

**A Review of PLA Golden Jubilee International Conference on
Emerging Paradigm in Librarianship: A Call for Innovation,
27-28 November 2007**

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The Pakistan Library Association Golden Jubilee International Conference on *Emerging Paradigm of Librarianship: a Call for Innovation* was held in November, 2007 at Aiwan-e-Iqbal, Lahore. It has been applauded by participants as an innovative development in the history of librarianship in Pakistan. It was a first-ever international conference in Pakistan with contributions from USA, UK, Singapore, Kuwait, India and Jammu & Kashmir. The event was as grand as it should be to commemorate the golden jubilee of PLA.

On behalf of the PLA Pb, the principal organizers of the event were: Mr. Muhammad Ahsan Tahami (Chair, Organizing Committee), Dr. Kanwal Ameen (Chair, Program Advisory Committee), Mr. Muhammad Anwar (Chair, Sponsorships and Publicity Committee) and Mrs. Sania Awais (Chair, Local Support Committee). Besides, LIS professionals, teachers and many students volunteered themselves for the success of the conference. I also worked as Associate Secretary to the Chair, Program Advisory Committee, Dr. Kanwal Ameen.

The quality of submitted papers and geographic diversity in participation made the conference an important professional event for LIS community from all over the country. The enthusiasm of the participants was marvelous during all sessions. At the end of the conference, it was observed that all participants departed with big smiles and appreciation.

Participants: The contributors from various parts of the country and globe such as England, USA, Kuwait, Singapore and

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India sent their papers. About six hundred eminent academicians, professionals and LIS students from all parts of the country attended the conference.

Conference Themes: The theme of the conference PLA Golden Jubilee International Conference 2007 was “Emerging Paradigm in Librarianship: a call for Innovation”. The key topics at the conference were focused around the following four sub themes/sessions.

- A. Library & Information Services
- B. Librarianship as Profession
- C. Role of Associations
- D. LIS Education

The PLA Punjab Branch in its very first meeting, held in May 10, 2007, had decided to celebrate the Golden Jubilee year by holding an international conference in the same year, i.e. 2007. A Conference Program Advisory Committee (CPAC) was constituted and it decided to seek ‘invited papers’ instead of issuing an ‘open call’ for papers to hold the conference within a specified time. The latter would have required at least three more months, hence, that method was abandoned. The CPAC members identified and short listed a number of national and international prospective authors to be invited to contribute. (Ameen, 2008)

Inaugural Session: Mr. Qazi Afaq Hussain, Secretary Education, Government of the Punjab inaugurated the conference. Mr. Muhammad Imtiaz Tajwar, Director General Public Libraries Punjab was the Guest of Honour. Mr. Ahsan Tahami (president PLA Punjab Branch) also address this session. Dr. Kanwal Ameen conducted the session.

The keynote address by John Feather (Professor of Library and Information Studies, Loughborough University, UK) provided the perspective of LIS education in changing environment titled “*The Next Generation: Trends in LIS Education for the 21st Century*”. he predicted future of the profession - the next fifty years

and beyond - ultimately depends on the continual influx of new blood, of young men and women committed to the profession and committed to new ways of practising it. But they will only be attracted if the professional gatekeepers, the LIS departments and their academic staff, provide a stimulating, contemporary and forward-looking programme of education.

The future of the profession - the next fifty years and beyond - ultimately depends on the continual influx of new blood, of young men and women committed to the profession and committed to new ways of practising it. But they will only be attracted if the professional gatekeepers, the LIS departments and their academic staff, provide a stimulating, contemporary and forward-looking programme of education. Those programmes will need to be built around an understanding of information itself, the organisation and structure of knowledge, the principles of information storage and retrieval, and, above all, developing the capacity of managing information, information institutions and one's own career. It is perhaps the latter that is really new. Like all professions, we need a new generation of professionals who are equipped to continue to educate themselves, and to learn and to teach throughout their careers.

Prof. Feather postponed his arrival just a week before the conference due to the very uncertain political and security situation of the country and sent his address in recorded video. The address was highly enlightening and was applauded.

1st Session: After the key note address, the first business session was conducted by the Session Secretary, Dr. Muhammad Ramzan (Chief Librarian, LUMS). Session Chair, Prof. Dr. Mumtaz A. Anwar congratulated the organizers of the conference for their successful efforts to conduct first international conference in his introductory note. To encourage the interactive environment, organizing committee invited 15-20 minutes paper presentations, and question answer session at the end of every session.

There were presentations by The Mr. Sajid Mirza (Islamic International University, Islamabad), Mr. Hamid Rehman (DLIS,

Peshawar University), Dr. Shaheen Majid (School Of Communication & Information Nanyang Technological University, Singapore), Prof. Dr. Rafia Sheikh (University of Sindh Jamshoro) and Dr. Syed Jalal-ud-Din Haider (Prof/Ex-Chairman, Chairman Dept of LIS Karachi University, Karachi. Pakistan). Mr. Sajid presented his paper on “Electronic resources and services in federally chartered universities of Pakistan”. He conducted a survey of six public sector’s general university libraries from Federal area of Pakistan. He reviewed the current status of electronic resources & services, their extent and to find out the problems being faced in providing these services. He concluded that lack of faculty’s interest in the use of e-resources, lack of training opportunities for LIS professionals and lack of e-resources were the three major obstacles in the provision of e-resources and services. Mr. Hamid spoke on “Human Resource Management (HRM) in academic libraries of Pakistan”. He discussed the importance and the current situation of human resources in academic libraries. He also discussed the key areas of HRD such as need of human resources, hiring and recruitment, interviews, selection procedure, job description, staffing, probationary period, employee-employer implications, on job training, supervision, counting education, job analysis, performance, appreciation, bonus and increments etc. with the strengths and weaknesses of the HRD system. He concluded with appropriate suggestions and recommendation.

Dr. Shaheen presented his thought provoking presentation on “Environment Scanning as a Source of External Knowledge”. He told that he had selected this topic as to be an emerging concept to make it abreast with conference concept. He introduced the internal and external environment and the scope of this scanning that includes competitiveness, competitors, competitive intelligence and advantage etc. Application of this scanning may be for problem solving, daily and routine decision making, new initiatives and some others. He also introduced the near and for environments and the steps of scanning, i.e. information needs, acquisition of information, its processing, products and services, dissemination and use. He concluded his presentation with the idea of hybrid approach for environmental

scanning. Prof. Dr. Rafia presented her paper titled “Quality Assurance Program and LIS Education at the University of Sindh. Jamshoro”. She started her presentation with the upcoming competitive world, where a high quality of education is being demanded. She included 8 criterion and 25 standards set by HEC for quality assurance. She mentioned a need of better corporation and coordination between HEC and universities. As there is a variety and diversity among universities, HEC should consider it and every university should be dealt with according to its strengths and weakness. She concluded with need of training, digitization, data banks development which should be addressed. Dr. Haider discussed the “Issues in Pakistani Libraries: the need for innovative approach”. He told that the faculty should play their role to bring change and innovation in the profession thorough their schools. He also mentioned need for faculty development through foreign education and exposure. He also mentioned absence of required skills for top position or leadership in libraries. He also mentioned a need for an interaction and faculty exchange between LIS and IT peoples. Dr. Haider concluded his presentation with the factors of change and innovation, i.e. internet, users of library and leadership which include association, schools faculty and seniors.

In the end, a question answer session was conducted and the session Chair concluded the session. The chair added that we should focus on our community using different techniques e.g. studies on information seeking behaviors. We should know what human and other resources we have, what are the strength and weaknesses of our systems and digitization of research repositories is call of the time. Gaps in this regard should be identified and filled. At the end, chair thanked speakers for their papers.

2nd Session: The 2nd session of the conference was on the 'IT Applications and Librarianship as Profession'. The session Secretary was Miss Umerah Shah (Assistant Professor, DLIS, PU), and it was chaired by Prof. Dr. Syed Jalal-ud-Din Haider. There were presentations by Nosheen Fatima Warraich (University of the Punjab, Lahore), Muhammad Rafique (Islamic International University, Islamabad), Abdul Waheed (Government

College University, Lahore), and Dr. Muhammad Ramzan (Lahore University of Management Sciences). Ms. Nosheen, presented her paper on *“Perception of LIS Professionals about the Use of HEC Digital Library Databases”*. She discussed the impact of HEC National Digital Library on the library services. She analyzed the satisfaction level of LIS professionals about these e-sources and problems faced by them in facilitating the researchers. She concluded that HEC must strive aggressively to market these databases and improve training programmes to increase the quality research productivity.

Mr. Rafique addressed the *“Issues of OSS Adoption in Pakistani Libraries: Lessons Learned from PLSP Project”*. He stated that the adoption of OSS in libraries is just at budding stage in the country. Only a few projects made the first move in this direction. He presented his first-hand experience of using Koha, open source software for library automation and identified the major issues and barriers affecting OSS adoption in Pakistani libraries. Mr. Waheed spoke on *“LIS Career in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities”*. He noted that librarians should provide value-added services by carrying out search across a wide range of information resources, downloading the resultant information and analyzing and repackaging it to suit the requirements of the users. He also discussed some challenges other than technological are professional segregation, employer prejudice, poor employment strategies and lack of professional support. Mr. Ramzan presented paper titled *“Problems Hindering the Wider use of ICTs in Libraries of Developing Countries”*. He discussed the common problems hindering the wider application of information technologies in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Uganda and other developing countries. The findings revealed that skilled human resources, inadequate funds, IT infrastructure, management’s attitudes and unavailability of un-interrupted power supply are common problems being faced by librarians in application of innovative technologies.

3rd Session: The third session focused on the ' Role of Associations'. The session secretary was Ms. Bushra Almas (Chief Librarian, FCC University Lahore.) and session Chair was

Mr. Sher Afghan. There were presentations by Pervaiz Ahmad and Shafiq-Ur-Rehman (Allama Iqbal Open University and University of the Punjab respectively), Dr. Rubina Bhatti (Islamia University Bhawalpur), Ms. Azra Qureshi (Agha Khan University, Karachi), and Prof. Dr. Jagtar Singh (Dept. of LIS, Punjabi University, Patiala, India). Mr. Shafiq presented his paper on *“Library Organizations in Punjab: an overview”*. He discussed the development of various library organizations in the Province. At present there are 11 professional organizations in the Punjab. He also discussed the role of these organizations in the development of librarianship in the province and the country.

Dr. Rubina presented her paper titled *“Role of Library Associations in Professional Development: Challenges for PLA”*. She discussed the role of library association with special reference to PLA. She pointed out the major challenges faced by PLA i.e. information literacy and lifelong learning, quality assurance, curriculum development, continuing education and professional development, leadership development, collaboration, information and communication technologies and code of ethics. She concluded that association should devise necessary policies and procedures to bring harmony and consistency towards achieving the shared goals of professional development.

Ms. Azra, in her paper *“Role of Library Associations”*, discussed the overall role of library associations in the development of profession. She pointed out that library associations become successful only when their members are committed to success and offer programs and services that involve people in their work to keep their interest alive. She was of the view that PLA’s past failure is basically library professionals’ own failure. They need to be dynamic to make it alive and vibrant. Libraries must be viewed as integral parts of societies in which they function and societal needs must be studied in order to meet. Prof. Dr. Singh presented his paper on *“Beyond Web and Formal Degrees: Lifelong Learning is the Sustainable Paradigm”*. He noted that this is an era of fierce competition and discontinuous change, ICT instability, education obsolescence, economic insecurity, information overload, info-stress and techno-stress. He

pointed out a paradigm shift from teaching to learning, libraries to networks, printed publications to digital documents, ownership to access, and enclosure to disclosure. In this environment, neither formal degrees nor the web is in a position to meet our education and information needs. He concluded that lifelong learning is the only sustainable paradigm available to the stakeholders to stay ahead of change and competition and there is no substitute to the book, reading, learning and the library to build a sustainable future.

4th Session: The fourth session focused on 'LIS Education'. It was conducted by the Session Secretary, Dr. Khaild Mahmmod (Professor and Chairman, DLIS, PU) and on the Chair was Dr. Jagtar Singh. There were three presentations in this session, by Dr. Sajjad ur Rehman (Dept of LIS, Kuwait University), Dr Abdul Sattar (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) and Dr. Mumtaz Anwer (Dept of LIS, Kuwait University).

First paper of Dr. Sajjad ur Rehman on "*Developing New Competencies among LIS Professionals: Challenges for Educators*" was presented by Dr. Mumtaz Anwar. The paper described the developments of LIS education. The modules for converting competencies into curriculum were also discussed. The paper of Dr Abdul Sattar was presented by Dr. Shaheen Majeed. Topic was "*Interpersonal Skills for Library and Information Professionals*". That was one of most interesting papers as it dealt with the need of developing communication and behavioural skills. The paper with the need of social grace for LIS professionals. It threw light on the importance of proper dressing, behavior, personal grooming and communication skills. The last paper by Dr Mumtaz Ali Anwar on "*Faculty: The first pillar of excellence in education in information management*", focused on the importance of faculty development to produce high quality professionals. Paper presented results of many surveys in this regard. He discussed that he could found only two studies on excellence of university teachers, while hundreds of studies had been conducted on school and college teachers. He concluded that untrained teachers can destroy any nation in 25 years.

Dr. Jugtar Singh summed up the presented papers and emotionally narrated that after partition of Punjab, not only land was divided but the LIS education was also. He was very excited and happy to be able to attend the Conference. He stated that the challenges has increased the need of right decision making on librarians' part.

Two full days included a keynote address, 16 papers by national and international slate of presenters. There were 22 fulltext paper received but six papers of international researchers could not be presented because of time and visa problems. Lunches, tea breaks, and a banquet at Aiwan-e-Iqbal Complex were provided to give participants ample time to mix informally.

Concluding Session and Closing Ceremony: At the end of second day, closing ceremony was conducted to acknowledge all the professionals and LIS students who work devotedly to make this grand event possible. Dr. Kanwal Ameen conducted the session and It was also an interesting session. Shields were distributed to all members of different committees and certificates to all participants and presenters.

Lifetime Achievement Awards: Lifetime Achievement Awards were awarded in recognition of outstanding professional services of the following professionals: Mr. Abdul Raheem, Abdul Majid Sajid, M. Asghar, and Sher Afghan Malik.

The conference ended with the recommendations based on the papers presented. The recommendations were discussed to seek the consensus of the participants. These were prepared by Mr. Afzal Haq Qarshi (Ex Incharg, Dept. of LIS, PU) and Ms. Bushra Almas Jaswal and presented by Ms. Bushra.

It is good to know that the Proceedings of the Conference has just been published.

Ameen, K., Ali, R. A., & Tahami, M. A. (Eds.). (2008). Proceedings of the PLA Golden Jubilee International Conference 2007). Lahore: PLA Punjab Branch.