



Continuing Professional Development of LIS Professionals Working in Select University Libraries in Nepal

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Abstract

Continuing professional development (CPD) programmes emerge as instrumental mechanisms for elevating employee skills, nurturing a culture of perpetual learning, and augmenting professional success. This study attempts to focus on the CPD programmes and their impacts in Nepal. A structured questionnaire was designed and circulated personally among eight librarians in October 2022, and all duly filled-in questionnaires elicited a response rate of 100%. The findings unveiled a notable need for more participation of university librarians in scholarly communication endeavours. Most LIS professionals were found to need more affiliations with national-level professional associations. They had yet to find opportunities to attend conferences, workshops, and training programmes to fortify their professional acumen. Furthermore, this study identified several formidable barriers obstructing attendance at CPD programmes, including inadequate workplace support, financial constraints, an interaction gap between subject matter experts and participants, time limitations, and logistical challenges related to travel. In light of these findings, it is recommended that an expanded array of CPD initiatives be orchestrated specifically for LIS professionals in Nepal. The findings of this study will certainly add value for the working professionals in Nepal to enhance their professional skills.

Keywords: Continuing education programmes, ICT skills and competencies, Nepal, Professional development, Staff development, University libraries

1. Introduction

The Library and Information Science (LIS) field is undergoing heightened complexity due to the ongoing evolution and progress of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the internet. In response to these transformative forces, LIS professionals must stay well-informed and continually refresh their knowledge base. Embracing this proactive approach is

essential to ensuring the alignment of their services with the ever-evolving demands of the market. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) serves as the pathway for enhancing expertise and competence. It transcends the mere preservation of one's skills and capabilities. However, the pursuit of CPD often encounters significant hurdles, encompassing financial constraints, employee attitudes, institutional policies,



geographical restrictions, gaps in technical knowledge, professional associations, and many other challenges.

Harnessing the abundant resources offered by libraries offers an effective means of surmounting challenges amid adversity. Libraries are veritable treasure troves, brimming with diverse assets such as books, scholarly journals, and internet databases, all of which are indispensable for fostering professional growth. These invaluable tools empower individuals to consistently enhance their skills and remain abreast of their fields' latest advancements. Furthermore, professional associations must play a pivotal role in fostering CPD. These organisations should develop robust CPD programmes and passionately advocate for the continual professional growth of early-career and seasoned personnel alike. By collectively addressing these challenges and leveraging the resources at our disposal, we can propel the trajectory of professional development to new heights.

2. Review of related literature

A recent study from Nepal by Adhikari (2023) discovered that the lack of technical personnel was a significant obstacle to implementing advanced computer applications. Therefore, the author strongly suggested implementing comprehensive training programmes to enhance the skills of library staff. Osiesi and others (2022) concluded that professional development and training impact job performance widely. Another similar study was conducted (Bajpai & Madhusudhan, 2021) and mentioned that conferences and workshops were the media for acquiring ICT skills for college librarians. Most LIS professionals believe CPD programmes are needed to enhance skills and knowledge. In today's technologically advanced world, professionals can participate

in CEP activities in various ways. Despite not being physically present, learners can achieve the skill. YouTube, Skype (Abbas et al., 2022), and Virtual Communities of Practice (VCoP) (Qutab et al., 2022) are the leading channels for participating in CPD programmes to enhance the existing skills and knowledge of LIS professionals.

Some of the significant factors that impact professional development faced by LIS staff and institutions are staff shortages (Anwar et al., 2021), lack of finance, the non-positive response of the authority (Anwar et al., 2021; Ahmad et al., 2021), a lack of personal commitment (Ahmad et al., 2021), and institutional problems (Ajeemsha & Madhusudhan, 2014). Ampah-Johnston and Kwafoa (2020) emphasised that employees should participate in continuous education programmes (CEP) for professional development. "Professional development activities and in-house training are most effective for job performance (Ajeemsha & Madhusudhan, 2014), and "tutorials, webinars, and face-to-face workshops at conferences are preferred by staff for professional development" (Tchangelova & Lam, 2013). Biswas (2020) focused on the need for CPD programmes by presenting the programmes held from 2014 to 2018 in India.

It is noteworthy to state that no article originating from Nepal has been discovered regarding this topic. However, few master's theses have addressed this topic. Jha (2019) highlighted the necessity of retraining library staff to utilise ICT effectively. The author underscores the significance of equipping library staff with the requisite skills to make the most of ICT tools. According to Gautam (2016) study, the utilisation of Web 2.0 tools is minimal due to a lack of general understanding and technical expertise. She suggested that the central Department of



Library Science and TUCL should organise hands-on practice workshops, as well as in-service training, to encourage the implementation of Web 2.0 tools in the departmental libraries of Tribhuvan University. Poudel (2016) recommended conducting workshops and seminars and Banjade (2015) identified a need for more education and training programmes for cataloguers in Nepalese university libraries, particularly in the context of library automation. Acharya (2009) underscores that the library profession in Nepal lags behind other professions and emphasises the critical role of training and education in establishing LIS as a robust profession. This is especially pertinent for LIS professionals who need prior training or education.

The above literature review reveals that, due to a need for qualified LIS professionals in Nepal, libraries frequently need help using modern technologies successfully. CPD programmes for LIS professionals emerge as a strategic solution to address the emerging ICT technology skills and competencies gap, and this study fulfils this gap.

3. Statement of the problem

The preceding literature review underscores the pivotal role of CPD programmes, highlighting that providing proper training motivates librarians to embrace emerging technologies, enhances service quality, and enriches library functions. Nevertheless, none of these studies have specifically addressed the topic of CPD programmes for LIS professionals in Nepal.

This gap in the literature emphasises the relevance and necessity of a study entitled "Continuing Professional Development of LIS Professionals in Selected University Libraries in Nepal."

4. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

- (i) To determine the scholarly communication status of university librarians working in select universities in Nepal
- (ii) To know the active involvement of LIS professionals in continuing professional development programmes and their association
- (iii) To ascertain the benefits and hindrances of continuing professional development programmes.

5. Methodology

The scope of the study is restricted to eight (8) select university libraries in Nepal (Table 1). The survey method was adopted, and data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire to elicit respondents' professional development responses. The instrument was circulated personally among eight librarians in October 2022 and received all duly filled-in questionnaires, eliciting a response rate of 100%. The responses received from the respondents were analysed with the help of descriptive statistics and presented in six tables.

**Table 1: List of participating university libraries in Nepal**

Sl. No.	University Name	Library	Library's URL
1.	Tribhuvan University (TU)	Tribhuvan University Central Library (TUCL)	www.tucl.edu.np
2.	Kathmandu University (KU)	Kathmandu University Central Library	https://ku.edu.np/central-library
3.	Pokhara University (PokU)	Pokhara University Central Library	https://pu.edu.np/library/
4.	Nepal Open University (NOU)	Nepal Open University (NOU) Library	https://nou.edu.np/
5.	Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS)	Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) Library	https://www.pahs.edu.np/
6.	Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU)	Agriculture and Forestry University: Library	https://www.afulibrary.edu.np/
7.	BP Koirala Institute of Health Science (BPKIHS)	BP Koirala Institute of Health Science (BPKIHS) Library	http://www.bпкиhs.edu/
8.	National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS)	National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) Library	https://nams.org.np/

6. Findings and discussion

6.1 Demographic information

The demographic data encompassing gender, educational backgrounds, professional experience, and the specific roles individuals play provides valuable insights

into a library's human resource management dynamics. Moreover, the LIS profession holds a noble stature as it serves society. Hence, professionals within this field must possess adequate qualifications to effectively bridge the gap between users and the wealth of information available (Table 2).

Table 2: Demographic information of respondents (n=8)

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of respondents(%)
Gender		
i.	Male	06(75)
ii.	Female	02(25)
Academic Degree		
i.	MLISc.	07(87.5)
ii.	Ph.D.	00 (00)
iii.	M.Phil.	00 (00)
iv.	BLISc.	01(12.5)



Professional Designation		
i.	Library Officer	04(50)
ii.	Librarian	02(25)
iii.	Deputy Librarian	01(12.5)
iv.	Library Assistant	01(12.5)
v.	Asst. Librarian	00 (00)
Professional Experience		
i.	Below five years	01(12.5)
ii.	6- 10 years	00 (00)
iii.	11-15 years	04(50)
iv.	16-20 years	01(12.5)
v.	21 -30 years	02(25)
vi.	Above 30 years	00 (00)
Nature of Work*		
i.	Library Administrating	08(100)
ii.	E-resources Management	07(87.5)
iii.	Technical Processing	07(87.5)
iv.	Institutional Repository	07(87.5)
v.	Current Awareness Services	06(75)
vi.	System Managing (IT)	04(50)
vii.	Acquisition	03(37.5)
viii.	Reference service	03(37.5)
ix.	Data Entry	03(37.5)
x.	Lending Service	02(25)

(*Note: Multiple answers are permitted.)



Table 2 shows that male participants (75%) outnumbered females (25%). It implies that male employees held higher-level positions than female employees. This suggests that the majority of participants in this survey are male. Any employee's formal education academic degree serves as a foundation. Table 2 reveals that most respondents (87.5%) held an MLISc. degree, indicating a strong academic background in LIS. There were no Ph.D. or M.Phil. holders in the sample, which indicates that this survey primarily captures individuals with bachelor's or master's-level qualifications. Only 12.5% of respondents have a Bachelor's in Library and Information Science (BLISc.) degree.

Library professionals are responsible for many aspects of the library's operation. "Library Officer" was the most common professional designation (50%), suggesting that this role is prevalent among the respondents. However, diverse designations were present, including Librarians(25%), Deputy librarians(12.5%), and Library assistants (12.5%). Interestingly, there are no respondents with the title of Assistant Librarian in this survey.

Professional experience refers to actual hands-on knowledge of the job. Respondents were asked about university librarians' work experience. Table 2 illustrates that 50% of respondents have "11-15 years" of experience. This suggests that many surveyed individuals have moderate experience in their respective fields. 12.5% of respondents have "Below five years" of experience, indicating that individuals are in the early stages of their careers within the sample. Also, 12.5% of respondents have "16-20 years" of

experience, implying a group of mid-career professionals. There is also a segment with "21-30 years" of experience, constituting 25% of the respondents. This group represents individuals with a substantial level of experience. Notably, no respondents in this sample fall into the "6-10 years" or "Above 30 years" of experience.

The respondents were engaged in various facets of library work, emphasising library administration and e-resources management. Table 2 reveals that most respondents are involved in library administration (100%), e-resources management (87.5%), technical processing (87.5%), and institutional repository (87.5%). These areas are significant in the roles of the LIS professionals. The other areas of work, such as acquisition (37.5%), reference service (37.5%), data entry (37.5%), and current awareness services (75%), also play essential roles but to a lesser extent. Some areas, like system managing (IT) (50%) and lending services (25%), have fewer respondents, suggesting there are fewer common responsibilities among the surveyed group. This indicates a diverse skill set among the respondents, covering traditional library functions and modern digital resource management.

6.2 Status of scholarly communication of LIS professionals

In this study, scholarly communication taken in the context of the process involves sharing, disseminating, and publishing academic research findings to make them widely accessible to global academic communities in the form of published articles (Table 3).

**Table 3: Status of scholarly communication of LIS professionals (n=8)**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of respondents (%)
Published articles in indexed journals		
i.	Yes	01(12.5)
ii.	No	07(87.5)
Quantity of published articles by LIS professionals		
iii.	<= 5 articles	01(12.5)
iv.	5-10 articles	00 (00)
v.	More than ten articles	00 (00)

Table 3 discloses that only 12.5% of LIS professionals have published articles in indexed journals, while the majority (87.5%) have yet to publish articles in such journals. This finding suggests that there is room for growth and improvement in terms of scholarly

communication among the LIS professional community in Nepal. Table 3 also indicates that only 12.5% of respondents have published fewer than or equal to 5 articles. No respondents have published "between 5 to 10 articles" and "more than ten articles".

6.3 LIS professional development and role of professional associations

Table 4: LIS professional development and role of professional associations (n=8)

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of respondents (%)
Connecting with professional associations		
i.	NLA	07(87.5)
ii.	IFLA	00 (00)
iii.	ALA	00 (00)
iv.	SLA	00 (00)
Attended any PDP/CEP programmes during the in-service period		
i.	Yes	06(75)
	No	02(25)
Participation in CPD programmes/CEP in the service period*		
i.	Conference attended	06(75)
ii.	Workshop participant	06(75)
iii.	In-service training	05(67.5)
iv.	Refresher course/Short-term course	04(50)
v.	Field visit	02 (25)
vi.	Social Media Professional Groups	00 (00)
Reasons behind attending the CPD/CEP*		
i.	To acquire new skills	06(75)
ii.	To update knowledge or basic education	06(75)
iii.	To get trained in the latest ICT technologies	06(75)



iv.	To improve library services	06 (75)
v.	To train junior staff	03(37.5)
vi.	To get a break from routine work tasks	02(25)
vii.	To share research/innovations/research visibility	01(12.5)
viii.	To network with peers	01(12.5)
ix.	It is mandatory for the promotion	00 (00)
Present sessions/papers/posters at conferences		
i.	Yes	04 (50)
ii.	No	04 (50)
Received funding for attending PDP/CEP from working place		
iii.	Yes	01(12.5)
iv.	No	06(75)
Appropriate reason for not attending the PDP/CEP*		
i.	Lack of funding	02(25)
ii.	Lack of workplace support	02(25)
iii.	Institutional problems	02(25)
iv.	Lack of awareness	00 (00)
v.	Technical problems	00 (00)
vi.	Personal problem	00 (00)

Table 4 shows that the National Library Association (NLA) is the most prominent professional association, with a high involvement rate of 87.5% of respondents. In contrast, there is no reported involvement in international associations such as the IFLA, ALA, and SLA, suggesting that the focus is primarily on the national level. Table 4 reveals that a significant proportion of respondents (75%) reported attending PDP/CEP programmes during their in-service period, indicating a strong commitment to professional development. However, 25% of respondents did not participate in such programmes, which suggests there may be barriers or opportunities for improvement in encouraging participation.

Table 4 shows that conferences and workshops have the highest participation rates at 75%, indicating a strong interest in events that allow networking and skill development. In-service training follows closely at 67.5%, demonstrating a desire for ongoing education. Refresher courses or short-term courses and field visits also show reasonable participation, though slightly

lower at 50% and 25%, respectively. Notably, participation in social media professional groups must be reported, indicating a potential area for future development or outreach efforts.

Table 4 reveals that respondents provided various reasons for attending CPD/CEP programmes, with the most common motivations being to acquire new skills, update knowledge, get trained in the latest ICT technologies, and improve library services, all at 75%. A smaller percentage attended to train junior staff (37.5%). Fewer respondents attended for personal reasons or to network with peers, indicating that professional development and skill improvement were the primary drivers.

Furthermore, half of the respondents (50%) reported presenting sessions, papers, or posters at conferences, showcasing active engagement in knowledge sharing and professional discourse. Only a minority (12.5%) received funding from their workplaces to attend PDP/CEP programmes, which could be seen as a potential barrier to



participation. The majority (75%) did not receive funding, suggesting that alternative funding sources or support mechanisms may be needed to facilitate participation.

Table 4 also reveals that the reasons cited for not attending PDP/CEP programmes are fairly evenly distributed, with lack of funding,

workplace support, and institutional problems each accounting for 25% of responses. Interestingly, no responses indicated a lack of awareness, technical problems and personal problems, suggesting that respondents are generally aware of these programmes and are not hindered by technical issues.

6.4 Benefits of CPD

Table 5: Benefits of attending CPD programmes (n=8)

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of respondents (%)
i.	Development of innovative ideas for libraries and their services	08(100)
ii.	Development of new skills and competencies	07(87.5)
iii.	Upgrade knowledge of cutting-edge and emerging technology	06(75)
iv.	Interaction with professional experts	05(62.5)
v.	Holistic development of professionals	04(50)
vi.	Sharing/knowing of experiences of other libraries	03(37.5)
vii.	Refreshments from a regular job	03(37.5)
viii.	Mentorship opportunities	02(25)

(*Note: Multiple answers are permitted.)

Table 5 reveals that 100% of the respondents acknowledged that CPD programmes contribute to developing innovative ideas for libraries and their services. This indicates a unanimous agreement among participants regarding the role of CPD in fostering creativity and innovation within the field. 87.5% of respondents recognised that CPD programmes help develop new skills and competencies. This high percentage suggests that the majority of participants believe that these programmes are effective in enhancing their professional skills. 75% of respondents stated that CPD programmes assist in upgrading their knowledge of cutting-edge and emerging technology. This finding

highlights the importance of staying updated with technological advancements in the library profession.

Interestingly, 62.5% of respondents reported that CPD programmes provide opportunities for interaction with professional experts. While this percentage is substantial, it also indicates room for improvement in facilitating more expert interactions through such programmes. 50% of respondents recognised CPD programmes as a means for holistic professional development. This percentage suggests that half of the participants believe these programmes contribute to their professional growth. 37.5% of respondents indicated that CPD



programmes enable them to share and learn from the experiences of other libraries. While this percentage is relatively lower, it underscores the importance of fostering a collaborative learning environment within CPD initiatives.

However, 37.5% of respondents expressed that CPD programmes offer a break or refreshment from their regular job responsibilities. This finding highlights the potential stress-relief and rejuvenation aspect of attending such programmes. 25% of respondents identified mentorship

opportunities as a benefit of CPD programmes. While this percentage is lower than other benefits, a segment of professionals' value mentorship within CPD.

6.5 Hindrances of CPD

CPD is essential for LIS professionals to stay updated with the latest trends, technologies, and best practices. However, several hindrances can prevent LIS professionals from attending CPD programmes. Table 6 outlines the hindrances respondents face in attending CPD programmes.

Table 6: Hindrances in attending CPD Programmes (n=8)

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of respondents (%)
i.	Expensive participation	07(87.5)
ii.	Lack of interaction with subject experts	06(75)
iii.	Time taking	05(62.5)
iv.	Travelling issues (health, gender, differentially abled)	05(62.5)
v.	Lack of realism	04(50)
vi.	Lack of knowledgeable spokesperson	04(50)
vii.	It does not help in the development of required professional skills and competencies	03(37.5)
viii.	Attend just for the sake of attending	02(25)
ix.	Does not meet the diverse expectations of attendees	01(12.5)

Table 6 reveals that expensive participation is the predominant hindrance to attending CPD programmes. A staggering 87.5% of respondents identified cost as a significant barrier, indicating a substantial financial burden associated with such programmes. Furthermore, most participants (75%) wanted increased interaction with subject matter experts within CPD programmes. This underscores a pressing demand for more immersive and expert-led

content in these educational initiatives.

Over half of the respondents (62.5%) find CPD programmes time-consuming. This indicates that the duration or scheduling of these programmes may need to align better with the respondents' professional commitments. An equal proportion of respondents (62.5%) face challenges related to travelling, including health concerns and issues related to gender and individuals with



disabilities. This emphasises the need for more inclusive and accessible CPD options.

Furthermore, half of the respondents (50%) believe that CPD programmes lack realism. This might indicate that the content is perceived as theoretical and not practical or applicable to their professional context. An equal number of respondents (50%) need more knowledgeable spokespersons in CPD programmes. This suggests a need for better-quality instructors or facilitators.

Moreover, about one-third of the respondents (37.5%) believe that CPD programmes must be more effective in developing their professional skills and competencies. This points to a potential need for more alignment between programme content and participant expectations. A quarter of the respondents (25%) indicate that some individuals need a genuine interest in learning to attend CPD programmes. This could be a concern if it leads to disengagement during the sessions. The smallest percentage of respondents (12.5%) reported that CPD programmes must meet attendees' diverse expectations. This suggests a need for programme customisation to cater to the varied needs of participants.

7. Conclusion

This study offers a profound examination of the current state of professional skills and competencies among university librarians in Nepal, offering invaluable insights that can guide future initiatives to elevate their professional development and bridge existing gaps. The study's findings acknowledge that the quality of library services is intrinsically tied to the performance of its staff, highlighting the pivotal role of university librarians. The study recognises the importance of enhancing scholarly communication among LIS professionals, emphasising the need to

encourage and support librarians in publishing their research. Elevating the quantity and quality of publications can significantly advance the LIS field. The study suggests that recognising and rewarding outstanding contributions through awards and incentives can further motivate LIS professionals, promoting greater research visibility.

To conclude, this study serves as a beacon of insight into the world of university librarians in Nepal, offering recommendations and avenues for improvement that can resonate not only within the specific context of Nepal but also in the broader LIS community. It reinforces the idea that investing in professional development, promoting research and scholarly communication, and addressing the unique challenges faced by librarians are key drivers in the ongoing evolution of the Library and Information Science field, ensuring its continued relevance and excellence in the digital age. However, it is worth noting that this study's scope is limited to a specific subset of university librarians in Nepal, potentially leaving unexplored nuances within the broader profession and the need for further research encompassing all LIS professionals in Nepal universities.

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