

Developing Standards for Library Services in Pakistan: A Critique of Professional Efforts

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The literature on the development of standards of library service in Pakistan has not been systematically identified, listed, and reviewed. The purpose of this paper is to identify, as far as possible, the work already done and to have a critical look at the accessible literature. Most of the work previously done is based on individual effort and, in general, lacks methodical and systematic approach. In most cases the proposed quantitative standards seem to be excessive and unrealistic which do not seem to be enforceable considering the budgetary situation in Pakistani libraries. Formulation of standards has become critical now due to the changed information environment, enormous growth in academic and research institutions and information-oriented private sector enterprises with a resulting increase in the number of LIS professionals. It is recommended that the Pakistan Library Association should create a permanent structure to work on this area. While preparing these standards, the work done in developing rather than developed countries should be carefully examined.

Keywords: Standards; Libraries; Library Services; Pakistan.

Introduction

The deliberation about and determination of standards of library service, covering its various aspects, has a long history. As far back as 1894, the New York State University adopted a statement of “Minimum requirements for proper library standard” (Qureshi, 1982) leading in time to the development of standards for various types of libraries by the national and

international professional organizations worldwide. It may be worthwhile to reiterate the definition of ‘standards’ used by the South African Library Association. “Library standards may be defined as the criteria by which . . . library services may be measured and assessed. They are determined by professional librarians in order to attain and maintain the objectives they have set themselves. Standards may be interpreted variously as the pattern of an ideal, a model procedure, a measure for appraisal, a stimulus for future development and improvement and as an instrument to assist decision and action not only by librarians themselves but by laymen concerned indirectly with the institution, planning, and administration of . . . library services” (South African Library Association as quoted by Hirsch, 1972, 159-160). Such standards have been established by the professional organizations, accrediting / affiliating agencies and government authority. Their nature, scope, status (voluntary or mandatory), and enforcement and inspection has varied from situation to situation, profession to profession, and country to country. With time, they have also been transformed from purely quantitative to qualitative measures.

Purpose and Method

Pakistan has a history of these deliberations. However, these efforts have so far appeared in the form of some resolutions adopted by the Pakistan Library Association (PLA), a couple of draft proposals, a few research-based studies, some descriptive writings based on factual data and personal opinions, and a small amount of very simplistic and descriptive literature. This literature has not been systematically identified and listed. There is a need to identify and list the substantive available literature, have a critical look at some of it, and then, based on this work, make some concrete recommendations for future efforts. Our focus will be on the literature related to ‘standards for libraries’, not on standardization.

Several sources consisting of bibliographies, such as Khurshid and Irshad Ali (1965), Irshad Ali (1992), Z. Khurshid (1983), and indexes such as Samdani (1995), and Nasim Fatima et al. (2004), related works, and citations to publications were examined to compile a list of available Pakistani literature on standards for library service. However, one has to be very careful while selecting citations from Pakistani bibliographical sources which contain occasional errors. A glaring example is Azra Qureshi's (1972) master's thesis completed at the University of Karachi. A three author bibliography (Nasim Fatima et al 2004) lists it as the "*Standards for Public Libraries of Pakistan*" (p. 62) whereas the actual title is "*Standard Catalog for Public Libraries of Pakistan*", a purely bibliographical work which has nothing to do with standards. An extensive search of published literature, using a variety of strategies and sources including citations used in the literature, revealed only 53 items. Some writings could have been missed. The full-text of available writings was examined and reviewed as to their contribution.

Formulation of standards is no easy task. It is not something for which the profession should depend on individual efforts some of which can be no more than personal wish lists and blind adaptations of work of some developed countries which may not be appropriate for local conditions. It must be done as a very serious planned work by the national library association through a group of experienced and knowledgeable professionals in consultation with a variety of stake-holders. It is hoped that the present effort will assist those who wish to proceed further in an objective, standardized, and methodical way to formulate standards and those who wish to conduct research in this area.

Review and Discussion of the Available Literature

Library Association Initiatives: Our senior professional leaders seemed to have been aware of their responsibility and tried to take concrete steps soon after organizing themselves by creating PLA in 1956 (Qazi, 1956). Its initial concern was expressed in one of the resolutions, worded in ambiguous language, passed during its first annual conference held in 1958 which read as follows: "8. It was decided to make a survey of the present support of libraries and the funds spent on salaries, books and magazines and then to prescribe a minimum standard" (PLA, 1958). Two years later during its third annual conference held at Dacca, it adopted a more concrete resolution which read as (PLA, 1960):

"20. The following committee is hereby appointed to formulate standard specifications

of libraries in schools and colleges in regard to their book stock, physical conditions, reader accommodation, opening hours and so on in order that the Government and all concerned may base their planning and implementation of library development plan on fully articulated specifications:-

1. Mr. Fazal Elahi, Librarian, Middle East Research Library, 254 Ingle Road, Karachi
2. Mr. Ahmad Husain, Librarian, East Pakistan Central Public Library, Dacca
3. Mr. A. S. Qasimi, Librarian, Peshawar University Library.
4. Mr. K. N. Elahi, Librarian, Punjab Public Library, Lahore
5. Mr. Anis Khurshid, Asstt. Librarian, Karachi University Library.
6. Mr. M. S. Khan, Librarian, Dacca University Library.
7. Mr. A. Razzaque, Librarian, Rajshahi University Library."

The record of the work of this committee could not be found in the available material. One of the reasons was that the old archival record of PLA had unfortunately been lost during the PLA's term of office in Islamabad (Anwar, 2011).

Several resolutions were adopted in the later conferences supporting the earlier ones without reporting what work if any had been done so far. Resolution No. 10 of the 6th annual conference held in 1965 at Lahore reiterated: "The Conference requests the Zonal Councils of the Association to undertake the task of drawing up standards of libraries of different categories, their accommodation, staff, book stock etc. and to send the proposed standards to the Council at the headquarters for consolidation and finalization" (PLA, 1965, p. 276). The 7th conference held in 1968 at Lahore resolved that: "19. This conference reiterates its previous resolutions concerning formulation of standards. The conference recommends that the Pakistan Library Association should set up committees to formulate standards for public, school and college libraries" (PLA, 1968, p. 62).

Some writers, while discussing standards, had mentioned the contribution of the 1968 two-day conference on 'Library Development and Manpower Needs in Pakistan' organized by the Society for the

Promotion and Improvement of Libraries (SPIL) which was published as a special issue of the *Pakistan Library Bulletin* without any formal title (SPIL, 1968-69). It included, along with a few preliminary items, 11 papers some of which suggested the formulation of standards, and a memorandum of recommendations to be submitted to the Commission on Manpower and Education constituted by the Government of Pakistan. The authors of these papers ventured to estimate the needs of professional manpower for various types of libraries for both East and West Pakistan. The following comparison with previous estimates was also provided (p. 138):

“As per Kadri’s estimate for 1966 was 11,126

As per Moid’s estimate for 1966 was 10,000

The actual present estimate for 1968 is 27,261”

We have no idea how the top two figures were worked out and very little idea of the methods used by the authors of various estimates which formed the basis for the third figure. The first two estimates appeared to be unrealistic and inflated. A cursory look at the estimates provided in the papers which became the basis for the 1968 figure gave a strong feeling that these figures were also highly exaggerated. The memorandum ended with “A Humble Note” which said: “The figures of manpower needs in various types of libraries might appear ambitious in the first thought, but if the term “need” is considered in its literal sense, it is applied to the bare and dire requirements. The present manpower need is potential for the promising country. These figures can be phased out through [the] five year plan [period]” (p. 140). The seriousness of the work done on these estimates, or the lack of it, was obvious from the following quotation from the paper estimating the manpower need for public libraries “Each union council should maintain a small sized library which may be supervised by a part time professional or full time sub-professional. As there are 7,577 union councils in both the wings of the country, we shall need [a total of] 7,577 sub-professionals or 947 professionals” (Husain, 1968-69, p. 89). Did these union councils actually have ‘small-sized libraries’ in 1968? It was very doubtful. Then, what was the significance of these imaginary statistics. And the figure of 947 professionals came to one each for eight union councils! Would these individuals be some sort of rowing professionals? How seriously did the Commission on Manpower and Education take these estimates would be an interesting study to learn about their fate and perhaps teach us a lesson to be serious and realistic?

The 8th annual PLA conference, held in 1971 at Karachi, passed another resolution as “5. This Conference requests the Government of Pakistan to issue through the usual channel as an interim measure: (i) a directive to affiliating Universities and Boards of Secondary Education to formulate, in consultation with expert librarians, a set of tentative standards for libraries in affiliated colleges and schools respectively and to insist on such standards at the time of renewal of affiliation, recognition, etc.” (PLA, 1972, p. 437).

SPIL, a citizen’s group, remained very active for many years by holding seminars, preparing reports and making recommendations for the improvement of library services in the country. It published a *Plan for Development of Libraries in Pakistan* (SPIL, 1972), a detailed 121 page document providing a comprehensive discussion on the development of various types of libraries. About one-half of this publication (p. 61-121) presented a discussion on standards for various types of libraries which would be discussed in a later section of this paper.

A step initiated by the Department of Library Science, University of the Punjab, in cooperation with PLA (Punjab branch), and the Punjab College Library Association was taken in 1976 (Anwar, 1978). This resulted in organizing a two-day seminar on the problems of college libraries attended by 52 librarians including 32 (61.5%) from colleges from all over Punjab. Detailed initial preparations, led by the present writer, based on research done at the Department, were made to focus on critical issues faced by college librarians. It identified problem areas and made recommendations which could have become the basis of standards. Under Objectives and Standards, it was observed:

“It is not surprising that one is unable to find any definite plan for the development of college libraries. So much so that no attempt, officially or professionally, has ever been made to at least define the objectives that the library should pursue in college education. Such a role, if defined, could have been strengthened by the formulation of qualitative and quantitative standards of service. The responsibility for the lack of standards squarely lies on the shoulders of professional library circles in Pakistan” (p. 7).

Some of these recommendations did contain quantitative measures but no attempt was made to formulate formal standards. This long, intricate and difficult work which could not have been done in two days by a large group was left for the future. However, a copy of the resume of the seminar was

sent to the Director of Education, Lahore Region, on his request, with a copy to the Director of Public Instruction and the Minister of Education for taking certain actions.

PLA took an important step during 1980-82 as detailed in the Secretary's Report of the 12th annual conference as follows (Malik, 1983a, p. 32):

“19. LIBRARY STANDARDS

The Pakistan Library Association has also set up a technical working group of the librarians for formulation of standards for the University and college libraries. Useful services can only be provided if sufficient staff, stock, finance, building and furniture are provided in the libraries prescribed and recommended in the library standard.

We have also requested the members to help the group by providing useful guidance. We will discuss these drafts in this conference and the recommendations should be sent to all the authorities concerned for necessary action.”

As a result, three papers dealing with standards for university (Khan, 1983), college (Malik, 1983b), and special (Riazuddin, 1983) libraries were prepared and presented during the conference in November 1982 (PLA, 1983). It appeared that PLA, in due course, might have done some work on “these drafts”, developed these into standards, and forwarded those to the government authorities. This fact was acknowledged later in the recommendations of its 1989 workshop including their ultimate fate (PLA, 1989). The three papers mentioned above would be discussed in another section below.

Another interesting initiative was taken by the PLA in 1989 by organizing ‘a two-day workshop’ on standardization of library services at Karachi (PLA, 1989). The published proceedings contained 23 papers and 14 other pieces of writings including two pages of 12 recommendations some of which had very little to do with standards. Most of the papers were descriptive consisting of material gathered from various secondary sources. Some papers did have elements of standards but these seemed to have been worked out by the writers themselves. There was a need to have a critical look at this initiative. This might even reveal some misleading information such as “In 1978 the *Standards for College Libraries* were developed by the Punjab Branch of Pakistan Library Association in cooperation with ...” (Haider, 1989, p. 100). He took the idea from the present author's publication, without citing it (Anwar, 1978) but

nothing like this ever happened before, during or after the seminar.

The 1960 resolution of PLA, reproduced above, adopted about 30 years earlier seemed to have been forgotten by 1989. The 1989 official PLA gathering made a similar recommendation as follows (PLA, 1989, p. 216):

“9. The PLA should appoint a committee/sub-committee for the formulation of standards for all kinds of libraries and information centers and also for library education. The committee/Sub-committee should collect all library standards formulated / suggested by various library associations as well as individuals, and revise those standards and propose admissible and workable standards keeping in view the present situation of libraries and library services in Pakistan.”

Whereas this recommendation acknowledged the un-admissibility and un-workability of previously formulated / suggested standards, it conflicted with another one of its own which read as follows (PLA, 1989, p. 215):

“2. The library standards for various libraries were devised by the Pakistan Library Association and were submitted to the President of Pakistan who had sent these standards to the Director General Libraries, Government of Pakistan. This House urges the Director General of Libraries to kindly explain: i. Fate of the Standards received in his office from the Ministry of Education for comments.”

The Director General Libraries, in his Presidential Address to the concluding session which appeared immediately after these recommendations, mentioned that “Pakistan Library Association in 1983 formulated standards for college libraries but there is no evidence of their implementation anywhere” (Akhtar, 1989, p. 218). Apart from that he did not make any mention of the substance of or the explanation (!) asked for by this meeting about its recommendation.

PLA's efforts for the formulation of standards, beginning with the 1960 resolution, were commented upon in 1989 in by Sadiq Ali Khan. These are reproduced verbatim as follows (Khan, 1989, p. 7-8):

There is no doubt that this [1960] Committee represented the cream of librarianship in Pakistan at that time yet it failed to do anything regarding standardization. Mr. Anis Khurshid became associated with this

Committee as Asstt. Secretary PLA Headquarters, and became its Secretary after the death of Mr. Fazal Elahi, serving from Nov. 30, 1961-62. He got a second opportunity of doing something about standardization when he became the Secretary of the Headquarters in 1970-73.

It is really strange that a person with so much name and fame to the profession could not achieve anything in this regard.

After that many forceful resolutions were moved in PLA Conferences but not a single practical effort was made in this regard until 1982 when two bills [?] relating to standards, one for college library and the other for special library, were moved at the 12th Conference held at Peshawar. These bills [?] were, however, handed over to a Select Committee which was asked to present them before the general house. But they were not presented before the house for discussion. Similar joint efforts had been made earlier in 1976 by the Punjab College Library Association and PLA Headquarter Punjab, Deptt. of Library Science Punjab University relating to College Library Standards. But their fate was the same as they were not presented before the General House.

After a long time the PLA Headquarters took the initiative in reviving this old issue of standards for different types of libraries and decided to hold a two days workshop on the standardization of library services in the country so that all related matters might be openly discussed. The previous efforts in this respect were also to be examined for incorporation. Accordingly the workshop was organized at S. M. Arts and Commerce College Karachi January, 1989.”

Khan made misstatements of fact about the 1976 seminar which made recommendations to formulate standards and the 1982 PLA conference at which three papers, not bills, were presented. More work on them was to be done later on by a technical working group. This showed a lack of seriousness among professional circles resulting in harsh personal attack on Anis Khurshid. Only two years later during the 14th conference of PLA held in 1991 at Karachi, it must have been extremely awkward for Secretary General Sadiq Ali Khan when the house resolved (PLA, 1993, p. 347):

“E. LIBRARY STANDARDS

This conference notes that library standards for various types of libraries are non-existent, and if any, they are not adequate and self explanatory. This conference resolves that library committees be appointed by PLA to prepare various library standards.”

Thus Sadiq Ali Khan happily took us back to 1960. It was true that PLA’s work in this area had lacked seriousness and an objective and methodical approach. Realizing this and some similar situations, one concerned writer had expressed his frustration much earlier by saying that “Pakistan Library Association has served well as the platform for adopting resolutions” (Anwar, 1968b, p. 76) which statement was severely criticized.

Efforts for Formulating Standards: Apart from the initiatives reviewed above and the suggestions made by several individuals, some initial work had been done during the past five decades. Unfortunately, there had been a lack of coordination and recognition of some good work done by others. Some work seemed to have been done by the students of the Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab (Nawaz, 1968). The nature of this work had to be checked and identified. The following pages would review the known work, in a chronological order due to its historical nature, depending upon the information available to the present writer. The doctoral dissertation of Anis Khurshid (1969) would not be included because it dealt with library science education only. The following table presents the details of efforts made for developing library standards.

Table, Chronological List of Efforts for Developing Library Standards

<i>Year</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Type of Library</i>
1967	Shaikh Muhammad Hanif	MALS Thesis	College Libraries
1968	Mumtaz Ali Anwar	Paper	School Libraries
1972	S. P. I. L.	Booklet	All Types
1979	Iftikharuddin Khawaja	Ed. D. Dissertation	School Libraries
1982	Sain Muhammad Malik	Paper	Medical Libraries
1982	Naimuddin Qureshi	Ph. D. Dissertation	University Libraries

1983	Sain Muhammad Malik	Paper	College Libraries
1983	Syed Riazuddin	Paper	Special Libraries
1988	Iftikharuddin Khawaja	Paper	School Libraries
1989	Sain Muhammad Malik	Paper	Medical College
1989	Syed Riazuddin	Paper	Special Libraries
1989	Nasim Fatima	Booklet/ Paper	Children's Libraries
2008	Khurshid Akhtar Ansari	Ph.D. Research*	Public Libraries

The revised thesis was never finally approved.

The earliest recorded work was a master's thesis by Muhammad Hanif (1967) submitted at the University of Karachi. No details of this thesis which dealt with the standards for college libraries were available. It would be interesting to know the procedures that were used, the details of the data, and the validation process for the proposed standards if used at all.

Anwar (1968a) published standards for school libraries for the first time. This project was started in September 1966 in consultation with a librarian and a faculty member from the Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of the Punjab. Some of the data were shared with Rahim Khan (1968) which was presented in a paper at the SPIL seminar at Islamabad in 1967. The data were collected from 21 out of 23 pilot secondary schools in West Pakistan and used for developing standards in consultation with two IER coordinators. As a result, "minimum quantitative standards" were developed for "an average school with a student population of 250 ... as a sample for the development of standard facilities. Schools with smaller or larger membership may adopt the proposed standards incorporating proportionate changes" (p. 10-11). The proposed standards dealt with: a basic collection, staff, book budget, and space for collection and readers. These standards were very realistic considering the local conditions and could have been implemented if professional organizational support were used. Two versions of this paper were also published in other journals (Anwar, 1970, 1971). Unfortunately, this work was rarely cited by later writers.

SPIL's (1972) *Plan for Development of Libraries in Pakistan* provided a detailed discussion on the development of various types of libraries. The latter half of the document (p. 61-121) presented a

discussion on various elements of standards for these libraries. The six elements covered were: Objectives; Finance; Personnel; Collection; Building, Furniture and Equipment; and Technical Services. Each element of the standard, including quantitative proposals, was presented separately covering all libraries. How the quantitative proposals, which on the face of it seemed excessive, were worked out was not explained. The possibility of acceptance of these standards by the government authorities was very little. This was apparent from just one example. Under personnel for school libraries, it was proposed that "librarians in schools should be professionally qualified and provided faculty status [?] in regard to pay, status and cadre" and a primary school of 200 to 400 students should have a library staff of "(a) one librarian ... Matric with Certificate in Library Science (b) Part-time clerk [and] Part-time janitor" (p. 84). This work, like some other initial attempts, should have been used as raw material, with some care, for formulating standards by competent authorities.

A comprehensive research-based work done on the formulation of standards for school libraries was contributed by Iftikharuddin Khawaja for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Virginia (Khawaja, 1979). He developed a tentative list of standards using the published literature and previous work. That initial list was used to develop a final list which was validated by a group of Pakistani experts, most probably from education. The final list of standards was grouped into eleven categories. The categories proposed by Khawaja were similar to those formulated by the international professional associations. This dissertation could not be found in spite of efforts by the present writer. Parts of its abstract had been published by Usmani (1987). Khawaja (1988) also published a paper on the qualitative standards for school library budget. This paper seemed to be a reflection of his dissertation. His work was very methodical and should have been used for further development.

Sain Mohammad Malik prepared a report, containing standards for medical libraries, for a short 3-month course he attended at Loughborough University in 1982 (Malik, 1982). Although this short report was published by the PLA, it had nothing to do with its contents. The proposed standards covered six areas: i) Service; ii) Financial; iii) Personnel; iv) Material; v) Building; and vi) Equipment. He did mention standards from other countries while proposing those for Pakistan.

Naim Qureshi (1982) continued this activity and conducted research to formulate standards for university libraries in Pakistan as a part of doctoral

degree at the University of Pittsburgh. He examined the standards of several countries which he found to be too high, collected data from Pakistani universities using two pre-tested questionnaires sent to 14 universities. Using the data from 12 libraries, he developed a set of standards suitable for the Pakistani situation. Qureshi developed standards in eight areas as follows: 1. Objectives of the Library; 2. Administration; 3. Finance; 4. Personnel; 5. Collections; 6. Organization of Materials; 7. Facilities; and 8. Services. Each area had a descriptive part and a specific set of standards. For example under Standard 5: Collections, he proposed “5.6 The growth of the library collection shall be five per cent per year” (p. 132).

His proposed standards, which had both qualitative and quantitative features, seemed to be reasonable. An interesting feature was his comparison of the existing collections of participating libraries with his proposed standard. It was surprising to find that 10 of the 12 libraries fell short of his proposal (Table 29, p. 144). One of his recommendations was “The Pakistan Library Association (PLA) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) should study the proposed standards for university libraries in Pakistan. The[se] standards should be approved with certain modifications if needed” (p. 145). The results of this research should have been examined by the concerned quarters and researchers and used for further work. For this, he recommended that: “This study should be replicated in Pakistan after five years” (p. 147). On the contrary, although this dissertation was known, it was only noted in passing by Sabzwari (1985) and Usmani (1987) rather than using it as a benchmark for more refined work.

The proceedings of the 1982 PLA conference included three papers on standards (PLA, 1983). These papers dealt with standards for university (Khan, 1983), college (Malik, 1983b), and special (Riazuddin, 1983) libraries. Najaf Ali Khan (1983) provided an extensive review of standards for university libraries from several countries and appreciated the formation of a committee by PLA to formulate standards. However, he refrained from suggesting any standards himself. Instead, he said that “There is no desire to prescribe a normative prescription for uniform application to all libraries in Pakistan. The main objective of the paper is to invoke interest and to impress upon the authorities in Pakistan to formulate standards for university and college libraries of Pakistan” (p. 66). The paper by Malik (1983b) dealt with standards for college libraries. It presented a descriptive text and some quantitative standards under the following elements: 1. Aims and Objectives of College Libraries; 2. Stock;

3. Services; 4. Staff; 5. User education; 6 Budget; 7. Equipment; and 8. Building. Malik did not mention the procedure adopted by him in developing the proposed standards. However, he provided a list of 10 members of the Technical Working Group previously established by PLA to formulate standards for college libraries (p. 106). Riazuddin (1983) while presenting standards for special libraries made an initial statement in the paper which was confusing. He mentioned that the 12th annual PLA conference “appointed Syed Riazuddin ... to submit a draft of standards for special libraries. In pursuance of P.L.A. deliberations, P.L.A. Sind/Council Branch appointed a sub-committee at Karachi ... to draft the standards” (p. 127). He then listed the names of eight members of the sub-committee including his own. If the later part of the statement was true, how did he present the draft of standards in the 12th conference? He mentioned the difficult work of developing the presented standards. The elements mentioned covered: Aims and Objectives; Administration; Users; Library Materials; Services; Budget; and Physical Resources. It was not clear if this paper was written after the conference and then published as a part of its proceedings.

Three years after Naim Qureshi’s methodical and serious work which should have been meticulously examined, critiqued, and used as a foundation for further work, Sabzwari (1985) published a fresh proposal for university library standards only mentioning Qureshi’s dissertation without giving any detail. The information used by Sabzwari for developing his proposal was derived from papers written by the “University librarians ... published in the PLB” and ... “fact and figures” (p. 6) collected through a questionnaire. Eleven such papers were published in 1982 (*PLB*, 1982). He also used information from literature on standards from other countries giving 11 citations to Withers (1974), an interesting work but quite dated. Sabzwari’s formula for book collections and journal subscriptions (p. 32-33) compared with Qureshi’s (p. 133-134) would show the rationality reflected in both. It was interesting that the size of the collection of the Punjab University Library was given by Qureshi (1982, p. 144) as 700,000 volumes whereas Sabzwari (1985, p. 23) mentioned 255,000. It is reasonable to say that one needed to be very careful before using standards developed by individuals.

Most of the 23 papers of the 1989 two-day PLA workshop on standardization (PLA, 1989) were of general nature. However, two papers were worth mentioning. Malik (1989) dealt with the standards for a medical college library containing quantitative elements. Some of these were similar to what he proposed earlier in a report (Malik, 1982). Riazuddin

(1989) proposed quantitative standards for special (he uses the word 'research' in the title and 'special' in the text) libraries covering essential areas. The information given had a similar pattern presented in his earlier paper (Riazuddin, 1983).

Nasim Fatima (1989) conducted an extensive survey of 43 children's libraries from nine cities using a 13 page questionnaire consisting of 70 questions (the methodology section mentions 66, p.5) some of which were very detailed. This was a very comprehensive survey providing important information for these 43 libraries. The text of this descriptive survey was labeled as '*Children Library Resources and Services in Pakistan*' whereas the booklet was titled as "*Standard of Children Libraries in Pakistan*". It might be noted that nothing in the three objectives (p. 3), details given in the methodology, and the 70 items in the questionnaire was related to standards. She reviewed 23 items in the previous literature published from 1956 to 1988 but ignored some important studies, e.g., Anwar (1968a) and Khawaja (1979). At the end of the descriptive report which had very little interpretation, there was a long list of "Standards", spread over about six pages, which appeared to be more like suggestions. The researcher mentioned that these "standards are recommended for an average Children Library in Pakistan" (p. 28) without defining an average library. Some of these recommendations were unrealistic. For example, the section on staff suggested its strength as: A Children Librarian, M. A. (LIS), in Grade-17; A Deputy Children Librarian, M.A. (LIS) in Grade-17, 1 to 4 Assistant Children Librarians with Diploma in LIS in grade-16, and some other staff (p. 30-31). The figures given under 'Finance' (p. 33) were similar in nature. These suggestions were too excessive for an average children's library in Pakistan. Some other suggestions were interesting, e. g., under 'Readers' Services', it suggested that "Two books for 15 days and 1 journal for 1 week can be issued" (p. 32). Would journals in a children's library circulate? These proposals, whatever their nature and worth, should be of some use in future.

It is very unfortunate to end this section with a sad note. Khurshid Akhtar Ansari (2008), a faculty member at the University of Baluchistan, had been working on his doctoral thesis for developing standards for public libraries in Pakistan. His thesis was sent for evaluation. There were some problems in the thesis according to the evaluation report of the external examiner (whose name the author is not allowed to mention). The thesis was revised by Ansari by removing the weaknesses. By the time the new evaluation report reached the university, Ansari was unfortunately killed. It was recommended that he

should be given the degree posthumously. Nothing was done. The author have tried, without success, to contact his son to suggest that his thesis at least be published so that his work is made available to and acknowledged by future researchers.

The literature that has been discussed and reviewed above was accessible to the author at the time of writing this paper.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The critique above shows that not much work on library standards had been done during the past 50 years in spite of an enormous increase in the number of libraries in the public and private sector academic and research institutions and corresponding increase in LIS professionals. This might be due to the deteriorating situation of the library profession resulting in low quality work being done by the professional forums and relevant government departments.

Most of the available literature on standards of library service in Pakistan consisted of recommendations made by individuals, resolutions passed by some professional organizations, appointment of committees to develop standards, and some worked out standards for various libraries. All of these were based on individual efforts which mostly, excepting a few, lacked methodical and scientific approach. Some of these were exaggerated wish lists. However, some basic spadework had been done which could become the beginning point for a serious effort. The approach to formulating standards should be changed to being less quantitative to more qualitative establishing a baseline with incremental goals and objectives which should be achievable and measurable. It might be worthwhile to review the work done in some Asian countries (e.g., Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, etc.). There is also a need to keep in mind certain emerging trends which could directly or indirectly influence library standards.

During the past ten years, the mushrooming of educational institutions country-wide, especially in higher education, had created a fluid situation. Even the minimum criteria for university libraries prescribed by the Higher Education Commission were ridiculously low. The resulting situation has adversely affecting the quality of education. There is an urgent need to take this issue seriously. The main responsibility lied with the Pakistan Library Association. It should create a permanent structure within itself, such as a section, department, or division, consisting of a small number of knowledgeable senior professionals to take up the work of developing standards of service for various

types of libraries. It would be better if sub-groups for each type of library were established within the overall structure. Such standards, once developed, should be reviewed and updated on a periodic basis. Along with this structure, a permanent mechanism needs to be established that should struggle for the acceptance of the proposed standards by the various concerned authorities, their enforcement, and a system of regular inspection and reporting to make sure that the standards were actually implemented. This suggestion is a very hard and difficult dose which can only be possible through a strong professional missionary spirit, profession-centred effort, realistic approach considering the national resources, and a long-term commitment that had been generally lacking so far.

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