

Capacity Building through Training Program in LIS Professionals: A Survey on Various Libraries in Barak Valley (Assam)

Sudip Bhattacharjee

Sucheta Bhattacharjee

Abstract

Capacity is the ability to cope with problems with immediate solution. Capacity building involves man-machine interfaces to enhance operating efficiency, skills of employee of an organization towards the achievement of organizational goals. In order to make employees satisfied and committed to their jobs in academic and research libraries, there is need for strong and effective motivation at the various levels, departments and sections of the library. The present study was undertaken with a view to know the role of training program of LIS Professionals in their library services. The present study is based on the opinion of LIS professional from Rabindra Library, Assam University, Silchar and various college libraries which are affiliated under Assam University, Silchar in Cachar District, Assam. For this purpose, survey method has been adopted by the investigators, which comprises of administration of questionnaire, observation of the participants, and interview of the LIS professionals for knowing their view towards training program. The self-designed questionnaire has been distributed amongst the randomly selected samples. The filled up questionnaires have been collected from the respondents for data analysis and interpretations. For data analysis percentage calculations have been made. Findings of this study shows that training is essential for LIS professionals for developing their skill by attending conferences, workshop, refresher course, etc. to cope up with the capacity to handle latest technology.

Keywords: Capacity Building, Training, LIS Professionals, Barak Valley (Assam)

1. Introduction

The twenty-first century brings a lot of changes in library and information centers and also made access to electronic media. Advances in the telecommunication system, audiovisual technology and multimedia have opened up new possibilities in dealing with the problems of collection development, organization and dissemination of information. In other words, in order to fulfill the objectives of a modern library to acquire process and disseminate information exhaustively, expeditiously and pin

pointedly, the libraries have developed a number of techniques. To offer an effective service in an information technology environment, library personnel must have in depth knowledge and proficiency in the application of technology. Professional librarians need to enrich their knowledge and skill to cope up with such new environment.

2. Capacity Building: Concept

Capacity building or development is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to: (a) perform core functions, solve problems, define and



achieve objectives; and (b) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner.

There is no singular definition for capacity building. Over the years, 'capacity building' has moved from being a focus to concern individual training, the development of institutions and recently a complex systems philosophy where individual capacities are linked with those of institutions and systems at large. Recent definitions emphasize the continuing process of strengthening of abilities to perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives, and understand and deal with development needs. (UNDP (1997); UNDP (1998); UNESCO (2005)).

The World Customs Organization - an intergovernmental organization (IO) that develops standards for governing the movement of people and commodities, defines capacity building as "activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behavior of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capacitybuilding>).

Specifically, capacity building encompasses the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environment potentials and limits and of needs perceived by the people of the country concerned"(<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/capacity-define.html>).

3. Need of Capacity building in Library

In broad sense, capacity building is concerned with the following:

- ❖ LIS professional development: It is the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively.
- ❖ Library development: It is the elaboration of management structures, processes and services, not only within library but also the management of relationships between the LIS professionals and users.
- ❖ Institutional and legal framework development: It also makes legal and regulatory changes to enable LIS professionals, to perform at all levels, and in all sectors, to enhance their capacities.

4. Scope and Coverage of the Study

Assam University is one of the central universities situated in Southern part of Assam in North Eastern India. It has as many as 57 undergraduate affiliated colleges, which have been trying to meet the intellectual and educational interests in the region. The libraries in these colleges try to cope up with the information explosion as more and more publications are accessed in electronic form. Most of these libraries have changed the traditional methods of information service to modern methods with the application of ICT. The study is based on the opinion of LIS professional from Rabindra Library, Assam University, Silchar and various college libraries which are affiliated under Assam University, Silchar in Cachar District, Assam.

5. Objectives of the Study

Followings are the main objectives of the present study:

- ❖ To examine the need of training program among LIS professionals belong to Cachar District, Assam;
- ❖ To evaluate the performance of LIS professionals towards attaining training program;
- ❖ To examine the barrier of attending training program by them;
- ❖ To find out the major area where training program is essential for them; and
- ❖ To evaluate the challenges faced by them.

6. Methodology

Survey method has been applied to make the study. Data has been collected by using a questionnaire. Around 80 questionnaires were distributed among the LIS professional from Rabindra Library, Assam University, Silchar and various college libraries of Cachar District, Assam. Out of the respondent a few did not fill in the questionnaire completely. The librarians were also interviewed to get their opinion on library services and facilities. The findings of the present study are based purely on the responses made in the questionnaire returned by the LIS professionals and the interviews conducted informally.

7. Delimitation of the Study

The study is delimited to the Rabindra Library, Assam University, Silchar and various college libraries which are affiliated under Assam University, Silchar in Cachar District, Assam. The higher institution such as Medical Library, NIT Library and other special/ private library are not taken into consideration in this study.

8. Review of Literature

Bhattacharjee (2014) carried out a study on Library and Information Science Professional in this digital era. This paper attempts to understand the role of library and information science professionals in this information age to provide a successful, relevant and dynamic service. It also focused on issues, trends and challenges in preparing new era librarians and information professionals.

Magara (2010) conducted a study on challenges of Library and Information Science capacity building in Southern Sudan. This paper described the capacity building in LIS in SS and discussed developments of LIS capacity in SS, challenges of LIS education and training, and strategies for capacity building in LIS. It concludes that in order to develop competences and skills for LIS development in SS, there is a need of developing capacity of librarians in these universities and also teaching staff in the LIS departments to acquire technical knowledge and competencies in meeting demands of electronic age.

Ogunsola (2011) carried out a study on tools for capacity building in developing countries. The findings of this study shows that any library established in any organization must be ready to make personal sacrifices towards sustainable professional development of the concept of capacity building in the organizations. Provision of manpower for the various sectors of the nation's economy, the literate condition of the individual in the citizenry and wider dissemination of knowledge for productive research and development are predicated on existence of well-nurtured and adequately funded library and information services in any organization and institution.

Panda, Swain and Jena (2009) conducted a study on capacity building and restructuring of libraries and

information centers. Their study built a conceptual framework of capacity building and library restructuring and attempts to put focus on some of the basic aspects of library capacity building leading to re-engineering of library and information centers in the wake of changing scenario of informatics.

9. Major Findings and Discussion

9.1 Distribution of Questionnaire to the LIS professional and Responses Received

Altogether 80 questionnaires have been distributed among the LIS professional from Cachar District, Assam. Figure-1 shows that self-designed questionnaire was distributed to 80 Library and Information Science professional, out of which 66 (82.5%) LIS professional have returned the filled in questionnaire whereas 14 (17.5%) LIS professional have not returned the questionnaire. Therefore the response rate is 82.5%, which is a good response.

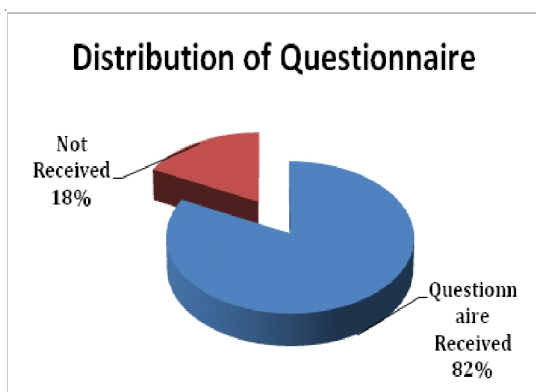


Figure-1: Distribution of Questionnaire to LIS professionals

9.2 University and College Wise Distribution of LIS professionals

The present study includes response received from LIS professionals belong to Cachar District, Assam.

Out of 66 sample, 45 (68.2%) LIS professional are from Assam University, Silchar and rest 21 (31.7%) LIS professional are from other colleges which are affiliated to Assam University, Silchar of Cachar District, Assam.

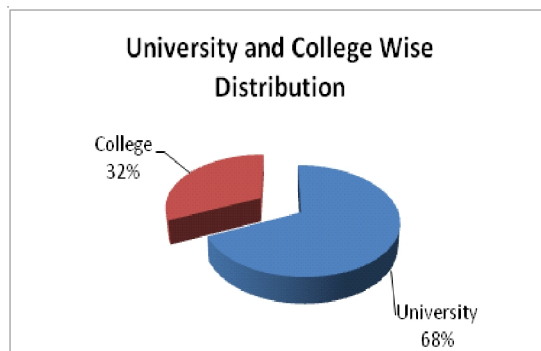


Figure-2: University and College Wise Distribution of LIS professionals

9.3 Sex-Wise Distribution of LIS professionals

From the Figure-3, it is evident that out of 66 LIS professionals responded to the study, 38 (57.6%) professionals are male whereas 28 (42.4%) LIS professionals are female which shows that in the present study male LIS professional have participated in more number than that of their female counterpart.

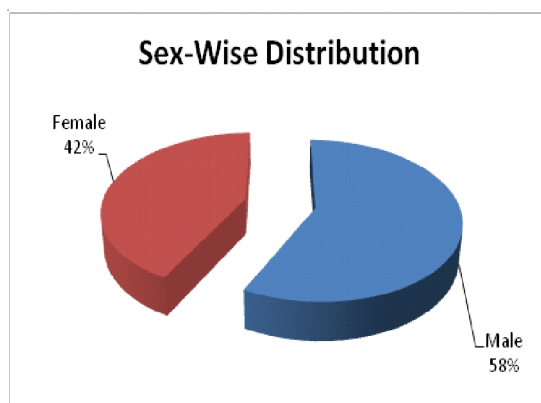


Figure-3: Sex-Wise Distribution of LIS professionals

9.4 Age-Wise Distribution of LIS professionals

The responses received indicated in Figure-4 shows the age-wise distribution of 66 LIS professionals, which reveals that 29 (43.9%) LIS professional belong to 26-35 years age group which is followed by 16 (24.2%) LIS professionals who belong to 36-45 years age group, whereas 12 (18.2%) LIS professionals belong to 46-50 years age group and 9 (13.6%) are above 51 years. The response suggested that more number of professionals belonging to young generation have actively participated in the present survey.

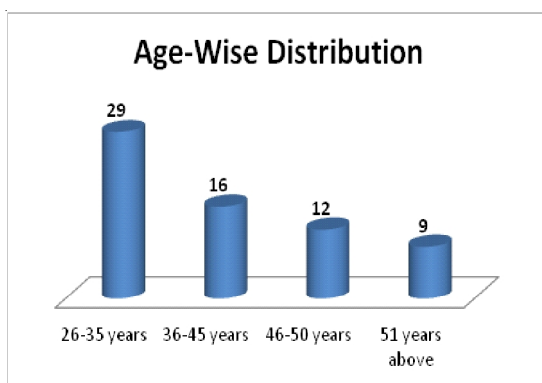


Figure-4: Age-Wise Distribution of LIS professionals

9.5 Category Wise Distribution of LIS professional

In this study, LIS professional include Faculty, Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Technical Library Assistant, Semi- Technical Assistant and other Library Professional who are working in library. Figure-5 shows that the category wise distribution questionnaire. Out of 66 LIS professional, 23 (34.8%) belonged to Technical Library Assistants followed by 21 (31.8%) Semi- Technical Assistant whereas 8(12.2%), 3(4.5%) and 2(3.0%) are Librarian, Assistant Librarian and faculty members respectively.

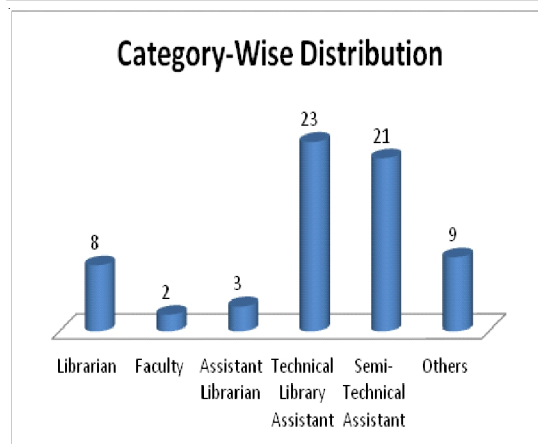


Figure-5: Category Wise Distribution of LIS professionals

9.6 Experience-Wise Distribution of LIS professional

The Figure-6 shows that out of 66 respondents that comprised of Faculty, Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Technical Library Assistant, Semi- Technical Assistant

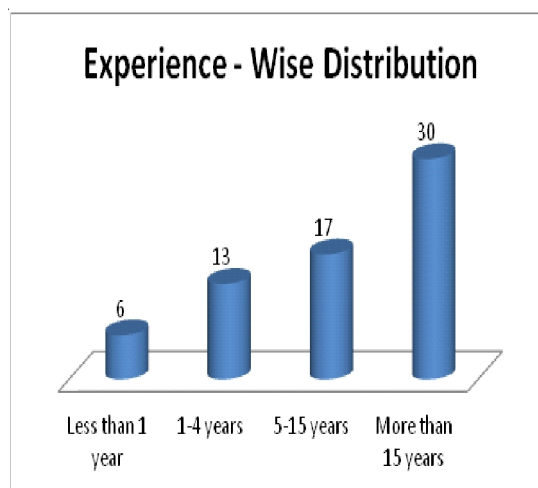


Figure-6: Experience - Wise Distribution of LIS professional

and other Library Professional most of the respondents 30 (30.3%) are having working experience of more than 15 years which is followed by 17 (17.9%) respondents having working experience of 5-15 years whereas 13 (9.3%) having working experience of 1-4 years and 6 (7.1%) respondents are having less than 1 year working experience, which indicates that majority of respondents of the study are having more than 15 years of working experience.

9.7 Ranking the Training Programme Attended by LIS professional

The Table-1 shows that out of 66 respondents, 31 (47.6%) attended conferences which is followed by 27 (40.9%) attended workshop whereas 17 (25.7%) attended refresher course; 14 (21.1%) attended in-house training and 10 (15.1%) professionals also attended online training programme. This result indicates that majority of LIS professional participate in conference.

Table -1: Ranking the Training Programme Attended by LIS professional

Statements	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	No Response
Conference Attended	31(47.6%)	16(26.2%)	0(0.0%)	7 (11.5%)	12(18.1%)
Workshop Attended	23(34.8%)	27(40.9%)	5 (7.5%)	0(0.0%)	11(16.6%)
Refresher Course Attended	7 (11.5%)	9(13.5%)	17 (25.7%)	9(13.5%)	24(36.6%)
In house Training Programme	8(12.2%)	10(15.1%)	12 (18.1%)	14 (21.1%)	22(33.4%)
Online Training Programme	0(0.0%)	7(10.6%)	0(0.0%)	10(15.1%)	49(74.2%)

(Source: Primary Data)

(Respondents are allowed for giving multiple responses)

9.8 Publication Details of LIS professional

Table- 2 shows that 23 (35.1%) LIS professionals published 1-5 publication in various journals/ conference proceeding whereas 13 (19.6%) professionals published 6-10 publications and 8 (12.1%) professionals published more than 20 publications whereas 3 (4.5%) professionals published 11-20 publication Further, 17 (25.7%) professionals do not have any publication and remaining 2 (3.0%) respondents has not given any response.

Table -2: Publication Details of LIS professional

Items	Number
No publication	17 (25.7%)
1-5 publications	23 (35.1%)
6-10 publications	13 (19.6%)
11-20 publications	3 (4.5%)
More than 20 publications	8 (12.1%)
No response	2 (3.0%)

(Source: Primary Data)

9.9 Benefits from Training Program

To know the view of LIS professionals towards benefits of training program, question was asked and the responses received are shown in Table- 3 below.

Majority, 59 (89.3%) professionals think that the training program helps to be up-to-date with library service which is followed by 48 (72.7%) respondents as they feel training program gives an opportunity to learn new technology. Further, 37 (56%) respondents think that it provides an opportunity to learn library software, whereas 32 (48.4%) think it helps to interact with professionals and 26 (39.9%) respondents think that it also provides opportunity to discuss their day to day problems.

Table -3: Publication Details of LIS professional

Details of Benefit	Number
Help to be up-to-date with library service.	59 (89.3%)
Got opportunity to learn new technology	48 (72.7%)
Got opportunity to learn library software	37 (56.0%)
Help to interaction with professionals	32 (48.4%)
Got opportunity to discuss the day to day problems.	26 (39.9%)

(Source: Primary Data)

(Respondents are allowed for giving multiple responses)

9.10 Essential Area of Training Program for Professional Development

Essential areas of training program are ranked by the LIS professionals, which are shown in Table- 4. According to 56 (84.8%) library professionals, library automation training is marked as first rank which is followed by 52 (78.8%) opined ICT skill development training as second rank. Further, 47 (71.2%), 43 (65.1%), 40 (60.6%) professionals felt human resource management skills, management of e-resource/ Internet training, digital library training are also very essential and placed 3rd, 4th and 5th rank respectively. Moreover, 36 (56.4%), 31 (46.9%), 29 (43.9%), 25 (37.8%), 21 (31.8%) and 20 (30.3%) professional opined user education training, research

development training, communication skills training, reference Sources and Services training, project management training, Statistics management skills are also essential areas of training program and placed 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th ranks respectively.

Table -4: Essential Area of Training Program

Area of Training Program	Number/Percentage
Library automation training	56 (84.8%)
ICT skill development training	52 (78.8%)
Human resource management skills	47 (71.2%)
Management of e-resource/ Internet training	43 (65.1%)
Digital library training	40 (60.6%)
User education training	36 (56.4%)
Research development training	31 (46.9%)
Communication skills training	29 (43.9%)
Reference Sources and Services training	25 (37.8%)
Project management training	21 (31.8%)
Statistic management skills	20 (30.3%)

(Source: Primary Data)

(Respondents are allowed for giving multiple responses)

9.11 Opinion on Additional Training Requirement

Figure-7, shows that 49 (74%) respondents are interested in additional training and 17 (24%) respondents have no interest in additional training.

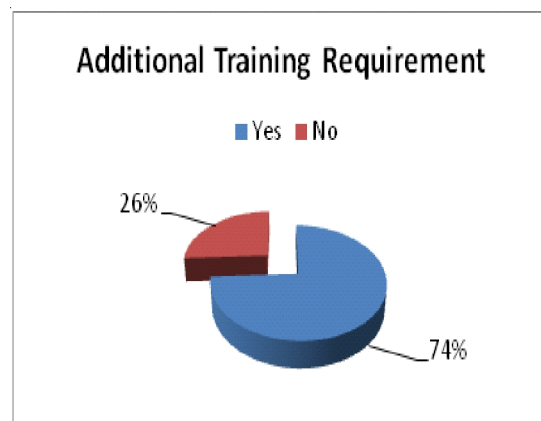


Figure-7: Opinion on Additional Training Requirement by LIS professionals

9.12 Encouragement from Authority for training programmes of LIS professionals

Figure-8, shows that 30 (45%) respondents are encouraged by their authority to participate in training program and only 36 (55%) respondents are not encouraged by their authority to participate in any training program.

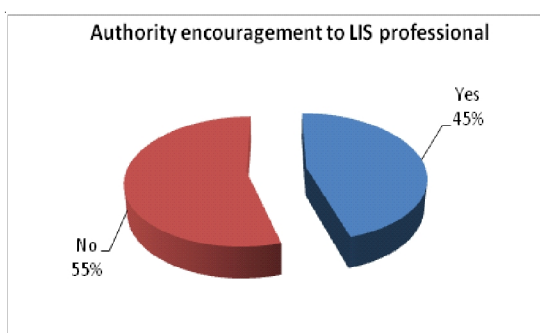


Figure-8: Authority encouragement to LIS professionals

9.13 Barriers to attend Training Program

Barriers to participate in training programs were ranked by the LIS professional, which is shown in Table- 5. According to 40 (60.6%) professionals, lack of training programs at a convenient time is the major problem they face which is followed by 37 (56.0%) professionals, who feel the problem was due to lack of permission from higher authority. Moreover, 36 (54.6%), 32 (48.8%), 30 (45.5%), 28 (42.3%), 19 (28.7%), 15 (22.7%) and 10 (15.2%) LIS professionals felt less number of training programs organized in your locality, lack of funding from the employers, lack of time for attending training, communication backwardness, lack of willingness to attend training program, training is expensive for them and training is not compulsory for promotion respectively. Further, 8 (12.1%) professionals also felt that there were some other barriers to participate in the training program.

Table -5: Essential Area of Training Program

Barriers	
Lack of training programs at a convenient time	40 (60.6%)
Lack of permission from higher authority	37 (56.0%)
Less number of training programs organized in your locality	36 (54.6%)
Lack of funding from the employers	32 (48.8%)
Lack of time for attending training	30 (45.5%)
Communication backwardness	28 (42.3%)
Lack of willingness to attend	19 (28.7%)
Training is expensive	15 (22.7%)
Training is not compulsory for promotion	10 (15.2%)
Others	8 (12.1%)

(Source: Primary Data)

(Respondents are allowed for giving multiple responses)

9.14 Opinion of LIS professionals towards Job Related Issues

To know the views of LIS professionals towards training programme, question was asked and responses received are shown in Table -3. According to 44 (66.5%) LIS professionals, training would help to do job better way, whereas 36 (54.6%) LIS professionals opined advancement of technology has increased the need for ongoing training. Further, 33 (50.0%) LIS professionals feel training was essential for career development and 30 (45.5%) LIS professionals expressed online training is better substitute in present era whereas 27 (40.9%) LIS professionals felt training program offers more individual attention.

Table -3: View of LIS professional towards Job Related Issues

Statements	Always	Very Often	Sometime	Never	No Response
Training would help to do job better way.	44(66.5%)	19(28.2%)	0(0.0%)	1(1.5%)	2(3.1%)
Technology has increased the need for ongoing training	29(43.9%)	36(54.6%)	1(1.5%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
It is essential for career development.	18(23.2%)	33 (50.0%)	7(13.5%)	0(0.0%)	9(13.5%)
Online training is better substitute in present era.	27(40.9%)	30(45.5%)	9(13.5%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
It offers more individual attention.	8(40.9%)	17(40.9%)	27(40.9%)	12(40.9%)	2(3.1%)

(Source: Primary Data)

(Respondents are allowed for giving multiple responses)

10. Suggestions and Recommendations

From the present study it is clear that LIS professionals play an important role for building competence for all staff of the organization. Academic and professional training of librarians/ LIS professionals of the College libraries and university library were recommended as a priority. The followings are few suggestions and recommendations to meet the capacity building for LIS professionals that are based on the present study and suggestions given by the respondents:

- ❖ Training should be provided to LIS professional for developing their skill by attending conferences, workshop, refresher course, etc. to cope up with the capacity to handle latest technology. LIS professional should also be trained with knowledge to build the gap by providing orientation and training.
- ❖ Create awareness among the LIS professionals towards various ICT and digital library usage/ service and traditional practical library;
- ❖ To fulfill the demand from library users, LIS professional should be trained with library automation and ICT skill development training.

- ❖ All kinds of barriers to participate training programs by LIS professional should be removed by taking appropriate steps;
- ❖ LIS professional must also get autonomy to take decision by their own for the betterment of library; and
- ❖ Government should provide adequate fund to LIS professionals to build their skills which will help library to develop its services efficiently and effectively.

11. Conclusion

Capacity building requires a significant and sustained commitment of financial and human resources, which should be provided for educational planning processes. The starting point for capacity development is the acknowledgement that capacity already exists. Assessment and evaluation are therefore important elements for any capacity building programme. Capacity building considerably depends on successful innovation within an existing set up that is operated through practices and services.

Library capacity building constitute restructuring and reorganizing. The government should provide well intentioned to library for librarians/ LIS professional for effective library services in university and colleges. LIS professional and the entire educational system must be optimistic with the full introduction

of ICT and digital library services in university and colleges, the efforts will extend a long way to improve the standard of library especially in all types of libraries in Cachar District, Assam. There is urgent requirement of awareness/ training program among the LIS professional to know the latest ICT environment for the library. The needs to acquire, organize and manage, retrieve and disseminate relevant, reliable and more recent or current information through modern trends in library services cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, all hands have to be on deck to achieve the desired goal of the library.

12. Acknowledgement

The authors are thankful to all the librarians/ LIS professional for returning filled in questionnaire instantly.

References

1. BHATTACHARJEE, Sudip. Library and Information Science Professional in this digital era. Challenges and opportunities in libraries and librarians in knowledge era. pp. 106-110. Pragati: Lucknow, 2014.
2. MAGARA, Elisam. Challenges of Library and Information Science Capacity Building in Southern Sudan: A Situational Analysis. In conference proceedings IST-Africa 2010, IIMC International Information Management Corporation, edited by Paul Cunningham and Miriam Cunningham. 2010. p. 1-12.
3. OGUNSOLA, L.A. Libraries as Tools for Capacity Building in Developing Countries. Available at: <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/> (Accessed on 23/07/2014).

4. PANDA, Bibhu Prasad and SWAIN, Dillip K. and JENA, Kamal Lochan. Capacity Building and Restructuring of Libraries and Information Centers: a Spotlight. In ICSSR National Seminar on Capacity Building for Library Professionals in Digital Environment. 20-21 September 2009. (Unpublished).
5. <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/capacity-define.html> (Accessed on 23/07/2014).
6. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capacitybuilding> (Accessed on 23/07/2014).

About Authors

Mr. Sudip Bhattacharjee, Assam University, Silchar, Assam
E-mail: sudipbest@gmail.com,
sudipbht12@rediff.com

Ms. Sucheta Bhattacharjee, PhD Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Assam University, (A Central University), Silchar
E-mail: sucheta.aus@gmail.com