

# Exploring the Impact of Professional Development on the Work Performance of Women Librarians

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The study aims to analyse the participation of women librarians in professional development activities and evaluate their impact on work performance, skill enhancement, and career advancement.

**Methodology:** The survey was conducted by using a questionnaire as a data collection tool.

**Findings:** Approximately 54.51% of women librarians engage in professional development, leaving 45.49% who do not. Leadership Skills rank highest in priority (73.6%), followed by Institutional Repository Building (56.9%) and Knowledge Management (46.3%), with leadership development being most critical for workplace success.

**Conclusion:** Professional development boosts women librarians' performance, especially in leadership, automation, and reference services. Marketing and knowledge management show a moderate impact, whereas technical areas such as Web 3.0, cloud computing, and hardware require targeted training. Programs should be tailored to address emerging tech challenges and skill gaps.

**KEYWORDS:** Women Librarians; Academic Libraries; Professional Development; Institutional Repositories; Library Automation; Emerging Technologies in Libraries; Web 3.0 in Libraries

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are evolving rapidly, requiring librarians to continually update their skills. Professional development is especially vital for women librarians, who often face barriers that hinder their growth and performance (IFLA, 2016). Through workshops, courses, and networking, they can enhance digital skills, leadership, and service delivery, contributing to both personal advancement and institutional innovation (Garg & Sharma, 2016).

This study explores the underrepresentation of women librarians in professional development and its impact on job performance. A survey of 216 women librarians in Mumbai and Thane was analysed using SPSS to assess the link between professional development and work effectiveness.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Review of Related Literature on Professional Development at the National Level**

Studies show that professional development helps librarians manage digital resources more effectively and provide user-friendly services (Khan & Gohar, 2018). National organisations like INFLIBNET, IATLIS, and RRRLF support this through courses and workshops. Still, issues such as the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, inadequate institutional support, and limited training in rural areas persist (Bansode & Patil, 2017). Peer mentoring, leadership training, and recognition also play an essential role in motivating women librarians (Sangeeta & Vyas, 2019). In short, while opportunities have grown, stronger policies are needed to make them more inclusive and supportive.

### **2.2 Review of Related Literature on Professional Development at the International Level**

In countries such as Australia and Canada, professional development emphasises lifelong learning, equitable access, and online training (Partridge, Lee, & Munro, 2010). In the US and Europe, librarians are also expected to acquire new skills, such as teaching methods, data handling, and research communication, through structured programs (Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013). However, problems such as bias, insufficient funding, and the underrepresentation of women in senior roles persist. Mentorship and global networks are suggested to improve inclusivity (Hicks, 2014). Overall, international models are more structured and career-focused, while in India, opportunities are uneven and less linked to career growth. To improve, India needs clear policies and stronger institutional support.

## **3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. To find out how many women librarians take part in professional development activities.
2. To see how these activities improve their work performance after completion.
3. To measure and rank how different professional development activities affect various parts of their work using average scores.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

The present study is part of ongoing research on the Impact of Professional Development on the Work Performance of Women Librarians.

**4.1 Research Design:** The research employed a descriptive approach using a survey methodology.

**4.2 Population of the study:** 216 women librarians from academic libraries in Mumbai and Thane, Maharashtra, India.

**4.3 Scope & limitations of the Study:** The study focuses exclusively on women librarians working in academic libraries located in Mumbai and Thane districts of Maharashtra, India. It examines the extent of participation, areas of interest, and perceived impact of professional development activities on work performance, skill development, and career advancement.

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**4.4 Data Collection:** The survey method was used for the present study. The data was collected using a structured Google form questionnaire, ensuring standardised responses across all participants.

**4.5 Reliability & Validity of the instrument:** The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The questionnaire's validity was assessed by soliciting feedback from five experts in library and information science, and the necessary revisions were made.

**4.6 Method of data analysis:** The collected data were analysed using SPSS. Percentages and frequencies were calculated to analyse the data, and MS Excel was used for graphical representation.

## **5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **5.1 Demographics and Workforce Profile**

**Table 1:** *Background of Women Librarians*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>5.1.1 Age Group</b>		
21-30	9	4%
31-40	87	40%
41-50	89	41%
51-60	31	14.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>5.1.2 Marital Status</b>		
Married	184	85.2%
Unmarried	25	11.6%
Widowed	4	1.9%
Separated/Divorced	3	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>5.1.3 Year of experience</b>		
1-5	15	7%
6-10	18	8%
11-15	69	32%
16-20	59	27%
21-25	33	15%
26-30	16	7%
>30	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>5.1.4 Employment Status</b>		

Permanent	168	77.8%
Temporary	35	16.2%
Ad-hoc	5	2.3%
Contract Basis	8	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>5.1.5 Type of Institution</b>		
Aided	111	51.4%
Un-Aided	105	48.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100%</b>
		(N=216)

The demographic data paints a picture of a mid-career, experienced women workforce dominating the librarian profession.

- **Age and Experience:** A majority (81%) of the surveyed women librarians are between 31 and 50 years old, and 59% have 11 to 20 years of experience. This indicates a highly seasoned and stable workforce. The low representation of younger librarians (21-30 years; 4%) suggests potential entry barriers or a shift in career preferences among younger generations.
- **Marital Status and Stability:** With 85.2% of respondents being married, the data underscores the importance of family support and work-life balance for this demographic. This high percentage of married professionals, combined with a large proportion holding permanent positions (77.8%), suggests a desire for and attainment of job stability.
- **Employment and Institutional Context:** The even split between aided (51.4%) and unaided (48.6%) institutions reflects a broad representation across both public and private sectors, providing a comprehensive view of the professional landscape.

Mid-career women librarians have distinct professional development needs, shaped by priorities and family responsibilities that differ from early- or senior-level staff.

## 5.2 Women Librarians' Participation in All Professional Development Activities

**Table No. 2** Women Librarians Participation in All Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Activities	Level	Participated (%)	Not Participated (%)
Attendance of seminars and workshops	<b>International</b>	43.40%	56.6%
Short-term courses		30.60%	69.40%
Webinar		72.20%	27.80%
Professional educational events		27.80%	72.80%
Professional association Meetings		20.40%	79.60%
Attendance of seminars and workshops	<b>National</b>	74.10%	25.90%

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Short Term courses		53.20%	46.80%
Webinar		83.30%	16.70%
Professional educational events		39.80%	60.20%
Professional association Meetings		32.40%	67.60%
Attendance of seminars and workshops	<b>State Level</b>	84.70%	15.30%
Short Term courses		50.00%	50.00%
Webinar		81.50%	18.50%
Professional educational events		40.70%	59.30%
Professional association Meetings		33.30%	66.70%
Orientation Courses	<b>Other Activities</b>	59.70%	40.30%
Refresher Courses		63.90%	36.10%
Major /Minor Research Project		28.20%	71.80%
Job Training Programme		55.10%	44.90%
Visit other libraries and Information Centre		86.10%	13.90%
	<b>Average %</b>	<b>54.51%</b>	<b>45.49%</b>

In academic inquiry, a concern arises regarding the participation rate of women librarians in professional development activities. Regrettably, the data indicate that only 54.51% of women librarians are actively engaged in such endeavours, leaving 45.49% unable to participate in these crucial opportunities. (Refer to Table No.2)

The lower participation of women librarians is primarily due to the need to balance professional duties with family responsibilities. Travel challenges and limited networking, especially at national and international levels, lead to a stronger preference for state-level professional development events.

Women librarians' participation in professional development is vital for networking, idea exchange, and growth. Library organisations must boost awareness and provide support to ensure equal access for all.

### 5.3 Impact on Work Performance after Successful Completion of Professional Development Activities

**Table No. 3** Impact on Work Performance after Successful Completion of Professional Development Activities

Impact on Work Performance after Successful Completion of Professional Development Activities							
No.		1	2	3	4	5	Total
1.	Increase Leadership skills	159	36	19	2	0	216
		73.6%	16.7%	8.8%	.9%	0.0%	100%
2.	Building an Institutional Repository	123	59	28	6	0	216
		56.9%	27.3%	13.0%	2.8%	0.0%	100%
3.	Knowledge Management	100	98	15	2	1	216
		46.3%	45.4%	6.9%	.9%	.5%	100%
4.	Marketing of Library & Information Services	73	118	18	7	0	216
		33.8%	54.6%	8.3%	3.2%	0.0%	100%

5.	User Education & Information Literacy	87	113	11	4	1	216
		40.3%	52.3%	5.1%	1.9%	.5%	100%
6.	Digital Copyright Issues	63	111	33	9	0	216
		29.2%	51.4%	15.3%	4.2%	0.0%	100%
7.	Library PR & publicity	75	110	25	6	0	216
		34.7%	50.9%	11.6%	2.8%	0.0%	100%
8.	Help for Library Automation	93	109	13	1	0	216
		43.1%	50.5%	6.0%	.5%	0.0%	100%
9.	Database management	80	109	23	3	1	216
		37.0%	50.5%	10.6%	1.4%	.5%	100%
10.	Financial Management in Libraries	63	108	32	13	0	216
		30.1%	48.6%	17.1%	3.7%	0.0%	100%
11.	Acquiring and managing E-resources in the workplace	77	106	26	7	0	216
		35.6%	49.1%	12.0%	3.2%	0.0%	100%
12.	Human Resource Management in Libraries	73	105	25	12	1	216
		33.8%	48.6%	11.6%	5.6%	.5%	100.0%
13.	Creating and using Electronic Information resources in the library	80	104	25	7	0	216
		37.0%	48.1%	11.6%	3.2%	0.0%	100%
14.	Writing Reports, Articles, and Conference Papers	83	103	24	6	0	216
		38.4%	47.7%	11.1%	2.8%	0.0%	100%
15.	New techniques of Reference and Information Services	96	102	16	2	0	216
		44.4%	47.2%	7.4%	.9%	0.0%	100%
16.	Open-Source Software Packages	82	102	25	6	0	216
		38.0%	47.2%	11.6%	2.8%	0.0%	100%
17.	Networking and consortia	64	102	40	8	2	216
		29.6%	47.2%	18.5%	3.7%	.9%	100%
18.	Computer Hardware and Troubleshooting	55	101	46	14	0	216
		25.5%	46.8%	21.3%	6.5%	0.0%	100%
19.	Developing content for websites	86	100	25	5	0	216
		39.8%	46.3%	11.6%	2.3%	0.0%	100%
20.	Cloud Computing	65	94	44	11	0	216
		30.1%	43.5%	20.4%	5.1%	0.0%	100%
21.	Web 3.0 Applications	71	93	38	13	1	216
		32.9%	43.1%	17.6%	6.0%	.5%	100%
<i>*1 =very high,2= above average,3= average,4= Below average,5= Very low</i>							

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Chart No. 1 Impact on Work Performance after Successful Completion of Professional Development Activities

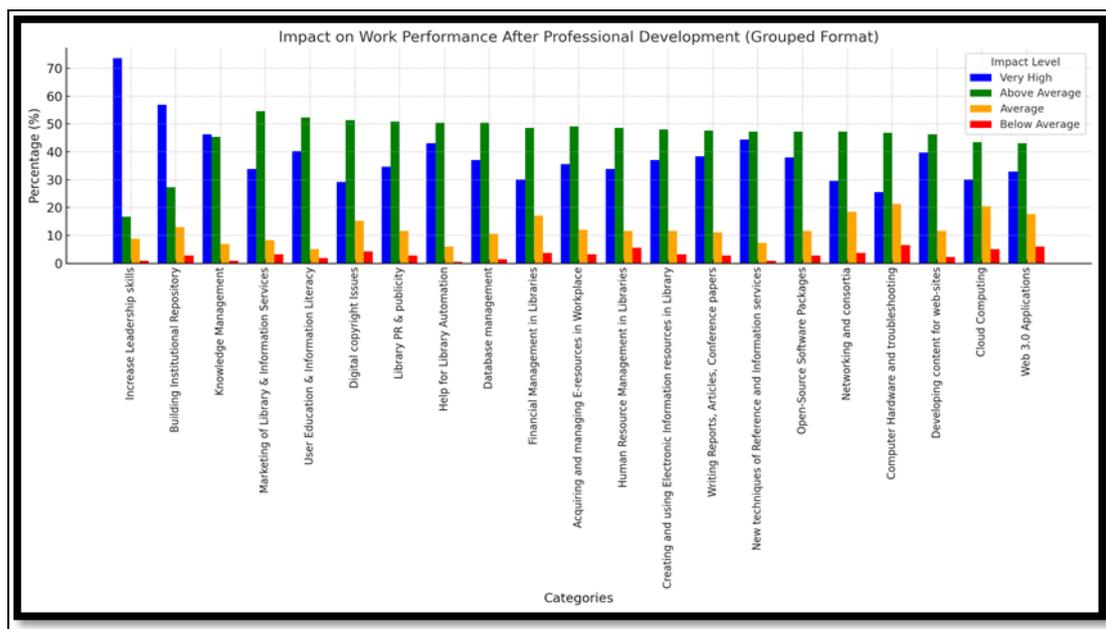


Table No. 4 and Chart No.1 illustrate the impact of professional development on work performance across different areas. Most respondents rated the impact as *Very High or Above Average*, indicating that professional development significantly enhances skills and effectiveness. Only a few responses fell under *Average or Below Average*, showing overall strong positive outcomes.

### ➤ High-Impact Areas:

**Increase Leadership Skills:** Very High (73.6%) and Above Average (16.7%) combined show a notable improvement in leadership skills, making it a standout area of development.

**Help for Library Automation:** 43.1% rated it as "Very High" and 50.5% as "Above Average," reflecting significant perceived benefits.

**New Techniques of Reference and Information Services:** Almost 92% rated this area as "Very High" or "Above Average," indicating strong results from professional development.

### ➤ Moderate-Impact Areas:

**Marketing of Library & Information Services:** A majority (54.6%) rated it "Above Average," but fewer (33.8%) rated it "Very High," suggesting room for improvement.

**Knowledge Management:** Balanced responses with 46.3% "Very High" and 45.4% "Above Average," indicating a solid impact but with potential for growth.

### ➤ Areas Needing Attention:

**Computer Hardware and Troubleshooting:** Only 25.5% rated it as "Very High," with a relatively higher proportion (21.3%) rating it as "Average," pointing to a need for more effective training.

**Web 3.0 Applications:** While 32.9% found it "Very High," a significant 17.6% rated it "Average," and 6.0% found it "Below Average," signaling uneven impact.

➤ **Emerging Areas:**

Professional development significantly enhances librarians' performance, particularly in leadership, library automation, and reference services. Cloud computing showed moderate success, with 30.1% rating it "Very High" and 43.5% "Above Average," while 20.4% rated it "Average."

Skills like marketing, knowledge management, and institutional repository building were rated above average, showing a positive impact. However, tech areas like Web 3.0 and hardware troubleshooting saw mixed results, suggesting a need for more targeted, accessible training.

Overall, while professional development is effective, a greater focus on emerging technologies is essential to ensure wider benefits.

**5.5. Mean and Rank of Impact on Work Performance after Successful Completion of Professional Development Activities**

**Table No. 4** Mean and rank of Impact on work performance after successful completion of Professional Development Activities

<b>Mean and Rank Impact on work performance after successful completion of Professional Development Activities</b>		
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Computer Hardware and Troubleshooting	13.66	1
Cloud Computing	13.28	2
Financial Management in Libraries	13	3
Web 3.0 Applications Marketing of Library & Information Services	12.9	4
Nnetworking and consortia	12.86	5
Library physical Layout and Design	12.75	6
Digital copyright Issues	12.68	7
Human Resource Management in Libraries	12.24	8
Library PR & publicity	11.77	9
Acquiring and managing E-resources in Workplace	11.72	10
Open-Source Software Packages	11.52	11
Marketing of Library & Information Services	11.49	12
Writing Reports, Articles, Conference papers	11.41	13
Creating and using Electronic Information resources in Library	11.37	14
Database management	11.21	15
Developing content for web -site	11.12	16
User Education & Information Literacy	10.56	17
New techniques of Reference and Information services	10.12	18
Help for Library Automation	10.08	19
Knowledge management	9.97	20
Building Institutional Repository	9.83	21
Increase in Leadership skills	7.49	22

## ***Exploring the Impact of Professional Development on the Work Performance of Women Librarians***

Women Librarians were asked to rate several working areas on a five-point scale, based on how professional development activities impacted their work performance. The survey results indicate that:

The "**Computer Hardware and Troubleshooting**" training was the highest-ranking activity, with a mean score of 13.66. This suggests that technical proficiency in computer hardware and troubleshooting is perceived to have a profound impact on improving job performance in the workplace.

Close behind, "**Cloud Computing**" ranked second with a mean score of 13.28. The widespread adoption of cloud computing technologies is clearly seen as an essential skill, further contributing to the importance of modern IT knowledge in the workplace.

"**Financial Management in Libraries**" (Mean: 13.00) and "**Web 3.0 Applications Marketing of Library & Information Services**" (Mean: 12.90) also ranked highly. These activities appear to provide valuable skills in managing finances and marketing digital services, which are crucial for the evolving needs of libraries.

PDA's such as "**Networking and Consortia**" (Mean: 12.86) and "**Library Physical Layout and Design**" (Mean: 12.75) show a significant but somewhat lesser impact on work performance. These activities likely enhance team collaboration and the physical environment of libraries, which indirectly improves overall work output.

"**Digital Copyright Issues**" (Mean: 12.68) and "**Human Resource Management in Libraries**" (Mean: 12.24) are ranked in the middle range. Understanding copyright issues and effectively managing human resources are key factors in ensuring smooth operations in the library and information services sector.

As we move further down the ranking, we see PDA's such as "**Writing Reports, Articles, Conference Papers**" (Mean: 11.41) and "**Creating and Using Electronic Information Resources in Libraries**" (Mean: 11.37) still contributing to performance, but the impact is less pronounced than in the top-ranking activities. These activities, while important for knowledge sharing and resource creation, seem to have a slightly lower perceived immediate impact.

"**Acquiring and Managing E-Resources in Workplace**" (Mean: 11.72) and "**Open-Source Software Packages**" (Mean: 11.52) also fall within this category, suggesting that while technical and resource management skills are important, their impact may vary by workplace context.

"User Education & Information Literacy" (Mean: 10.56) and "New Reference Techniques" (Mean: 10.12) are seen as less impactful on performance, suggesting they're viewed as less critical than technical or managerial skills.

The least impactful professional development activities, with a mean score of 7.49, is "**Increase in Leadership Skills**". This indicates that while leadership skills are important for personal growth and career development, the immediate effect on work performance might not be as tangible as that of other more technical or specialized skills.

According to Table 5.3.3, women librarians prioritise the top five essential areas following participation in professional development activities, indicating a significant impact on their work approach and focus.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

According to the study, the majority of women librarians in permanent positions are married, stable, and in their mid-career. Although this provides a solid basis, involvement in professional development is often constrained by family obligations.

Participation is higher at state-level seminars and webinars, but attendance at national and worldwide events is lower. The fact that just 54.51% actively participate emphasizes the need for more adaptable and accessible formats. Leadership, automation, and reference abilities are all enhanced by professional development. However, the results of training in subjects like cloud computing and Web 3.0 are inconsistent, suggesting the need for more specialised, hands-on methods.

Despite their perceived high impact, leadership skills rank low in measured performance, indicating a disconnect between job production and personal development.

In conclusion, professional development enhances skills and self-assurance; however, to effectively support women, it should be more technology-focused and adaptable.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study highlights that professional development plays a vital role in enhancing the work performance of women librarians, particularly in areas such as leadership, library automation, and reference services. However, participation is uneven—often limited by personal responsibilities and institutional support—especially for national and international activities. While technical and managerial skills show clear performance benefits, emerging digital skills require more targeted training. To maximize the impact, institutions must offer more accessible, flexible, and need-based professional development opportunities that align with the evolving roles of women librarians in both academic and digital environments.

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