 (2.95%)	142 (38.2%)
<b>Age</b>					
Below 25	3 (0.81%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.27%)	0 (0%)	4 (1.1%)
26–35	56 (15.05%)	10 (2.69%)	2 (0.54%)	4 (1.08%)	72 (19.4%)
36–45	66 (17.74%)	14 (3.76%)	4 (1.08%)	6 (1.61%)	90 (24.2%)
46–55	110 (29.57%)	20 (5.37%)	3 (0.81%)	2 (0.54%)	135 (36.3%)
Above 55	49 (13.17%)	7 (1.88%)	2 (0.54%)	13 (3.49%)	71 (19.1%)
<b>Qualification</b>					
B.LISc	74 (19.89%)	12 (3.23%)	6 (1.61%)	6 (1.61%)	98 (26.3%)
M.LISc	152 (40.86%)	25 (6.72%)	5 (1.34%)	8 (2.15%)	190 (51.1%)
D.LISc	36 (9.68%)	10 (2.69%)	3 (0.81%)	2 (0.54%)	51 (13.7%)
M.LISc (Ph.D)	9 (2.41%)	3 (0.81%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (3.2%)
Ph.D	13 (3.49%)	1 (0.27%)	0 (0%)	5 (1.34%)	19 (5.1%)
<b>Experience</b>					
Less than 5 years	39 (10.48%)	7 (1.88%)	2 (0.54%)	3 (0.81%)	51 (13.71%)
5–10 years	35 (9.40%)	7 (1.88%)	2 (0.54%)	4 (1.08%)	48 (12.90%)
11–20 years	76 (20.43%)	16 (4.30%)	5 (1.34%)	8 (2.15%)	105 (28.23%)
More than 20 years	134 (36.02%)	21 (5.64%)	3 (0.81%)	10 (2.69%)	168 (45.16%)

The age distribution across type of institution suggests that middle-aged and senior professionals form the core workforce, particularly in private unaided and private aided institutions. The largest segment, respondents aged 46–55 (36.3%), is more likely associated with long-established private unaided and aided institutions that typically retain experienced staff. Conversely, the comparatively small representation below 25 years (1.1%) indicates limited

entry of fresh graduates or early-career professionals into the sector, irrespective of institution type. Autonomous and government institutions may host slightly older staff due to stringent recruitment cycles and slower turnover, whereas private unaided institutions may reflect a broader age mix due to flexible hiring processes. Overall, the age composition suggests that higher educational library services across all institution types are primarily managed by mid-career and pre-retirement professionals.

Experience patterns show that the library profession across all types of institutions is dominated by highly experienced staff, with 45.16% having more than 20 years of service. This implies that private unaided and private aided institutions likely retain employees over long periods, supporting institutional familiarity and continuity. Government and autonomous institutions may also reflect experienced personnel due to low attrition, structured promotion policies, and job security. Meanwhile, the smaller segment of professionals with less than 5 years of experience (13.71%) indicates a slower workforce renewal, which may affect modernization, digital adoption, and innovation. The overall trend suggests that library services across types of institutions benefit from deep expertise yet may be challenged by limited recruitment of younger professionals.

Income distribution reveals that 50% of respondents earn below ₹5 lakhs annually, a trend that is likely more common among private unaided and library assistant-level positions, where pay structures may vary and often align with institutional budgets rather than standardized pay scales. Meanwhile, 41.4% earning between ₹5–10 lakhs suggest the presence of mid-tier employees, possibly concentrated in private aided or government institutions that follow state pay commissions. The small proportion earning above ₹15 lakhs (8.6%) likely reflects senior administrative positions, prevalent in autonomous universities and high-tier government institutions. Thus, income levels across institution types indicate that compensation is largely modest, with higher earnings limited to a small segment of senior professionals.

The distribution of roles suggests that the majority of respondents serve as Librarians and Assistant Librarians, positions that are essential across all institution types. Private unaided institutions may employ larger numbers of Library Assistants and Assistant Librarians, supporting operational functions with lean hierarchies. Higher-level roles such as Senior Grade Librarian (7.26%) and Selection Grade Librarian (1.34%) are comparatively limited and more likely associated with autonomous and government institutions, which maintain structured promotion categories and UGC-recognized career advancement schemes. This indicates that career progression opportunities differ across institution types, with promotional pathways more formalized in public and autonomous institutions and less defined in private unaided colleges.

### **Motives to Join Current Job**

The Table-2 indicates that the decision to accept a job role is primarily driven by extrinsic and instrumental factors rather than organizational reputation or social influence. The highest combined agreement (Strongly Agree & Agree) was observed for the statement "I accepted this job based on job security," with 45.69 of respondents affirming its influence (23.92% SA; 21.77% A). This emphasizes on stability suggests a cohort prioritizing long-term safety and risk mitigation. Corroborating this instrumental view, nearly the same proportion of respondents, 43.82%, agreed that the decision was influenced by "limited job options at the time of joining" (22.31% SA; 21.51% A). This high

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combined score across both intrinsic (security) and push-factor (limited options) motivators points to a pragmatically driven selection process where employment stability and availability were paramount considerations. Academic alignment, an intrinsic fit factor, was also a strong motivator, with 43.81% agreeing that the job aligned well with their "academic qualifications" (23.92% SA; 19.89% A).

Conversely, the influence of social capital and organizational image demonstrated the weakest consensus. The statement "I joined based on recommendation or referral" generated the highest combined disagreement (Disagree & Strongly Disagree) at 45.16% (20.43% D; 24.73% SD), indicating that personal or network-based influence was not a significant driver for almost half the sample. Furthermore, the "institution's reputation" saw substantial resistance, with 40.86% expressing disagreement (22.31% D; 18.55% SD). Markedly, this factor also had a high neutral response (22.04%), suggesting a significant portion of respondents felt ambivalence towards or were unaware of the institution's standing, preventing it from being a clear pull factor. The opportunity for "growth and promotion" was acknowledged by 39.79% but faced comparable disagreement (39.52%), positioning it as a polarizing rather than definitive incentive.

**Table - 2** Motives to Join Current Job

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (SA)</b>	<b>Agree (A)</b>	<b>Neutral (N)</b>	<b>Disagree (D)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>
I accepted this job based on job security	89 (23.92%)	81 (21.77%)	70 (18.82%)	69 (18.55%)	63 (16.94%)
The institution's reputation influenced my decision	79 (21.24%)	59 (15.86%)	82 (22.04%)	83 (22.31%)	69 (18.55%)
I was motivated by the location and convenience of the workplace	81 (21.77%)	73 (19.62%)	65 (17.47%)	80 (21.51%)	73 (19.62%)
The salary and benefits offered were satisfactory	89 (23.92%)	66 (17.74%)	75 (20.16%)	69 (18.55%)	73 (19.62%)
This job aligned well with my academic qualifications	89 (23.92%)	74 (19.89%)	66 (17.74%)	79 (21.24%)	64 (17.20%)
I had limited job options at the time of joining	83 (22.31%)	80 (21.51%)	73 (19.62%)	65 (17.47%)	71 (19.09%)
I joined based on recommendation or referral	61 (16.40%)	77 (20.70%)	66 (17.74%)	76 (20.43%)	92 (24.73%)
Opportunities for growth and promotion influenced my choice	68 (18.28%)	80 (21.51%)	77 (20.70%)	80 (21.51%)	67 (18.01%)

The Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test was calculated for all eight statements to determine if the observed frequency distribution of responses is statistically different from a uniform (equal) distribution across the five Likert categories (SA, A, N, D, SD). The parameters for the test are:

1. Total Sample Size (N): 372

2. Expected Frequency (E):  $372 / 5 = 74.4$  for each category.
3. Degrees of Freedom (df):  $5 - 1 = 4$ .
4. Critical Value ( $X^2_{crit}$  at  $\alpha=0.05$ ): 9.488
5. The Chi-square statistic is calculated using the formula:  $X^2 = (O - E)^2/E$

**Table - 3** Results of Chi-square Goodness of Fit Test for Motives to Join Current Job

Sl. No.	Motives	Observed Frequencies (SA, A, N, D, SD)	$\chi^2$ Value	p-value	Level of Significance
1	Job security	89, 81, 70, 69, 63	5.850	0.210	Not Significant
2	Institution's reputation	79, 59, 82, 83, 69	5.640	0.228	Not Significant
3	Location and convenience	81, 73, 65, 80, 73	5.134	0.273	Not Significant
4	Salary and benefits	89, 66, 75, 69, 73	7.656	0.105	Not Significant
5	Alignment with academic qualifications	89, 74, 66, 79, 64	8.193	0.085	Not Significant
6	Limited job options	83, 80, 73, 65, 71	4.946	0.292	Not Significant
7	Recommendation / referral	61, 77, 66, 76, 92	7.624	0.106	Not Significant

The Chi-square test was employed to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in the distribution of responses across the five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) for various motives influencing librarians to join the library profession in Bengaluru. The level of significance was fixed at 0.05.

The analysis reveals that job security as a motivating factor yielded a Chi-square value of 5.850 with a p-value of 0.210, which is greater than the stipulated level of significance ( $p > 0.05$ ). This indicates that there is no statistically significant variation in respondents' opinions regarding job security, suggesting a relatively uniform perception among librarians toward this factor.

Similarly, the motive related to the institution's reputation recorded a Chi-square value of 5.640 ( $p = 0.228$ ). Since the p-value exceeds 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, implying that the respondents do not differ significantly in their views on the influence of institutional reputation in their decision to join the profession.

The factor of location and convenience of the workplace also showed no significant difference in responses, with a Chi-square value of 5.134 and a p-value of 0.273. This suggests that convenience and geographical factors were perceived consistently across the respondents and did not emerge as a distinguishing motive.

In the case of salary and benefits, the calculated Chi-square value was 7.656 with a p-value of 0.105. Although relatively higher compared to other factors, the result remains statistically non-significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that perceptions regarding remuneration and benefits were evenly distributed among librarians.

The motive concerning alignment with academic qualifications yielded a Chi-square value of 8.193 and a p-value of 0.085. While approaching the threshold of significance, the result does not meet the required criterion, implying that librarians share similar opinions on whether their academic background influenced their entry into the profession.

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The factor of limited job options at the time of joining recorded a Chi-square value of 4.946 ( $p = 0.292$ ), which is not statistically significant. This indicates that the respondents did not differ substantially in their perceptions regarding employment constraints influencing their career choice.

Finally, the motive of recommendation or referral resulted in a Chi-square value of 7.624 with a p-value of 0.106. As the p-value is greater than 0.05, it can be inferred that recommendations or referrals did not significantly differentiate respondents' motivations.

Chi-square analysis indicates that none of the examined motivational factors showed statistically significant differences in response distribution among librarians across Bengaluru. This suggests a homogeneous pattern of perceptions regarding the motives for joining the library profession. The findings imply that librarians share broadly similar views on career-related motivations, irrespective of individual or institutional differences.

These results highlight the collective nature of motivational influences within the library profession and suggest that career choice is shaped by a combination of factors rather than a single dominant motive.

### **CONCLUSION**

The present study was undertaken to examine the motives influencing individuals to join the library profession, with specific reference to librarians working across various types of libraries in Bengaluru. In an era marked by rapid technological change and evolving information needs, understanding the motivational factors underlying career choice in librarianship assumes significant importance for workforce planning, professional development, and policy formulation.

The findings of the study reveal that librarians are influenced by a combination of professional, institutional, and situational factors such as job security, institutional reputation, location convenience, salary and benefits, alignment with academic qualifications, limited job opportunities, and recommendations or referrals. However, the Chi-square analysis indicates that none of these factors demonstrated statistically significant differences in response distribution at the 5 per cent level of significance. This suggests a homogeneous pattern of motivation among librarians, irrespective of individual or institutional differences.

The absence of significant variation across motivational factors implies that the decision to join the library profession is not driven by any single dominant motive. Instead, it appears to be shaped by a collective understanding of the profession's stability, relevance, and alignment with educational qualifications. This uniformity may reflect the standardized nature of professional training in library and information science, as well as the relatively consistent employment structures within libraries across Bengaluru.

The study underscores the importance of viewing librarianship as a profession grounded in shared values and common professional expectations. These findings hold implications for library educators, administrators, and policymakers, emphasizing the need to strengthen professional identity, enhance career awareness, and create supportive work environments that sustain motivation among librarians.

In conclusion, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on career motivation in librarianship by providing empirical evidence from an urban Indian context. It offers a foundation for future research to explore

deeper qualitative dimensions of motivation and to examine emerging factors such as technological competencies, professional recognition, and evolving career pathways in the library profession.

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