

The Reality of Gender Equality in Universities Libraries: A Case of Pakistan

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Abstract : The library and information science discipline is universally known as a feminist profession. It is considered a suitable field for females in Pakistan like a few other fields such as teaching and healthcare. It is also reflected through the uneven enrollment at graduate levels in library schools across the country as there are more females as compared to males. However, that uneven ratio does not really translate in the profession after passing out. There are more males in the profession as compared to females, as well as males can be seen on managerial and administrative posts majorly. A few females who joined the perception remain underrated and are hardly seen at managerial or administrative positions in the academic libraries. Therefore, this study was designed to highlight the perceptions of those females who have joined the profession to identify the issues related to equality faced by them as a professional. A qualitative research design based on a semi-structured interview was selected as an appropriate method to achieve the objectives of this study. Female librarians working in the higher education commission's recognized public and private sector universities of Punjab, Pakistan, were selected as the population for this study. Female librarians shared that inequalities and discrimination based on face value, experience, communication, and relationship with the manager are common at their workplaces. They added that managers prefer male professionals to deal with delegation or presentations though we both can do that. Female professionals from the private sector believed that library managers make final hiring and selection decisions based on job duties and gender. However, the one with strong references will be preferred for the job. Also, private-sector employees suffered more prejudice due to the non-availability of proper patterns of promotions and increments. The government personnel said there is always a proper board/procedure for hiring and promotions; therefore, it is difficult for them to identify any inequality. Participants were dissatisfied with their managers for not allowing them to attend training and conferences. The majority of participants from the private sector said they wouldn't speak up to prejudice because they are afraid of losing their jobs and their voice is lost in a male-dominated society where males hold numerous authoritative positions and females are considered less competent. Nonetheless, the discrimination and inequalities affected the work motivation and enthusiasm of employees. Therefore, organizations should not discriminate against the staff in terms of facilities and benefits. The sample may not represent the true picture of gender equality in university libraries of Pakistan due to less number of participants and limited geographical boundaries. It is also assumed that some females may refrain from disclosing factual information or some may exaggerate the facts as a large number of participants requested to become part of the study. Equal opportunities should be offered to female library professionals to uplift and involve them to mitigate the perception of gender dominance. The organizations or immediate authorities should allow their staff to participate in training opportunities to learn modern practices to better serve the community.

Keywords : equality-workplace, libraries as workplace, female professionals, librarians-Pakistan

Conference Title : ICLS 2022 : International Conference on Libraries and Society

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : November 10-11, 2022