

**ROLE OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT
OF LIBRARIANSHIP IN PAKISTAN**



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Role of Library Associations for Development of Librarianship in Pakistan

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2026

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Nouman Rafiq Awan

DEDICATION

“This study is dedicated to my beloved Parents”

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Nouman Rafiq Awan

ABSTRACT

Library associations serve as professional bodies that play a crucial role in the advancement of librarianship across the world. In Pakistan, associations have historically contributed to professional networking, training, advocacy, and the promotion of standards within the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession. The current study has been conducted to examine the actual role, and effectiveness of library associations in the contemporary professional environment. It particularly investigates the role of library associations in the development of librarianship in Pakistan by exploring their historical evolution, organizational structures, functional responsibilities, and professional contributions.

The current research adopted a multi-method qualitative approach by collecting data through secondary sources such as association constitutions, reports, policy documents, academic literature, and official publications. To enhance contextual understanding, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with selected office bearers and active members of national and provincial library associations. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, issues, and professional concerns.

The findings indicate that library associations in Pakistan have made meaningful contributions in areas such as professional training, continuing professional development (CPD), conferences, research promotion, and networking opportunities. Associations such as the Pakistan Library Association (PLA), Punjab College Library Association (PCLA), and Pakistan Library Automation Group (PAKLAG) have played notable roles in advocating automation, professional collaboration, and capacity building. PCLA has played a key role for service structure of college librarians. Their service structure is at

par with college faculty. However, the study also reveals significant challenges, including inadequate funding, weak governance structures, limited regional outreach, lack of formal accreditation systems, and insufficient engagement in sustained policy advocacy. Rural and underrepresented regions remain largely excluded from professional activities, further widening disparities within the profession.

The study concludes that while library associations remain central to the professional identity and development of librarianship in Pakistan, their effectiveness depends on institutional strengthening. Key recommendations include improving governance through transparent elections, diversifying financial resources, enhancing digital transformation initiatives, and strengthening collaboration with different organizations. The study provides valuable insights for policymakers, association leaders, and LIS professionals seeking to enhance the future role of library associations in Pakistan.

Keywords: Library Associations; Librarianship; Professional Development; Pakistan; Policy Advocacy; Challenges; Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
ALA	American Library Association
ALIA	Australian Library and Information Association
CILIP	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
HEC	Higher Education Commission
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
Koha	Open Source Integrated Library Management System
LIS	Library and Information Science
LIMS	Library Information Management System
PAKLAG	Pakistan Library Automation Group
PBWG	Pakistan Bibliographical Working Group
PLA	Pakistan Library Association
PLF	Punjab Library Foundation
PCLA	Punjab College Library Association
PMLA	Punjab Medical Library Association
PULO	Punjab University Librarians Organization

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Libraries have been known to be essential institutions of dispensing knowledge, research and scholarly excellence. The evolution of library profession is directly related to the work of library associations, which are instrumental in determining policy, promoting professional rights, and offering training to librarians (Islam et al., 2024). The library associations of the world perform a significant part in standardization of library practice as well as influencing library education and research. The role of such associations in Pakistan has a changing character, being associated with the general change in the fields of education, technology, and information management.

The Pakistani library associations are the representatives of librarians and faculty who operate at national, provincial, and international levels. Such associations have the mandate of advocating policies, professional training organization, research, and ensuring that the profession keeps abreast with changes in technology (Balassiano, 2010). The Pakistan Library Association (PLA) and Punjab College Library Association (PCLA) are some of the major library associations in Pakistan. Such organizations have helped in the professional development of the librarians by organizing conferences, research journals and offer a platform of professional networking (Welsh, 2020).

Recent years have seen the world move towards digital transformation and the creation of knowledge-based economies, driving an increased desire towards dynamic

and responsive library systems. Here, the library associations in Pakistan are being identified to be increasingly perceived as the agents of innovation and change in the profession (IFLA & McKee, 2017). Such associations are not just promoting professional growth by way of workshops, seminars and certifications. Nevertheless, they are also starting to contribute to bridging digital divide by facilitating digital literacy campaigns among the staff of the libraries.

The library associations help librarians to adjust to the new trends in the information world, including the open-access publishing, data curation, and information ethics. The role of library associations has become crucial as the information environment is becoming more and more complex (Khan & Bhatti, 2016). Their changing nature in terms of capacity building, polity and collaboration with other nations is an indicator of a new era in the development of librarianship in Pakistan and this needs a deeper and more academic study of their role and potential in future.

The establishment of library associations in Pakistan has lagged behind those of the developed countries even though they are there. Lack of professional recognition, development of insufficient funding, and no state assistance are all problems that make their functioning more difficult. Weak governance structures, old policies, inadequate resources to implement massive training and advocacy programs are some of the problems associated with many library associations (Malik & Mahmood, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to critically examine the development, success, and issues of the library associations in Pakistan in order to assess their effect on the profession and find the ways to improve it.

1.2 Study Objectives

This study aims to:

- 1- To investigate the current status of library associations in Pakistan.
- 2- To explore the role of associations for improvement of libraries and librarians in Pakistan.
- 3- To identify the major issues faced by the library associations.
- 4- To suggest measures for making library associations to be more effective in the future.

1.3 Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study will address the following research questions:

1. What is the status of library associations in Pakistan?
2. What is role of library associations for the development of librarianship in Pakistan?
3. What kinds of challenges do library associations experience,
4. What measures can be taken to address these challenges for their effectiveness in the future?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is of significant value to different stakeholders, including librarians, policymakers, and information sciences researchers. This study will examine how Pakistani library associations have played a key role in contributing to professional development. The empirical evidence generated by the study will be most useful for policy makers and strategic planners in the field. This study will also

explore what is wrong with the existing structure of library associations and recommend remedies for the better representation of the profession.

Additionally, it will stimulate further research in the field of library sciences, especially in the areas of policy formulation, training, and research funded. Finally, it will provide the basis of reference from which international professional associations interested in collaborating with Pakistani organizations can establish their proper relationships with regard to the training and growth of librarianship in Pakistan (Saleem & Ashiq, 2020).

1.5 Statement of Problem

The library associations are organization bodies that represent the library and information profession to promote their interests by advocating their concerns through advocacy, standards and building capacity and connecting with their peers. They do it in the framework of the organizational identity, the stakeholder theory, and the professionalization theory that contribute to the elucidation of the formation of the status and association among the members of associations through the help of associations.

Library associations in Pakistan are working for the betterment of librarianship in Pakistan. The, whether they are even legally in existence, or what the heck is going on behind curtains. I mean, who is running the show? Is anybody keeping track? (Spoiler: not much.). Less research is conducted about the role of Pakistani library association, their effect on policies, research and training programs. It seems necessary to find the work these associations are doing to help librarianship to become a dignified profession in Pakistan. That is exactly what forces this study to

investigate into how these associations have evolved, and what they have accomplished.

1.6 Delimitations and Limitation

The study focuses exclusively on library associations in Pakistan and does not include informal groups.

The research is limited to analyzing aspects such as structure, registration, constitution, major areas of work, and professional contributions.

The study does not examine the role of individual librarians and focused only on the role of library associations for the growth of librarianship in Pakistan.

1.7 Definition of terms

1.7.1 Library Association

The library association is a collection of people who have come together for a shared goal. In order to effectively serve its members, the profession appears to need to be well-organized (Dawra, 2003). The library association is taken into account while evaluating and accrediting of library employees, the gathering and sharing of general library knowledge, and the establishment and spread of general librarianship principles (Kawatra, 1992). A professional association (also known as professional bodies or societies) is group of professionals attached to a profession supposed to enhance and develop or protect interests of organization and individuals engaged in professional activities. These bodies are typically non-profit groups working under registration acts of countries etc. (Holmes, 2019).

1.7.2 Library Organization

The methodical setup and administration of the library's assets, personnel, and services to guarantee effective operation and simple access to information is known as library organization. It addresses how a library is set up to serve its patrons.

1.7.3 Librarianship

The field that deals with the administration, distribution, and organization of knowledge and information resources in academic, public, special, and school libraries, among others.

1.7.4 Library Group

A network or association of two or more libraries that work together to exchange resources, services, and knowledge is called a library group.

1.7.5 Professional Development

Ongoing instruction, training, and skill-building activities that librarians engage in to improve their performance, knowledge, and abilities in the field.

1.7.6 Library and Information Science

Library and Information Science, or LIS, is a professional and academic field that studies the gathering, organizing, storing, accessing, and sharing of information.

1.8 Proposed Chapters

Chapter No. 1 describes the introduction of the study, Objectives, Research Questions, Significance, and Problem statement.

Chapter No. 2 provides details of Literature related to the role of library associations across the globe.

Chapter No. 3 explains Research Methodology, Research Design, Population, Data collection, data collection procedure, Data analysis, validity and reliability.

Chapter No. 4 provides details of Data analysis, and Data interpretation,

Chapter No. 5 provides Summary of the results, Finding, Discussions, Conclusion, Recommendation, and Future Research.

CHAPTER - 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the literature pertaining to the roles and functions of Library Associations, both in developed and developing countries. It deals in detail with the problems of Library Associations throughout the world, outlining the issues and perspectives arising in different national situations.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine existing research and theoretical perspectives on library associations, both globally and within Pakistan. It gives background to the development, governance, membership patterns as well as professional roles of associations as well as coming up with the knowledge gaps that the research project is aimed at filling.

2.1 Purpose of Library Association

Professionals support through opportunities for sharing professional ideas and experiences, library associations often contribute to the advancement and promotion of the library profession. These associations focus on professional issues and keep them informed about current developments in the field. It encourages the professional to go after their rights (Abram, 2006).

Library associations foster communication among their members, offer several avenues for professionals to advance, and support the industry and its users (Mahmood, Hameed, & Haider, 2006). Within the country, there is a vast array of associations and groups formed by professionals working in the Library and Information Science (LIS) sector. Some of these groups operate in formal institutional environments, for instance, college librarians' associations, while others primarily

utilize digital and social media outlets to disseminate information, professional news, and industry news.

2.2 Role played by Library Associations

In discussing the post-apartheid role of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), Raju (2015) has been interested in inclusivity and equitable access to information. The study claimed that advocacy and training initiatives enabled LIASA to bring disjointed communities on one professional platform that enhanced the social awareness of librarianship. The case is an illustration of how library associations could be helpful in outreach and equity, particularly in the context of diverse provinces in Pakistan.

Rubin (2016) has analyzed one of the largest and most ancient professional libraries associations, the American Library Association (ALA). The paper has focused on the role of ALA in accreditation, professional ethics and librarian and library advocacy. Rubin continued by explaining that ALA facilitated the professionalization through education standards and a stimulus of professional development that can be used as the guide that can be applied to Pakistani library associations.

Ocholla and Bothma (2017) analyzed the issues of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) that facilitates open access, professional ethics, and international cooperation. They found that national library associations benefit in setting their goals with the IFLA strategic agenda, particularly in matters of global equity of knowledge and digital transformation. In the case of Pakistani library associations, such alignment can enhance the professional visibility and international collaboration.

Hall (2017) discussed the development of the UK Library Association into the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). According to the study, the competency-based accreditation system of CILIP enhanced the skills of the librarians and helped them to gain a career. Libraries could remain relevant in the present-day information landscape by focusing on digital literacy.

Partridge and Yates (2018) studied the advocacy strategies of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Their study revealed that evidence-based advocacy and strong connection to the government and higher education institutions enhanced the power of ALIA in the development of national policies. The findings suggest that through systematic advocacy and impact measure, the government and public perception of the library profession is improved.

2.3 Governance and organizational structures of library associations

Good governance is a determinant of the sustainability, credibility and authenticity of library associations. Ocholla (2018) concludes that libraries which have better governance and clear structures will be better placed to be sustainable and it will also enhance the impact of library profession.

Ahmed and Sultana (2020) identified the Indian Library Association and the Bangladesh Library Association as the sources of respective governance structures in their study. The context of the role and role of such library associations was examined and it was found that the two associations employ a blend type of governance, which equalizes the leadership of volunteers with accountabilities and effectiveness.

Later, the role of democratic governance, decision-making, and strategic planning played a significant part as observed by IFLA (2021), which argued that this

helps library associations gain recognition and strengthen their partnerships with international bodies. It was shown through the report of the IFLA on the matter that well-managed associations are well equipped to handle such challenges.

2.4 Professional Development and Member Engagement

Modern library associations have contributed to continuous professional development. Koontz and Gubbin (2019) established that those library associations which had a structured approach towards the training and certification sought by their members increased the professional credibility of their members.

Tella (2020) further established that online or digital learning was essential in retaining the younger professionals and renewing leadership.

An empirical study across Africa by Abdullahi and Haruna (2021) noticed that engaging in CPD had a measurable positive correlation with member satisfaction and retention.

2.5 Role of Library associations in Pakistan

There exist various library associations in Pakistan, which over the years have significantly contributed in their own ways to the development of librarians in the country (Mahmood, Hameed, & Haider, 2006). Despite these improvements, the weakness in finances has remained a concern.

Khan and Bhatti (2008) highlighted that most of the library associations in Pakistan are financially weak, and thus their abilities to conduct conferences, training workshops, and publication of research papers are hampered.

The necessity of the evolution of the library organization to keep abreast of technology and information systems was strongly emphasized by Mahmood (2010) and Naseer & Mahmood (2010). The need to adapt new technology to meet the challenges of rapid developments in information technology is further reiterated by the views of the researcher, as put forth by Mahmood (2011).

Rafique and Anwar (2012) have also discussed financial constraints as one of the limitations which have restricted the capability of the association in arranging professional work and publication. During recent years, the library environment has changed greatly, which again emphasizes the role of library associations in professional development. The current scenario is such where rapid changes have made continuous education compulsory. This is asserted by Ullah (2014) and supported by Jan and Khan (2014).

Gwyer (2015) has observed that collaboration among library professionals is required for maximizing benefits from associations. The level of collaboration among other organizations in Pakistan is low, and this has resulted in disunity within this sector. Farooq et al. (2016) have put forth their impression that it is necessary to have a comprehensive policy for enhancing professionalism and thereby expanding the boundaries of librarianship.

According to the observations of Madge (2016), the development policy of the national library of Pakistan is not fully matured and is lacking overall strategies for the management of research data as well as digitalization. The matter of economic sustainability is also being faced by the library associations.

Madge and Robu in (2019) clearly outlined that strategic partnerships play a pivotal role in improving their influence and performance, but lack of international

interaction makes impossible the implementation of global best practices. In the future, Ibrahim in (2020) forecasted that open-access ventures will assume prominent places within library associations, but open-access ventures have not yet gained prominence in Pakistan.

According to Rehman and Fatima (2021), digital literacy and data management are some emerging needs, but most associations have not yet formed a comprehensive plan for digital training and research. This unequal distribution and inadequate outreach by the national associations make it a reality that most librarians would look to the provincial and institutional organizations for assistance. Despite these and other issues, the PLA is a significant influence in the development of the professional identity and standards for ethics, education, policy, and development (Shah, 2021). The Punjab College Library Association (PCLA) is a critical voice for the college librarians, offering a professional platform for training, library automation, and a forum for cooperation and development (Tijjani, 2021).

Khan et al. (2023) confirmed the effectiveness of mentorship and capacity development programs conducted by library associations for early-career librarians and emphasized how these programs are crucial for enhancing professional confidence to bring improvement in retention among library personnel. In the year 2024, innovation, digital transformation, and an urge for more wide-ranging policy advocacy continue to shape the role of library associations in Pakistan; nonetheless, comprehensive research regarding internal governance, participation, and the developmental impact remains urgently needed.

2.6 Research Gap

The literature available mostly concentrates on descriptive accounts of library associations' establishment, leadership, and general operations, despite the fact that numerous studies have examined the history and structure of library associations in Pakistan (Mahmood, 2003). The true effects of these associations on librarians' professional growth, policy advocacy, continuing education, and the growth of librarianship as a recognized profession in the nation have not been thoroughly examined empirically (Anwar, 2000).

There is a significant deficiency in studies investigating how library associations in Pakistan tackle contemporary issues such as technology integration, digital transformation, and global cooperation. Input from provincial and specialized library associations is frequently overlooked in academic dialogues, leading to an insufficient grasp of the wider library advocacy context in the nation.

The lack of recent, data-focused research examining the successes, obstacles, and prospective opportunities encountered by these organizations highlights the need for renewed studies in this area. This research aims to fill these gaps by offering an in-depth evaluation of the achievements, strategic objectives, and operational roles of library associations in influencing the future of librarianship in Pakistan.

CHAPTER - 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological paradigm of the study to examine the terrain of the library associations in Pakistan, their development, and functions, as well as the challenges they face. A desire to understand the way these relationships have contributed to librarianship becoming professionalized to match with the new technological changes and how these organizations have change over time inspires the study. The diversity of associations, both nationally and locally, required a broad and comprehensive approach because of the dispersion.

3.1 Philosophical Paradigm

The study is based on the interpretivist paradigm that acknowledges the reality to be a social construction and conditional on the context. Interpretivism challenges the positivist concept of objective facts and assumes instead to comprehend the sense of meaning people and institutions place upon their interaction. This stance is suitable to the research objective which is to understand how library associations are framing and practicing their professional roles as reflected in both institutional documents and professional narratives obtained through interviews. The view of constructivist epistemology and the acceptance of knowledge creation through the interaction of current literature, interview data, and institutional discourse supports the interpretivist perspective. The library associations are social institutions which are administrative organizations in cultural, technological and policy contexts. They can thus only be described in an interpretive manner taking into account historical development, professional identity forming and situational forces. This philosophical perspective justifies the qualitative documentary design within a multi-qualitative framework

because it puts the meaning, context, and interpretation higher than the numerical generalization. The paradigm also supports the use of reflexivity which enables the researcher to view documents and interview texts not as a static text but as an expression of budding professional consciousness.

3.2 Research Design

The research design used for the current study is the multi-method qualitative which is the most appropriate because researchers need to investigate different aspects of the problem. Two parallel phases were used to achieve objectives of the study. Both the documentary and archival records as well as primary qualitative interview were used. This design enables one to take a closer look into the textual information and experiential accounts so that subtle conclusions about patterns, meanings, and organizational functions can be produced.

A descriptive approach was used in the first phase and exploratory approach was applied in the second phase. Descriptive research is a way of documenting the phenomena as they are, whereas exploratory research provides an opportunity to conduct research, which has not yet been documented. Research design and methods is given in the figure 1.

Research Design and Method

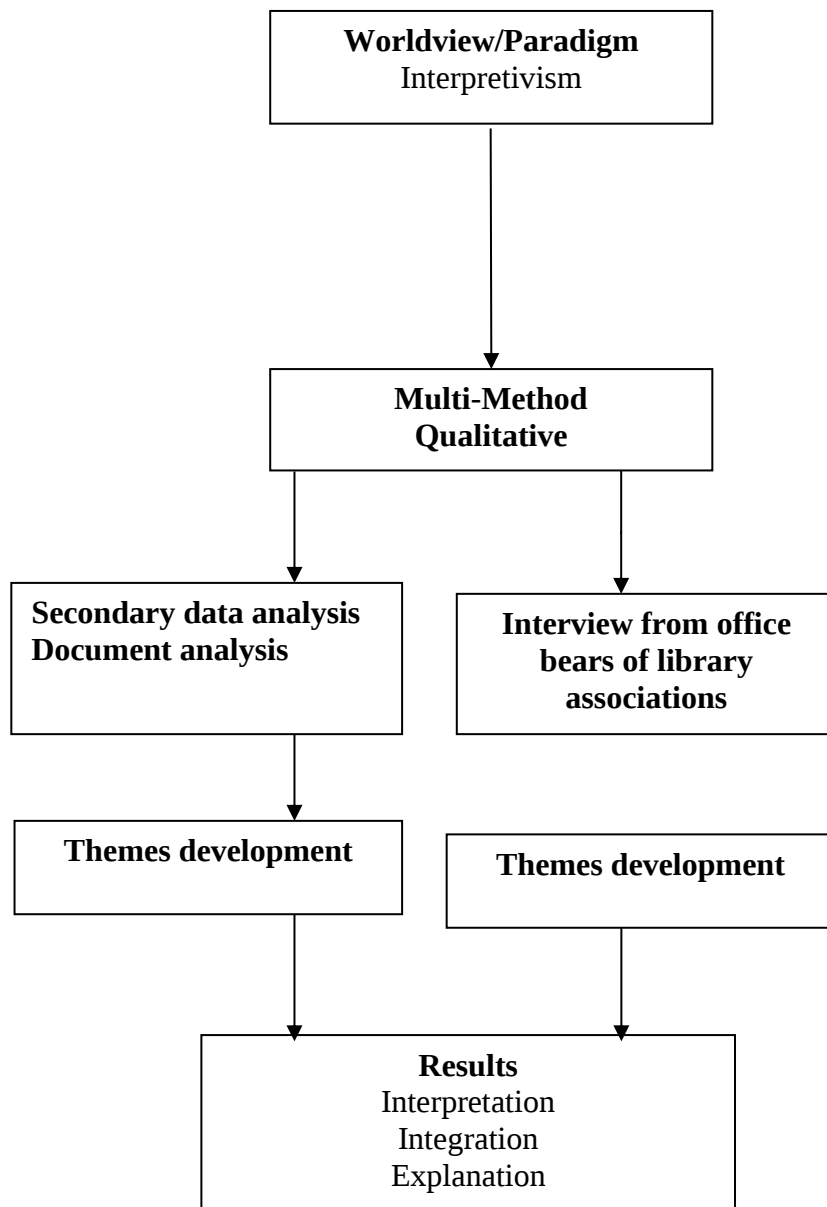


Figure 3.1. Research design and methods

3.3 Research Methods

This research explores the role of library associations in Pakistan and their formation through qualitative research methods. The first phase is a systematic analysis of secondary documents. In the second phase interviews were conducted to ensure the richness of the context and rigor of the analysis. Secondary analysis involves the identification of published material on library associations in Pakistan. This combination of two qualitative methods makes it possible to have a comprehensive understanding of institutional development, professional practices, and policy advocacy across time.

3.3.1 First phase: Secondary Data analysis

The current study used secondary data which is information that has been previously collected and documented by previous researchers, organizations or institutions due to reasons that have nothing to do with the research at hand. Secondary data are necessary in studies that demand large institutional backgrounds or extensive organizational aspects. They provide scope and historical consistency because they allow the researcher to incorporate different perspectives in different times and different places. The data sources which will be used in this research are varied and include:

- Academic Literature: Journal articles, doctoral dissertations, conference papers, and books written on the development, purpose, and issues of library associations in Pakistan and other similar nations.
- Formal records: constitutions, reports, and proceedings of meetings of such associations like PLA, PCLA, PakLAG, PBWG, and PLF. They were obtained on official websites, annual reports, and electronic archives.

- Government and Policy Documents: Notifications, service structure policies and development plans by provincial education departments, Higher Education Commission (HEC) and by the ministry of Education.
- Internet and Web Resources: Association websites, social media (e.g. Sada-e-Librarian, Pakistan Library Club archives) where membership and training events and policy initiatives are updated.
- Published Bibliographies and Directories: Listings of libraries like the Pakistan Library and Information Science Journal and the Directory of Pakistani Libraries that are held by the National Library of Pakistan.
- Primary Qualitative Data (Interviews): Semi-structured interviews with chosen library professionals were used to gather contextual information, professional viewpoints, and experiential insights not entirely found in documentary sources. As a separate qualitative dataset, these interviews were examined independently.
- Each of these data sources is a separate contribution to the research. Analytical literature can be found in scholarly publications, official documents in government and reports by the government offer organizational evidence, whereas Internet platforms show ongoing communication and dialogue among the professionals. All the selected documents were tested according to the following criteria to be considered credible and authentic. Authority: Sources with authority should be written or published by an authority such as a credible institution, recognized organization, or other qualified scholars in the field of library and information science
- Legal and Registration Documents: Registration certificates, constitutional amendments, correspondence with governmental regulatory bodies (such as

the Registrar of Societies), and legal frameworks governing non-profit professional organizations. These documents address RQ1 regarding registration status and legal foundations.

For Relevancy of data, respondents were selected who have direct relation to the library associations, and professional development or librarianship in Pakistan. Preference was given to the materials that were published in 2000-2025 to reflect on the modern situation, and the old historical literature has been considered where needed. To ensure that there were no discrepancies, the data were cross verified in several sources for Accuracy and Reliability. To improve contextual accuracy, interview data was also crosschecked with documentary evidence. Using this rich collection of secondary data, supported by primary qualitative interviews, the research will be sufficient in terms of both a temporal scope (including the progress between 1950 and 2025) and a thematic scope (including the topics of training, digitalization, governance, and advocacy).

Qualitative documentary research is conducted with purposeful and focused sampling. The purposive sampling technique is used whereby the materials are selected due to their relevance to the research questions. It is not an attempt to achieve statistical representativeness but rather to attempt to look into papers that actually illuminate the issue. To guarantee knowledgeable professional viewpoints, purposive sampling was also used in the interview participant selection process. The whole sampling universe was all the identifiable records or publications regarding the same associations whether national or provincial. Nevertheless, the selection did not just put together everything randomly. Rather, it followed a two-level approach that was systematic: First, a compilation of primary institutional documents was collected,

constitutions, official reports, newsletters, and conference proceedings of such institutions as PLA, PCLA, PakLAG, PBWG, PMLA, and others.

3.3.2 Second phase: Interview

The information on the organizational background, membership, and the major professional projects provided all the necessary information for selection of respondents for interview. A small group of informed library professionals were chosen for interviews in addition to documentary sources based on their background and participation in professional associations.

The inclusion criteria were clear and related to the research questions: a) they had the capacity to provide empirical or descriptive data on the functions, educational programs, or efforts to advance the profession of the Pakistani library associations; (b) they were able to comment on the policy implications, professional development programs, or advocacy in librarianship; and (c) in the case of interview participants, they possess firsthand experience on the functions of the associations, educational programs or challenges..

3.4 Analysis, interpretation and integration of data

The secondary and primary qualitative data analysis in this study was conducted in a systematic but free-flowing manner, neither too rigid nor interpretive. Originally, all the documents of interest, dating between 1950s to 2025, were gathered and organized in a systematic manner, chronologically, as well as thematically. This organization allowed tracking the development and the changes of library associations clearly through the years.

Since the study uses a multi-qualitative methodology, a dual-layered analysis was conducted. Documentary records were examined using documentary and thematic analysis, while interview material (presented separately in the next chapter) was interpreted through qualitative narrative and thematic coding. This ensured that each type of qualitative evidence retained its own integrity while contributing to the overall interpretive synthesis.

The documents were carefully examined, and not only the specific information, including the dates of founding or the number of members, was gathered but also the subtleties that capture the alternating priorities of the official communication, including the types of words used in the mission statements, the stated advocacy goals, and the priorities change over time. The practice of empirically examining the field had a dual focus that involved both secondary documentary evidence and primary interview narratives, and both quantitative and qualitative data. Capability of both forms were data using a traditional manual coding approach that assigns portions of text to descriptive codes. Important excerpts were closely related to the same emotional narrative such as training programs, governance issues, and funding barriers.

The practice of empirically examining the field involved both secondary documentary evidence and primary interview narratives using a research question-driven coding approach. Initial codes were developed deductively from the five research questions (legal frameworks, organizational roles, educational contributions, challenges/solutions, professional advancement), then refined inductively as additional patterns emerged from the data, such as training programs, governance issues, regional disparities, and funding barriers.

A thematic document analysis approach was used to interpret the secondary data and interview data. The thematic analysis is a qualitative approach that is flexible and rigorous in the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns or themes in a textual data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It was considered suitable in this study because it will enable the researcher to examine meanings, associations and repetitive notions that are applied in the documentary evidence in relation to roles and issues of library associations. Interview data was analyzed separately and interview narratives were handled through parallel but complementary qualitative procedures.

The analysis and interpretation of data procedure took a number of steps that were organized:

- Acquaintance with Data: All readings were repeated to meet the immersion and understanding of the documents. Important ideas, frequent words, and the emergent problems were noted. Initial Coding: Descriptive codes that identified text segments included training and professional development, policy advocacy, digital transformation, governance, and membership engagement.
- Theme Formation: Themes were unmistakably linked to research questions to provide analytical coherence: legal and governance themes to RQ1; organization function themes to RQ2; education, training, and research themes to RQ3; challenge-centered themes to RQ4; and professional development and advocacy themes to RQ5.

- **Themes Revision and Revising:** Themes were reduced to ensure the internal consistency and external differentiation, in other words, each theme was internal and could be easily distinguished among others.
- **Interpretation and Synthesis:** The origin of each theme was put in context with the rest of the literature and documentary evidence was correlated with the already existing mass of scholarly discourse on the topic of professional associations. By this cyclic reaction, information on various sources, scholarly articles, association strategies, policy reports was condensed into logical topical understandings. The analysis does not only present descriptive summaries of the institutional realities that exist in the foundation of librarianship in Pakistan, but goes further to present interpretive explanations of it. This framework enabled this study to go beyond just historical description and be able to conduct an interpretive assessment and find out the trends of success, constraint and adaptation in the evolution of the associations.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study employed predominantly secondary data, along with a limited use of primary qualitative interview data, and human participation was confined to voluntary academic interviews conducted under ethical guidelines. However, all actions were informed by academic ethics. As far as the use of other work is concerned: all the sources were referenced correctly, direct quotes were clearly stated according to the traditional referencing procedures. The rights to intellectual property were fully respected.

The use of reference and paraphrasing was done with care and all the statements of facts verified with credible and authoritative sources. The material that was not trustworthy like anonymous blogs posts was avoided. Only the documents that are official and available to the public were taken into account. For interview data, informed consent was obtained and anonymity was maintained where required.

Data collection and analysis procedures were reported in a detailed manner and thus, it can be replicated or examined by new researchers in the future. Since the majority of resources were obtained in the public areas such as government or association websites, so there were no privacy concerns or required consent for documentary data. Nevertheless, the interpretation done to the data was objective and accurate, free of distortion. Through these ethical considerations, the research meets the ethics of scholarly integrity and meets the guidelines of a multi-qualitative study in the social sciences.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

The reliability and validity of a qualitative study would necessitate a high level of methodological control, especially when using both secondary documentary data and primary qualitative interview data. Several tactics were used to make this study more credible, reliable, confirmable, and transferable.

- Various sources, official records, scholarly materials, government policies and online archives as well as interview data were used to collect information to cross-test the consistency. This triangulation minimized the possibility of bias associated with each source.

- Emphasis was laid on authoritative sources (e.g. Higher Education Commission, Pakistan Library Association) and corroborated interview accounts to make the sources authentic.
- Transparency in documentation. The data-collection log gave an audit trail of the process of document identification and selection as well as the parallel handling of interview transcripts.
- Consistency in Coding: A codebook was employed in thematic analysis in order to provide consistency in data interpretation across documentary data and interview narratives.
- Critical Reflexivity: The researcher was in the reflective position where he or she took into consideration his or her assumptions and the possible interpretive bias in analyzing both documentary sources and interview data.

The study was methodologically strengthened so that the combination of these mechanisms made it sound methodologically. Even though the qualitative analysis is a process associated with interpretation, the consistency of data sources and the transparency of analysis contributed to the increase in validity and reliability.

3.7 Theoretical Foundation

The analysis has been based on three interdependent theoretical frameworks that offer conceptual background to the study and guided the interpretation of both documentary evidence and interview narratives:

- Professionalization Theory: This theory directly informs RQ5 by providing a lens to examine how library associations position themselves as vehicles for elevating professional status through credentialing, ethical standards, and institutional recognition.

- **Institutional Development Theory:** This theory is based on organizational sociology and describes how institutions develop in the course of formalization, acquiring resources, and gaining legitimacy. It situates the volunteer-to-professional association development of Pakistani library associations as evidenced in archival records and experiential insights from interviews.
- **Knowledge Society Framework:** Based on UNESCO principles, this theory places a value on the information institution in facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and in socio-economic development. As knowledge infrastructure mediators, library associations are pivotal to determining information equity, digital inclusion, and lifelong learning as articulated in policy texts and professional narratives. These theoretical anchors were applied during the choice of data from both primary interview material and secondary sources as well as during the interpretive coding of the themes in a way that secured analytical similarity in the relation between empirical evidence and conceptual knowledge.

3.8 Methodology Limitations

While this study provides a breadth of depth, there are important caveats that readers should consider for transparency and balance:

- **Consequences of Relying on Secondary Data and Primary Data:** As the study documents are primarily based on available documents, alongside primary interview data, the study is limited in accessing current and unrecorded experiences of library professionals. Nevertheless, this limitation was

mitigated by triangulating with up-to-date sources from associations and using their websites where needed.

- **Potential Bias of Source:** The documents from the institutions can provide a rose-colored picture of the experience of the associations. This bias was countered by proving a triangulation of the evidence from independent academic literature and primary interview accounts.
- **Limitations of Quantitative Validation:** This is a qualitative and interpretive study where meanings are emphasized over numerical patterns. This did not allow for statistical extrapolation, yet allowed for rich contextual knowledge derived from both documentary sources and interview narratives.
- **Temporal Gaps:** Archives were not available or were incomplete regarding smaller provincial associations. The similarity with other records and interview-based personal communications was also used to cross-verify to reduce gaps in the data.
- **Evolving Contexts** The library associations are dynamic and some interpretations may be altered after the data collection period (2024-2025). The analysis thus gives a time period in a study. With those shortcomings, the methodological rigor, triangulated information from both secondary and primary sources, and theoretical basis make the findings resilient, believable, and rich enough to be used in the academic and policy discussion.

3.9 Summary

Lastly, the chapter has identified the systematic methodological framework that guides research on the role of library associations in Pakistan. According to the interpretivist paradigm and guided by the theories of professionalization and institutional development, methodology applied documentary analysis in combination

with thematic synthesis to make sense of both secondary documentary data and primary interview data during a 7-decade period. The analytical breadth and historical depth of the research was reached by systematical gathering, validation and analysis of 150 different documents and qualitative interview materials. Ethical, triangulation and reflexivity were followed to provide methodological certainty. The qualitative design with its basis in purposive sampling and thematic analysis for the interview component allowed the discovery of eleven significant themes, which clarify the role of library associations in librarianship development, career and profession, and policy advocacy in Pakistan. Typically, this type of methodological framework exhibits scholarly integrity, situational appropriateness and conformity of research purpose, data and research findings.

CHAPTER - 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

OF SECONDARY DATA

In this chapter, the author of the paper provides a thematic analysis of the original data gathered among library professionals and members of the association in Pakistan. The sample consists of 29 semi-structured answers, read aloud, coded with recurrent ideas and issues, and assembled into eleven themes that sum up the main concerns expressed by the respondents regarding association with libraries in Pakistan.

4.1 Library Associations in Pakistan: Introduction, History, membership etc

The Pakistan library association (PLA) founded in 1957 was the cornerstone of professional librarianship in the country. The history of the PLA (PLA Constitution, 1957; PLISJ archives, 1960s-1980s) reveals that the PLA had been created to coordinate librarians in the new independent state and establish professional standards. Later provincial associations, such as Punjab Library Association (PCLA) and Sindh Library Association (SLA) were formed to meet local professional demands. The history of its development, recorded in historical sources (Mahmood, 2011; Khurshid, 2018), suggests that there are three general stages:

- Period of Foundation (1950s-1970s): National and provincial associations were founded, first training workshops conducted, and newsletters published.
- Expansion Period (1980s-2000s): Membership expansion, formation of special sub groups like PAKLAG and PMLA and national conferences.

- Modernization Period (2010-2025): Growing emphasis on digital platforms, webinars and online working networks (e.g. Facebook and WhatsApp professional forums).

The study of association constitutions and reports demonstrates that overall, there remains a hierarchical governance structure among all major associations. The PLA and PCLA, for example, have an elected president, vice president, secretary-general, treasurer, and executive council. These include a system for representational governance but also face challenges of continuity and transitions in leadership. In their secondary literature, (Bhatti & Hanif, 2013; Khan, 2019) highlighted that democratic elections are used by associations but that even democratic elections have limitations, including only limited numbers of members able to participate in elections and logistical problems with organizing elections. Many provincial associations obtain voluntary services in lieu of a permanent secretariat, which presents different levels of administrative capacity. Digital report analysis (PakLAG, 2022; PLC 2023) illustrates the growing trend of associations incorporating online governance, and even using Google Forms for nominations and reporting for virtual meetings and note taking moving ahead. These reports illustrate the notable capacity of the association to adapt to and make use of modern communication technologies.

4.1.1 Pakistan Library Association (PLA)

The Punjab province boasts of a distinction of being the largest province in Pakistan in both population size and number of libraries and library education institutions it hosts. Most especially, the first professional library association established in Pakistan was that of the Punjab Library Association. At the national

scale, the Pakistani library profession organization is known as the Pakistan Library Association (PLA), which was founded in 1957 by the constitution. In the times of a high level of change due to educational, technological, economic, and social advancements, the sphere of Library and Information science (LIS) paintings keeps changing according to the new requirements. Following a critical analysis of the literature on the topic, this study has established some of the significant roles and strategic directions that PLA must consider to enhance its research contribution, professional growth, and the overall growth of LIS field in Pakistan. The Pakistan Library Association should regularly re-evaluate its policies, organizational structure, and methods of operation so as to be relevant and practical in a changing environment in order to fit in the current professional and technological standards. The organization must continue its effort in redefining itself as a dynamic and progressive organization that can formulate and implement creative approaches towards the new challenges of the information age.

4.1.2 Punjab College Library Association (PCLA)

The West Pakistan College Library Association underwent a structural transformation in 1970, when it was renamed the Punjab College Library Association (PCLA), and it received official registration in 1974. This association primarily represents and supports college libraries across Punjab Province, striving to advance research, promote professional development, and publish scholarly works that contribute to the enrichment of librarianship within the region.

In 1995, the PCLA made a significant success when it was granted official authority to offer course work in library science at the intermediate and undergraduate level as well as a teaching stipend qualified. This was a major step towards the field.

The association has had an important influence in the area of promoting major administrative and policy reshaping: in particular the implementation of the library weeding policy, introduced by the Punjab Education Department in 1999 and as a result library committees have been set up, lost book procedures developed and the organization of college librarian service adjusted to BPS-19. This association succeeded in the approval of four tier service structure approved by the Punjab government (BPS-17 to BPS-20.) under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Iqbal Hussain Asad, Rafiq Shahid Bhutta and others. In this regard, Mr., Allah Ditta, and Mr. Sajid Hussain also played key role.

Outside its policy work, PCLA has been busy in aiding the professional growth of librarians through lectures, seminars, established A.M.K. Sajid Gold Medal to acknowledge the best performers at intermediate level in Library and Information Science, it has affiliated with Multan Board, and also sponsored the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) at Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan

The PCLA first elections were held on the 3rd of September 2020, under the Chief Election Commissioner of Dr. Iqbal Hussain Asad, with Bushra Almas Jaswal and Rafiq Shahid Bhutta as the election committee. Their impartial and professional oversight has received both applause and there is optimism that the new management can elevate the association to a better position and commitment to ethics.

However, it is clear that some aspects still need enhancement. PCLA is advised to keep tackling these issues moving forward.:

- a) Organize long-delayed seminars, conferences, and workshops;
- b) Resume the publication of professional literature;
- c) Update membership records through a formal directory;

- d) Advocate for the filling of over 480 vacant librarian posts in Punjab's public colleges; and
- e) Seek approval for dedicated lecturer positions for teaching library science at both intermediate and bachelor levels.

4.1.3 Lyallpur Library Association (LLA)

As has been noted by Ahmed (2007), the Lyallpur Library Association (LLA) was formed in 1958 with the primary objective of enhancing the welfare and professional growth of library professionals within the Faisalabad region. The association consists of librarians who have graduated from public and private institutions in the region and is a registered professional body with a membership strength of approximately sixty-five members. The LLA provides support to members in handling professional problems such as write-off of books, stock management, and other administrative problems. The association made an effort to ensure uniformity in practice at the institutional level by compiling an elaborate procedural document that sought to standardize practices in regional college libraries, a document later sanctioned and formally endorsed by the Divisional Director of Education (Siddique, 1990).

Apart from its administrative work, the LLA has also organized a series of conferences and seminars addressing issues of library automation and modernization. However, there is a critical necessity for the association to expand its activities by commencing continuing professional development (CPD) programs, as well as launching resource-sharing and networking programs among libraries. Besides, the organization ought to extend its membership scope to include librarians from all types

of libraries and become more actively involved in publishing scholarly and professional work in the field of librarianship.

4.1.4 Punjab University Library Science Alumni Association (PULSAA)

The Punjab University Library Science Alumni Association (PULSAA), established in 1988 at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, under Dr. Sajjad-ur-Rehman as its first president, significantly contributed to enhancing professional growth within the Library and Information Science (LIS) community. Throughout its period of operation, PULSAA sponsored numerous academic and professional events such as workshops, seminars, conferences, short courses, etc. to encourage cooperation and exchange of knowledge among the LIS professionals (Qarshi, 1992). The association was last electing a new team in 1993 and its activities continued up to 1997. During this period, PULSAA published a quarterly newsletter, PULSAA News, as an important source of providing updates, academic discourse, and career opportunities in the LIS field. Importantly, PULSAA has contributed to the academic literature on the subject of librarianship in Pakistan in a number of highly regarded publications, such as: *A Treatise on Library and Information Science in Pakistan* (1990); *Library Education in Pakistan: Past, Present and Future* (1992); *Hallmarks of Library and Information Services in Pakistan* (1993); and *Role of Professional Associations in the Development of Librarianship in Pakistan* (1993). Considering this legacy, it is highly suggested that PULSAA should be renewed by having regular elections and more members participation. The organization has to pay attention to updating its membership, developing a comprehensive list of members and their publications, and rejuvenating its traditions to organize academic conferences and professional development seminars. The establishment of a permanent office, official web site and publication space on the Internet would help to modernize the activities

of PULSAA and make it more accessible to its current and future LIS professionals. A related incident occurred on July 4, 2019, when Dr. Amara Malik, with the help of the Punjab University Information and Library Management Alumni Association (PUILMAA) organized a professional development seminar named Overseas Job-Hunting Techniques at the Punjab University Library Auditorium. This program was aimed at equipping LIS students and professionals with practical skills to pursue international career opportunities, which emphasized the enduring importance of professional development in the field.

4.1.5 Pakistan Library Automation Group (PAKLAG) 2000

Pakistan Library Automation Group previously known as PLAG was established in 2000, Lahore, a panel of library professionals who were concerned with promoting automation and information technology within libraries. The organization includes five provincial chapters, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly NWFP), Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab, in order to offer more membership in the country. Firstly, it was designed as an email-list discussion forum, but nowadays, PAKLAG exists through the moderated mailing lists, which enable sharing of information and professional dialogue among its members. The use of group activities initiated in Lahore quickly went throughout the country with volunteers of different cities and provinces taking part in the drive to put information and communication technologies (ICTs) into use in libraries. PAKLAG is an open-ended, free to access, public forum, which does not charge subscription, sponsorship, or membership fee. Professionals are allowed to join free of charge by e-mailing to subscribe. Its official site, which is the community-related one, is the so-called Paklag.org, and it provides an online list of Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals, as well as the contacts of the librarians in Pakistan. This is one of the major achievements of PAKLAG; it has

developed and distributed the Library Information and Management System (LIMS), a free locally developed library automation system with technical support services. Pakistan has over 200 libraries that use LIMS in the cataloging and automation of their systems. The organization also provides training on state of the art automation tools and enhancing the digital capacities of the librarians. In addition to its technological programs, PAKLAG has provided an opportunity to participate in the scholarly life by publishing a doctoral dissertation titled Alternative Funding Model for Libraries in Pakistan (by Dr. Khalid Mahmood) in the form of a book. In order to support the development of professional communication and share the knowledge, the group provides a quarterly e-newsletter with the information about the latest projects, innovations, and the progress in the sphere. PAKLAG currently boasts of over 4, 300 professionals as its members, which is an indication of its countrywide reach and scope in promoting library automation in the country.

The organization provides special professional and technical consultations to libraries, information centers, and documentation institutions, which helps them to constantly develop and adapt to existing needs. It develops and proposes specific training programs that should equip the librarians with the skills they need to modernize and automate their library and documentation systems to match the technological advances that are changing. Moreover, the organization plays a pivotal role in the sector through creation of research based analysis and offering policy recommendations to the government and legislative bodies. These initiatives aim to teach and influence how evidence based policies are put in place and therefore, advance library and information services in a rapidly changing digital environment.

4.1.6 Pakistan Library Cooperation Group (LIBCOOP)

In Faisalabad, Pakistan Library Cooperation Group (LIBCOOP) was established in 2004 as a virtual professional association of librarians as well as information professionals. Officially initiated on 20 August 2004, LIBCOOP started as a closed membership community and was given the mandate of sharing professional experiences and information pertaining to library development projects. It has now grown up to be a community of around 936 active members belonging to different sections of the library community. The platform is a discussion site where professionals in the library management, collaboration, administration and execution of projects as well as people who have interest in broad topics connected with librarianship and information services discuss. The aim of LIBCOOP is to help the Library and information science (LIS) community in Pakistan to engage in lifelong learning and development within the community. To improve the visibility and effectiveness of the organization, it is recommendable that LIBCOOP should join more members, have a formal internet presence, and start a periodic newsletter coupled with a full-fledged members directory. Additionally, the group would benefit by expanding its communication channels beyond email to modern-day digital collaboration platform, a structured organizational structure through a constitution and bylaws to ensure continuity, transparency, and constant engagement with the professional community.

4.1.7 Librarian Welfare Group (LWG)

The Librarian Welfare Group (LWG) started in Lahore in 2006 and was created due to the ideas of a group of devoted library professionals who wanted to spread collaboration and career building within the library field. It is estimated that the organization has about 590 registered members. Its operating strategy is similar to the one of Pakistan Library Automation Group (PAKLAG), and the both entities have

similar challenges, particularly in terms of the structure and absence of the formal publications. Communication among LWG members is primarily facilitated through a dedicated email forum (librarianwelfare@yahoogroups.com), The platform serves as a venue for dialogue, sharing information, and building professional connections. As of November 2007, it had recorded 3,213 unfiltered messages (Librarian Welfare Group, 2007), reflecting a significantly engaged participant community. A primary goal of the LWG is to foster a research-oriented environment in Library and Information Science (LIS). The team focuses on discovering new research avenues, exploring creative professional methods, and creating routes for professional and field progress.

4.1.8 Punjab Medical Library Association (PMLA) and WhatsApp Group

The Punjab Medical Library Association (PMLA) was formed in 1990 and has been striving for the improvement of the professional state and service structure of medical librarians in the province. The association has a constitutive body and an elected 15-member executive committee. The last election of the association took place in 2002, and meetings are occasionally held to discuss and plan professional activities. Presently, resource sharing among member libraries is accomplished principally by informal digital communication, particularly via a WhatsApp group that presently has 101 members. To perform its institutional role more effectively, PMLA is recommended to become more dynamic in lobbying for upgrading the service structure of medical librarians from BPS-17 to BPS-20.

Besides, the association can also serve as a significant player in sectoral growth by promoting the automation and networking of medical libraries within the province.. Developing a union catalogue of holdings or an online public access

catalogue (OPAC) would facilitate more systematic and efficient resource sharing. Since many medical librarians require capacity building in this area, training initiatives should also be organized to enhance their technical competencies. In addition, PMLA should focus on the publication of professional literature and the revision of its membership directory, ensuring that it encompasses all types of libraries within the health and medical education sectors of Punjab.

4.1.9 Punjab Library Foundation (PLF)

PLF was established in 1985 in Lahore as an autonomous body. It was primarily setup to improve the public libraries in Punjab. It is functioning under a board of governors headed by the Punjab Ministry of Education. The Director General of the Public Libraries Punjab is its principal officer and secretary (Punjab, Education Department, 1999). PLF provides grant-in-aid to the public libraries and other libraries for the purchase of books, furniture and library equipment. The Punjab Ministry of Education formulated the following objectives of PLF (Punjab, Education Department, 1985) Operate a library service throughout the Punjab by providing books, equipment and other assistance as approved by the board. Frame a policy for the development and promotion of libraries in the province. Create standards for library services, book stocks, building and equipment. The Foundation has organised more than 14 short courses and workshops for librarians with the collaboration of other organisations.

4.1.10 Punjab University Librarians Organization (PULO)

The Punjab University Librarians Organization (PULO) was established in 1975 at the University of the Punjab (PU), Lahore, and currently maintains a membership of approximately 60 librarians. The Punjab University Library System

represents the largest academic library network in Pakistan, comprising more than 50 constituent libraries and around 100 professional staff members (University of the Punjab, 2006). According to Punjab University Librarians Organisation (1990), the association was formed with the primary aim of offering technical guidance and advisory support to the university administration for the continuous improvement of its library services.

PULO has been very keen since its establishment to advance the professional interests of its members. As an illustration, in 1988, the organization attained BPS-18 of move-over authorizations to librarians, which was a big milestone. Later in the year 2006 PULO assisted in upgrading the service structure to an advanced level as BPS-16 to BPS-19, a feat that brought home its advocacy efforts. Between 1985 and 2004, PULO organized the professional development projects and participated in a literacy movement in collaboration with the adult education department in the university. As a result, over 470 employees of the university completed literacy training and received two additional pay raises in recognition of their achievement. On June 2, 2023, PULO held an event to honor the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Khalid Mahmood. There were special guests who attended the gathering, including Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Anwar Chaudhry (Dean, Faculty of Business, Economics and Administrative Sciences), Chief Librarian Dr. Muhammad Haroon Usmani, Deputy Chief Librarian Saifur Rehman Attiq, and librarians of various departments. The Vice Chancellor has highlighted the very important role of librarians in creating a research-oriented environment as well as supporting the academic development of students. Mr. According to Attiq, the appointment of Dr. Khalid as the Vice Chancellor caused pride to the library fraternity. This was completed by the presentation of honorary shields to newly-awarded PhD librarians and outgoing employees as a sign of their work. In the future,

it is highly advisable that PULO focus on critical professional issues taking the initiative. Among the priorities, one should revise the service organization, timely promotions, write-off problems, and vacant librarian jobs. Moreover, the organization must also prioritize the need to encourage continuous education, uniformity in the library policies, and incorporation of information literacy into the undergraduate curriculum. PULO is urged to disallow non-professional management of departmental libraries, facilitate publishing of professional literature, provide scholarships to librarians and also engage in the efforts of promoting image of libraries and library professionals. To enhance institutional representation, PULO must aim at becoming part of university committees relating to library issues and enhance enhanced coordination among its members to promote common professional interests.

4.1.11 Kohacon

The KohaCon is an international bi-annual meeting of the Koha open-source library management systems community who gather together to provide a platform to professionals, developers and users of the system around the globe. It is available to every one and free most of the time and the venue shifts on a yearly basis, even in times that it was held in Pakistan. The Koha Community in Pakistan is a state sponsored national organization that strives to encourage and lobby the usage of Koha in Pakistan. The community has been formed to ease the process of integrating the open-source technology in the libraries, and this is the core of enhancing digital transformation in the library system in Pakistan. Its primary objective is to offer up-to-date library and information services to educational institutions, public libraries as well as information centers. Koha Pakistan strives to increase the quality and efficiency of access, delivery, and quality of information services in the country

through encouraging automation, bettering of systems, and developing professional capability.

4.1.12 Pakistan Library Club (PLC)

PLC is an active hub of library workers, providing a variety of events, think trainings, immersion workshops, specific seminars and interactive webinars. In addition to the academic and professional growth aspect, PLC can also host social events like yearly dinners to enhance networking and cooperation in the community. In the future the organization is planning its 6th national convention on AI in libraries which will take place on April 19, 2025, with the Department of library and information science working with Allama Iqbal University of Islamabad. Presently, PLC has a strong presence in the Internet, and the Facebook group has about 4,300 members..

4.1.13 Pakistan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Library Association (KPLA)

Similarly, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Library Association (KPLA) serves the librarians and information experts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. KPLA is focused on improving library services, taking care of the interests of the profession, and providing its members with constant opportunities to develop professionally.

4.1.14 Sindh Library Association (SLA-1970).

The Sindh Library Association (SLA) is an organization that works towards developing the profession of librarianship in the Sindh province. The organization also supports professional development through holding conferences, workshops and other related activities whose main aim is to help improve the skills of the librarians and also to improve library services in the area.

4.1.15 Pakistan Library Bureau (Library Promotion Bureau Karachi)

Founded in Karachi in 1965, the LPB is known for publishing the *Pakistan Library and Information Science Journal* and other works related to library science. Last publishing Pakistan Library and Information Science Journal PLISJ Volume 52 (4) October - December 2021 Quarterly.

4.1.16 Librarian Welfare Group (LWG) 2006

This Group is created to interact with each other for the betterment of LIS profession and Professionals. 4.8k group members on Facebook. Group by Department of English Language & Literature, The Superior University. The last event 27 April 2023 on ChatGPT, AI and academic integrity: opportunities and challenges.

4.1.17 All Balochistan Berozgar Librarians Association (ABBLA)

All Balochistan Berozgar Librarians Association (ABBLA) is a Facebook-based group representing unemployed librarians in Balochistan, Pakistan. Their Facebook page serves as a platform to share job opportunities, raise awareness about library-related issues, and advocate for improved library services in the region. Currently members 605 on Facebook page to till date.

4.1.18 Medical Library Association of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (MLAKP)

Medical Library Association of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (MLAKP) is a professional network that brings together medical librarians and health information professionals across the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The association primarily operates through its Facebook group, which serves as a hub for discussions, announcements, and professional networking among its members.

4.2 Achievements and Failures of Library Associations

4.2.2 Professional Development and Training Initiatives

A dominant theme emerging from secondary data is the **commitment to continuing professional development (CPD)**. Thematic review of PLA newsletters and conference proceedings from 2000–2025 indicates over 150 training events, workshops, and seminars conducted nationwide.

For instance:

- PLA organized numerous “National Library Conferences” emphasizing ICT skills.
- PakLAG led **automation and digitization workshops**, introducing KOHA, DSpace, and Greenstone in Pakistani libraries.
- PCLA and PLC initiated short online courses on digital literacy, citation management, and library marketing.

These initiatives have significantly enhanced librarians’ technological competencies, enabling digital cataloguing, institutional repository creation, and information literacy instruction. The analysis thus shows that associations act as informal training academies, filling the professional gap left by limited LIS degree-level specialization in many universities.

4.2.3 Professional Recognition and Service Structure

A review of the available literature demonstrates that library associations have played a pivotal role in policy advocacy within the sector. The Pakistan Library Association (PLA), for instance, has maintained consistent communication with both the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and provincial governments, ultimately

contributing to the formal recognition of librarians as professionals and the establishment of structured service frameworks. Archival material from 2005 to 2015, such as HEC circulars and PLA memoranda, illustrates lack of coordinated efforts to lobby for equitable pay scales and fair promotion opportunities. PLA has submitted policy recommendations aimed at integrating libraries into broader national educational development strategies. Despite these accomplishments, several studies (Mahmood, 2017; Bhatti, 2019) point out that the institutionalization of advocacy outcomes remains limited.

In respect of service structure, PCLA achieved success in getting equal status for librarians as lecturers. Librarians were awarded four tier service structure (Bs-16 to BS-20) but by efforts of PCLA this service structure was upgraded to BS-17 to BS-20. This structure was used as precedent by University of the Punjab, college librarians of Sindh and KP for getting similar service structure. For the award of service structure, Dr. Iqbal Hussain Asad, Rafiq Shahid Bhutta, Bushra Almas Jaswal, Mr. Saeed Ghafoor, Mr. Muhammad Ayub Bhatti, Mr. Sajid Hussain, Mr. Allah Ditta Dr. Ahsan Ullah, Mr. Mian Nazeer Hussain, Mr. Ashfaq Ahmad and other members of PCLA played key role.

While library associations have been making efforts in articulating the professional concerns of their members, maintaining consistent engagement with bureaucratic and legislative entities continues to pose significant challenges.

4.2.4 Digital Transformation and Technological Integration

According to secondary data provided by PakLAG, PLC, and social media archives, there was a great change in favor of online interactions and automation promotion after 2010. The free training on the open-source software by PakLAG,

webinars, and online repository creation contribute to the illustration of the reorientation of associations towards the digital world.

The analysis of the online repository of PakLAG (2015-2024) shows that KOHA, DSpace, and digital library management systems were often mentioned. The same can be said about the Pakistan Library Club (PLC) that has become one of the most significant digital facilitators due to the organizing of webinars in remote information services, research tools, and online cataloguing.

This development shows how secondary information indicate paradigm shift whereby the primary organizations used to hold regular meetings have been replaced by online professional communities. It also highlights the ability of the associations to maintain professional interaction even when physical and financial limits are encountered.

4.2.5 Gender Representation

The analysis of the documents reveals that in the last ten years, there is a growing female role in the association leadership. Early constitutions (1950s-1970s) had a small gender representation, but according to the recent elections by PLA (2019-2024), there are several women office bearers and executive members.

Research (Warraich and Iqbal, 2021; Ashraf, 2023) validates that such an inclusivity is indicative of the general tendencies within the society where women are enrolling into the LIS occupation. Conscious attempts at inclusiveness are further depicted by initiatives carried out by PMLA and PLC to hold webinars on Women in Librarianship.

However, secondary data also indicate that gender equity in leadership is not even distributed in the provinces, the Sindh and Punjab have higher representation of women leaders as compared to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. This shows that national policies that promote equal participation in all regions are needed.

4.2.6 Financial Sustainability and Resource Constraints

Analysis of annual reports and financial statements where they are available reveal that most of the associations rely on membership fees, conference revenues and small institutional grants. None of them have endowment funds and permanent offices.

This is termed as a structural weakness in scholarly commentaries (Khan, 2019; Bhatti, 2022) that prevents long-term planning and research investment. Lack of statutory funding also acts as an impediment to the sustainability of the professional programs in a large scale.

Nonetheless, the secondary evidence indicates the appearance of innovative approaches, including online crowdfunding, webinars sponsorship by LIS publishers, and joint partnership with other international organizations like IFLA and EIFL. The practices reflect financial prudence in resourcefulness.

4.2.7 Perspectives on Advocacy Impact

Some scholars claim that the activities of PLA, even though numerous, are more professional networking and skills building, rather than advocating strategic policies. As an example, training and conferences are useful in professional growth, yet they hardly have direct impact on the state library policy, budgetary concerns, or law overseeing library services.

Scholarly reviews indicate that both PLA and other associations lack the framework of policy-oriented research, generation of evidence, and long-term advocacy. The major studies note that the culture of research in the associations is poor and prevents them to provide authoritative policy advice based on empirical evidence. This loophole restricts the extent to which they are credible to policy makers who need hard data-based reasons of why changes in the policy are necessary. The literature on library associations in the world shows that strong advocacy must be supported by formal connections with the government, frequent provision of policy briefs, and active participation in legislative activities. Pakistani's associations have not managed to institutionalize these mechanisms, as have counterparts in other countries, where library associations have managed to exploit such influence effectively on the public funding and strategy of the sector. Literature on organizations has indicated that in the absence of specific advocacy initiatives, the associations may continue being marginal to the real decision-making procedures that influence the future of libertarianism.

A professional is able to engage in collaboration and networking with other professionals within a particular state and with other professionals across different states.

4.2.8 Collaboration and Networking

Comparative analysis of PLA and PAKLAG records shows that there are good tendencies in terms of national and international networking. Information exchange and career visibility Pakistani associations often cooperate with the American Library Association (ALA), international Federation of Library Association (IFLA), and local communities.

In the domestic context, informal communication has been turned into a strong professional support system with the development of WhatsApp and Facebook groups of librarians (e.g., "Pakistan Librarians Forum"). These online communities enhance immediate sharing of knowledge, peer support and sharing of resources.

Secondary data prove that such networking has become the staple of librarianship advancement in Pakistan, and this is quite enough to complement the restricted scope of formal institutional frameworks.

4.2.9 Research, Publications, and Knowledge Dissemination

The use of documentary evidence shows that the main academic source of research publication is the Pakistan Library and Information Science Journal (PLISJ). It was founded at the auspices of PLA in the 1960s and since then has been a venue of debate among professionals, empirical research, and documentation of best practice.

The additional examination of the citation patterns (2015-2023) suggests more diversity in publications as the field of interest started to broaden its nature and cover the topics of digital literacy, data management, and user experience research. Associations also promote publication of newsletters, online bulletins and blogs by the members hence enhancing the LIS knowledge base in Pakistan.

4.3 Challenges for library associations in Pakistan

Thematic analysis of the reviewed literature establishes common problems that limit library associations:

- Pakistan Library associations have historically had structural and systemic shortcomings such as lack of continuity in leadership because of administrative system primarily consisting of victims of voluntary and part

time services, ambiguous and unstable funding sources, and lack of long-term strategic planning.

- The lack of equal provincial participation contributes to these problems, which are manifested in the organization fragmentation and absence of national unity, as well as acute digital divide between the urban and rural institutions, which limits equal access to modern library technologies and opportunities to develop professionally.
- Other reasons which have made many library associations not to be registered or not registered strongly are because of bureaucracy, poor legal understanding, lack of agreement amongst leadership and internal strife which in turn destroys their credibility and financial accountability and their effectiveness in dealing with government agencies.
- Electoral process in associations is usually seen as unfair or non-transparent due to poor voter turn up, poor constitutional system, influence of small interest groups, inadequate membership records, and lack of independent checking of the election.
- The key challenges affecting these associations are that the associations have low professional awareness, low advocacy effectiveness, poor integration of research and policy advocacy, poor training facility, and poor involvement with the national education and information policy.
- Library associations have occasionally engaged in intermittent activities like organizing conferences, workshops, short courses, continuing professional development programs, and awareness seminars, and lobbying to establish librarian posts in the public sector institutions, but these activities have often been fragmented, underfunded, and poorly coordinated and thus not very

successful in any way in creating new jobs, in better structuring of services, or in ensuring that hiring processes are merit based across the provinces.

The above issues highlight the necessity of institutional change, sustainability, and involvement at the policy-making level with the government to make library associations vital in the long run.

CHAPTER - 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF INTERVIEW DATA

5.1 Demographic details of Respondents

The study is based on primary data collected from 29 respondents representing various library associations across Pakistan, which is appropriate for an in-depth qualitative thematic analysis. The demographic data provided a strong region solely from professional, educational, and other associations, including medical library associations, university library associations, public library associations, and provincial library network associations. The sample diversity in terms of gender, title, and type of responding professional background provided a good sense of how library associations operated at all levels of institutions and how practitioners and educators viewed their role in the development of librarianship in Pakistan.

5.1.1 Affiliation of respondents

The affiliations of respondents show diversity of the sample selected for interview. From two library associations, four respondents were selected from each association. Eight representatives were selected from four library association, selecting two respondents from one association.

Table 5.1

Affiliation of Respondents with Associations

Respondents' affiliation with Association Name	Number
Pakistan Library Association	04
Punjab University Librarians' Association	04
Punjab College Library Association	02
Peshawar University Librarians Welfare Association	02

Punjab Medical Library Association	02
Karachi University Professional Librarians' Association	02
Sindh Library Association	01
Punjab University Library Science Alumni Association	01
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Library Association	01
Pakistan Medical Library Association	01
Karachi University Library Science Alumni Association	01
Balochistan Library Association	01
School Librarians Forum Pakistan	01
Punjab Library Foundation	01
Higher Education Commission Library Forum	01
Punjab Public Libraries Association	01
Private Universities Library Consortium	01
Pakistan Digital Library Network	01
Women Librarians Network Pakistan	01
Total	29

5.1.2 Gender wise distribution of respondents

The sample size was quite balanced in terms of gender with 15 males and 14 females. This equanimity can be said to reflect the rising involvement of females in the expanding field of library and information science in Pakistan. The female participants were found to be serving in a variety of positions, including as university librarians, directors, and presidents of associations, evidencing the increasing leadership of women in the profession.

The gender distribution is nearly balanced, indicating equitable participation of male and female professionals. This reflects the growing involvement and leadership of women in the library and information science profession in Pakistan.

Table 5.2***Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents***

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	15	51.7
Female	14	48.3
Total	29	100

5.1.3 Designation / Position of Respondents

A total of 29 participants were recruited for the study, representing library associations from across Pakistan. The majority of respondents are practicing librarians, providing operational insights, while faculty members contribute academic and policy-oriented perspectives. This balance strengthens the analytical depth of the study.

Members involved were active engaged members of library association in various positions like president, general secretaries, assistant secretaries, and senior librarians of academic and professional associations. The sample was selected due to the fact that the respondents were active and taking part in the evolution of librarianship in Pakistan. The respondents gave various insights on library associations regarding how they act, challenges and influence in Pakistan.

Table 5.3***Designation / Position of Respondents***

Designation / Position	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
President	6	20.7
General Secretary	5	17.2
Assistant Secretary	2	6.9
Senior Librarian	5	17.2
University Librarian / Director	3	10.3
Assistant Librarian	3	10.3
Member/In-Charge/IT Librarian	5	17.4
Total	29	100

5.1.4 Professional status of respondents

Regarding the professional background, 20 of the participants (approximately 69 percent) were librarians and 9 participants (approximately 31 percent) were faculty members. This ratio of participants gave information on both practitioners and faculty members and academics. Librarians presented their operational experience experiences on library operation, library associations as well as professional development. The faculty members presented their academic perspectives, and policy level perspectives of library education, and library and institutional development.

Table 5.4***Professional Status of Respondents (Faculty vs. Librarian)***

Respondent Type	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Librarians	20	69.0
Faculty Members	9	31.0
Total	29	100

5.2 Thematic analysis of interviews

Each of these themes is analyzed below and presented with the representative quotes of respondents and the interpretation of the findings is also presented in the context of the literature and the research questions.

This study finds eleven significant issues of library associations according to the responses of the respondents. Regional outreach and equity (28 responses) has become the top issue, pointing out that there are crucial differences in the provision of library services in urban and rural settings, and provincial libraries do not receive enough attention and resources.

The second priority is digital transformation and technology (25 responses) because associations grapple with automation, implementing systems such as Koha and OPAC as well as training personnel to become digitally literate. Next in line is the need to train and further their professional education (23 responses), and librarians want to attend regular workshops and certificate courses and capacity-building research programs.

Conferences and networking (20 responses) are considered an important platform to exchange knowledge and to motivate in the profession, membership engagement and communication (18 responses) is defined as more and more based on social media tools such as WhatsApp and Facebook, but the associations should have improved membership directories and systematic communication plans.

The leadership and governance questions (15 responses) have shown worries regarding the issues relating to election transparency and poor management of organizations, but there are also worries that due to the extreme funding limitations

(13 responses) the associations are unable to organize meaningful programs beyond the mere member fees.

The other responses that the associations recognize are that there is need to have more policy advocacy and government collaboration (12 responses) in an effort to lobby library positions and service standards, as well as, coming up with publications and research channels (10 responses) to promote the library and information science profession.

Lastly, a few associations have a basic registration and legal status issues (6 responses), as they do not have formal registration because of resource constraints, and others see deficiencies in mentorship and career development (6 responses), especially among the early-career and unemployed librarians who need advice in a competitive labor market.

Table 5.5

Themes, counts and representative excerpts

Sr. No.	Theme (code)	Count (responses mentioning)	Short description	Representative excerpt (short)
1	Regional outreach & equity	28	Perceived need for stronger provincial and rural coverage; respondents stressed uneven services and accessibility between urban and rural libraries.	“...areas is under-explored because of resource and structural con...”
2	Digital transformation & technology	25	Need for automation, digital skills training, OPAC/Koha adoption, websites and online services.	“...online trainings of Lims ... Koha ... automation ...”
3	Training & continuing professional development (CPD)	23	Frequent call for regular workshops, certificate courses, research training and CPD programs.	“...Organise training, revival of reading culture, yes international ...”

4	Conferences & networking	20	Value placed on annual conferences, conventions and local meetings for knowledge sharing and motivation.	“...PLA annual conferences ... exchange ideas ...”
5	Membership engagement & communication	18	Use of WhatsApp/Facebook groups, need for directories and improved communications.	“...Whatsapp, Facebook groups ... update membership directory ...”
6	Leadership & governance	15	Concerns about election transparency, weak governance, and need for leadership capacity.	“...election issues, weak governance... need for transparent elections...”
7	Funding & financial constraints	13	Shortage of funding, reliance on member fees, lack of sustained grants.	“...no funds, membership fee low, cannot organize big events ...”
8	Policy advocacy & government collaboration	12	Calls for stronger policy lobbying and government partnership for library post creation, service standards.	“...collaborate with ministry, advocate for library positions ...”
9	Publications & research	10	Need for journals, newsletters, and active publication channels to promote LIS research.	“...publish research, journal, more literature needed ...”
10	Registration & legal status	6	Some associations unregistered or with unclear legal footing; need to formalize constitutions.	“...not registered, because lack of resources and formal procedures ...”
11	Mentorship & career development	6	Requests for mentorship schemes and support for early-career and unemployed librarians.	“...mentorship, job-hunting guidance ... support for unemployed librarians ...”

(Counts are keyword-coded tallies based on the 29 responses; representative excerpts are short snippets from actual responses.)

5.2.1 Regional outreach and equity

The most common theme that was discussed was regional outreach and equal service delivery. Almost all of the respondents identified a strong urban-rural rift: the links are established to bigger metropolitan areas (Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad), with smaller towns and countryside districts, especially in Baluchistan and in remote areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, being underserved. The consequences were explained by the respondents in terms of practice: less continuing-education opportunities, lack of networking, and ineffective representation in the policy discussions. It was observed that provincial associations or even local chapters are active and do not have coordination and resources to expand the services beyond the small group of institutions. Some respondents requested specific outreach initiatives (mobile workshops, hub-and-spoke training, virtual clinics) and associations to implement clear equity requirements in order to enable members of marginalized areas to utilize professional development and advocacy. This is consistent with what the literature at large has observed in the fact that regional disparities have limited library advocacy ecology and professional visibility in Pakistan.

This discussion of regional outreach and equity demonstrates an artificial urban-rural divide as the predominant problem (28 of 29 respondents) with library associations serving mostly urban centers and rural librarians being unable to access both the benefits of professional development and the chance to impact on organizational representation. Provincial coordination (24 respondents) is an added issue since provincial branches in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan are working independently with little collaboration, compromising the overall strength of library profession.

Nevertheless, online outreach (20 respondents) is also the solution suggested by the respondents who perceive webinars and online training sessions as the useful tool to overcome the geographic boundaries and allow remote stakeholder engagement to occur in the rural territories. Lack of rural librarians also leaves a big gap in the policy representation (19 respondents) since while they are not present in the national forums and decision making tables they cannot represent the profession in the effective advocacy of the holistic, equitable library service throughout Pakistan. The results indicate that such changes as resolving regional inequity should be based on two aspects, which include technological solutions to the problem, such as using digital platforms as a means of widespread communication, and structural changes to enhance inter-provincial cooperation and to enable the voices of rural individuals to be represented in the process of policy advocacy.

Regional equity is the profession's most urgent concern. Nearly all respondents demanded deliberate inclusion mechanisms and digital outreach programs to balance Pakistan's geographic disparities.

Table 5.6

Theme 1: Regional Outreach and Equity

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency (n = 29)	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Urban–rural divide	28	Library associations remain urban-centric; rural librarians lack exposure to professional development and representation.	“Urban professionals often have more opportunities to attend physical workshops.” , R7
2	Limited provincial coordination	24	Provincial branches (Punjab, KP, Sindh, Balochistan) work in isolation; collaboration is sporadic.	“Provincial associations must collaborate so our collective voice is louder.” , R5

3	Digital outreach as equalizer	20	Online sessions and webinars are viewed as realistic bridges for rural participation.	“Online trainings help librarians from remote colleges join virtually.” , R3
4	Need for inclusive policy voice	19	Rural exclusion weakens advocacy at national forums.	“Rural librarians rarely get seats at policy tables.” , R10

5.2.2 Digital transformation & technology

Respondents position digital readiness as essential for modernization and survival. Associations must adopt long-term digital-capacity frameworks rather than ad-hoc sessions. The issue of digital transformation is prevailing. Automation of libraries (Koha, LIMS, OPACs), staff digital literacy, and online services (e-reference, virtual catalogues) were mentioned by the respondents. Although some groups such as the PakLAG and Koha community made quite commendable contributions, according to the reports of the practitioners, not all groups adopted them with an equal measure, there are those libraries who nonetheless are almost fully digitized, whereas the others continue using card systems or minimal cataloguing.

The digital capacity gaps were associated with the lack of training, insufficient funding on software/hardware, and the absence of the organization of national or provincial digital strategies by respondents. A number of the participants called on associations to be at the forefront in setting standardized e-library toolkits, create vendor-neutral training packages, and undertake joint infrastructure initiatives (union catalogues, shared-OPAC). The answers indicate an expedient anticipation: associations ought to leave infrequent tech workshops to long-lasting, competency-based digital upskilling and to bargaining institutional-level accords to cut expenses to member libraries.

This digital transformation and technology analysis define three subthemes that are essential in library modernization endeavors. There is library automation (25 respondents) which becomes the major focus and association is the major factor that prompts the implementation of systems such as Koha, LIMS, and OPAC yet adoption is still uneven with many libraries still working manually. There is also a large digital literacy and capacity gap (23 respondents) between library staff who do not have the essential ICT skills, and this is where an association-wide system is necessary to instill systematic digital-skills training programs, instead of depending on informal workshops.

In the meantime, online access and e-learning (18 respondents) has been found to be effective in reaching a wider audience, especially allowing rural librarians to engage in professional development without travelling restrictions, but respondents are calling out for more structured curricula and more formalized virtual training frameworks. Combined, these findings demonstrate that although technology is being identified by associations as transformative, effective digital transformation involves both technical infrastructure (automation systems) and human capacity building (sustained ICT training), and online platform is a scalable solution to the geographic and resource limitation.

Table 5.7***Theme 2: Digital Transformation and Technology***

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Library automation (Koha, LIMS, OPAC)	25	Associations are catalysts for automation but coverage remains uneven.	“Koha and LIMS trainings improved automation, but many libraries are still manual.”, (R1)
2	Digital literacy & capacity gaps	23	Staff lack ICT skills; associations should institutionalize digital-skills programs.	“We arrange low-cost but impactful ICT workshops to upgrade skills.”, (R8)
3	Online access & e-learning	18	Virtual training increases participation yet needs structured curricula.	“Webinars allow rural librarians to attend without travel.”, (R13)

5.2.3 Training & continuing professional development (CPD)

Professional growth through structured CPD remains the foundation of associations’ legitimacy. Sustainable, accredited training models are critical. Associations kept relying on the same concepts of training and continuing professional development (CPD) as a point of expectation. The activities that were wanted by the respondents were extremely varied: as short and intensive workshops on such subjects as cataloguing and digital reference, as more formal certificate programs on research methods or metadata, to more mentorship-based fellowships.

Many of the respondents complained that such training opportunities are rarely available, or about the lack of advertising of such opportunities, which is usually in a limited number of locations. Meanwhile, not all the participants criticized local

associations that attempted to arrange affordable programs, but in many cases, they lack the necessary magnitude or influence. Many of the respondents proposed association formalization of CPD, with annual schedules, accreditation systems, e-learning portals, as one way to professionalize the skill development and support long-term growth. Some of them also positioned CPD not as a means to develop personal skills, but as a means of attracting attention to the profession and making librarians more competitive in the academic field and the information industry at large.

As can be seen in this analysis of training and continuing professional development (CPD), workshops and seminars (23 respondents) are the most recognizable and visible type of service library associations offer, and they are the main means of improving the technical skills of librarians and their professional competencies. Nonetheless, certification and accreditation (19 respondents) are identified by respondents as a pressing necessity that they require in order to achieve professional credibility and obtain practical incentives of career growth, and certificates are effective stimuli that would make people attend regularly.

There is also a major disparity in accessibility and frequency (17 respondents), with the fact that current training programs are less systematic, more sporadic and opportunistic, and librarians are demanding systematized annual training programs which predictably offer an unstopping education opportunity accessible to every member irrespective of where they are located. Such results indicate that although the link has been made that training is a fundamental role, the conversion of ad-hoc workshops into a formal, accredited CPD program with a planned timetable would be

a highly effective way of enhancing the professional development infrastructure and will be more likely to meet the dynamic needs of the Pakistani library workforce.

Table 5.8

Theme 3: Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Sr. No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Workshops & seminars	23	Training is the most visible service associations offer.	“Workshops and seminars enhance librarians’ technical skills.” , R 4
2	Certification & accreditation	19	Respondents seek accredited CPD programs to strengthen credibility.	“CPD certificates motivate professionals to attend regularly.” , R9
3	Accessibility & regularity	17	Training remains occasional; respondents demand continuous calendars.	“There should be a yearly training schedule accessible to all.” , R6

5.2.4 Conferences & networking

The symbolic core of the profession will always be conferences; they should be turned into outcome-oriented, hybrid events to have the greatest impact. The events were considered the high-value activity: the conferences and national conventions provide the exchange of knowledge, publicity, and professional acknowledgment. The respondents praised the yearly gatherings of PLA, but the inconsistency in quality and absence of follow-up (poor dissemination of results) also received comments. Local conventions and KohaCon-style community meetings, inclusive (typically free and successful in stimulating grassroots innovation), were often used. However, another

issue that was mentioned by the respondents was the missed opportunities: lack of follow-up of conferences (no implementation units or working groups), lack of documentation, and the availability of members in remote locations. The respondents have employed invited associations to ensure that conferences provide articulate outputs (policy briefs, training modules, working groups) and they are also employing hybrid formats as a means of doing more.

The conferences and networking analysis discovered that national conferences (19 respondents) especially the yearly Pakistan Library Association (PLA) conferences are essential professional unity and motivation forums but are too little to ensure extensive involvement and further strengthen geographic imbalance. According to the respondents, the main problem they consider is the lack of regional networking (15 respondents) and promoting decentralized provincial meetings and virtual mini-conferences that would maintain professional interest and enthusiasm throughout the year instead of depending on annual flagship events only.

A very significant issue arises concerning post-event follow-up (13 respondents), which the participants are frustrated by the fact that conference outcomes are not usually documented and an implementation mechanism, and they want more result-focused measures, where resolutions and recommendations are turned into practical actions and not symbolic statements. These results indicate that as much as conferences can be useful in revitalizing the professional community, the best way to maximize the effects of conferences is to geographically diversify them by organizing regional conferences, use virtual platforms as a way of making conferences inclusive, and ensuring that knowledge-sharing and collaborative discussions can make a tangible difference in library practice and advocacy.

Table 5.9***Theme 4: Conferences and Networking***

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	National conventions	19	Annual PLA conferences foster unity but remain urban-bound.	“National conferences are energizing yet limited to big cities.” , R5
2	Regional networking	15	Need for provincial and virtual mini-conferences.	“Regional meet-ups keep enthusiasm alive throughout the year.” , R12
3	Post-event follow-up	13	Participants desire outcome-based conferences.	“We must document and implement conference resolutions.” , R18

5.2.5 Membership engagement and communication

Interaction requires working two ways communication; digital services should become formalized systems of membership management. Even though social networking sites like WhatsApp and Facebook groups have been attracting large masses in terms of quick communication and posting of job opportunities, they have also revealed some organizational weaknesses. The respondents also highlighted the features of the real-time benefits but they also stated that there are also some giant flaws; this includes dissemination of information through unequal groups; there is no updated membership directory and the inconsistency of association communication itself. Reactively, the participants emphasized the need of revised membership procedures, take into consideration web-based directory, portal, and automatic subscriptions. Also, they claimed that the announcements and resources should be

concentrated on a central hub that would also be better managed to control the social media channels, and the official control should be used to increase the accuracy and minimize the misinformation provided. Lastly, the respondents required enhanced organization and enhanced and positive communication channels.

This discussion of membership participation and communication shows that digital communication tools (23 respondents), especially WhatsApp and Facebook groups, are now used by the majority as the main tool to share the information fast and communicate with colleagues, as such informal nature leads to the occurrence of haphazard, lackluster communication and lacks official character. Lack of centralized membership directory and database (20 respondents) is a major setback in the capacity of associations to bring about a systematic outreach, monitor member involvement, and organize nationwide programs and activities in an effective way. The necessity of a stronger internal culture of communication (17 respondents) is highlighted by the respondents who require professionalization of the culture of communication including regular newsletters, official announcements, and a free flow of information beyond the ad-hoc social media posts. These results bring out the paradox of associations accepting digital connectivity but failing to have the organizational infrastructures to utilize the same strategically implying that formalization of communication structure in the form of official databases, structured content calendars, and institutional channels would turn the fragmented social media interactions into integrated and professional interactions that enhance organizational coherence and member involvement.

Table 5.10

Theme 5: Membership Engagement and Communication

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Digital communication tools	23	WhatsApp/Facebook groups facilitate rapid networking but lack coordination.	“Social media keeps us updated though information is scattered.” , R11
2	Membership directory & database	20	Absence of centralized data weakens outreach.	“We need an updated directory for all members nationwide.” , R14
3	Internal communication culture	17	Respondents call for proactive newsletters and announcements.	“Communication must be official, regular, and transparent.” , R2

5.2.6 Leadership & governance

Associations need to be governed, they need codified constitutions, leadership training, institutionalized regimes instead of personality-driven management. Issues raised included governance issues, free and fair elections, strong executive committees and sound constitutions. The respondents have given examples of contested elections or empty leadership roles in the history of some of them; others have given the example of dedicated leaders who undertake significant voluntary activities. It is analyzed that the leadership capacity building (training committee members, transparent election regulations, better work-plans) and reforms in governance (professionalization of associations) is necessary. It is hoped that the associations will change to personality-based leadership to institutionalized processes with specific set of responsibilities, succession planning and accountability.

This leadership/governance analysis indicates that the issue of transparency in elections (18 respondents) is the most important issue as disputed or irregular elections have a devastating effect on institutional credibility and trust of members in

association leadership. The issue of leadership continuity (14 respondents) also makes the organization unstable, since the change of leaders is often repeated leading to the termination of their projects and repeated startups instead of long-term strategic development, thus resulting in associations being unable to reach their long-term objectives. Governance professionalism (13 respondents) is also mentioned by respondents, which involves well-written roles, responsibilities and accountability practices that would institutionalize organizational activities other than the baseless leadership of personalities. These findings indicate that governance weaknesses—spanning from electoral integrity to institutional memory and professional management—fundamentally undermine associations' effectiveness, suggesting that establishing transparent election protocols, implementing transition planning for leadership continuity, and codifying governance structures with defined accountability frameworks are essential prerequisites for building resilient, credible library associations capable of sustained impact.

Table 5.11***Theme 6: Leadership and Governance***

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Election transparency	18	Disputed or irregular elections erode trust.	“Transparent elections are vital for credibility.” , R8
2	Leadership continuity	14	Frequent changes disrupt project momentum.	“Every new team restarts instead of continuing plans.” , R6
3	Governance professionalism	13	Need for defined roles and accountability.	“Office bearers must follow documented responsibilities.”, R2

5.2.7 Funding and financial constraints

Most challenges are based on financial insecurity. Growth is predetermined by sustainable funding models and transparency mechanisms. Funding became an inhibitor to growth. According to the respondents, the associations rely largely on small membership subscriptions, periodic sponsorships, and volunteer work; this leaves the associations in a situation where they have to grapple to publish, hold large conferences and fund the extensive training programs. Several suggested restructuring of membership fees (leveled fees, institutional membership) to locate repeat government or donor funding and commercialization of specialist training to cross-subsidize outreach. The key point made by the respondents is that it will only be desirable with unpredictable resources that planned interventions (digital infrastructure, research journals, paid employees) will occur.

This discussion of funding and monetary limitations shows that financial constraint (19 respondents) is the main financial issue since associations have to

operate on small membership fees and volunteer work, which is crippling their ability to arrange large-scale training and professional operations. The interviewees acknowledge the necessity of diversified sources of income (16 respondents), suggesting such approaches as donor-financed projects, institutional memberships, corporate sponsorships, and competitive grants applications as a way to develop sustainable models of revenue-generation that would not rely on individual donations. Moreover, there is apprehensiveness on the issue of financial accountability (11 respondents), which shows the expectations of the members that the association has transparent budgetary mechanisms and frequent financial reporting which proves the responsible utilization of the association resources. These results imply that there are two approaches to financial sustainability that need to be taken, namely growing the revenue base by new strategic partnerships and diversified funding sources whilst simultaneously enhancing financial management through an open-minded accounting system that instills trust in the members and will lead to recruitment of external funders who will not support the organization without evidence of a responsible financial management.

Table 5.12***Theme 7: Funding and Financial Constraints***

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Limited income sources	19	Associations depend on membership dues and volunteers.	“Funding shortages restrict our training activities.” , R4
2	Need for diversified income	16	Suggestions include donor projects, institutional memberships.	“We should seek sponsorships and project-based grants.” , R9
3	Financial accountability	11	Calls for transparent budgeting and reporting.	“Members must know how funds are spent.” , R7

5.2.8 Policy advocacy and government collaboration

The potential of advocacy is present whereas the institutionalization is not. The policy engagement should be transformed into an organized, evidence-based activity. Some of the respondents talked about successful, though not extensive episodes of advocacy: lobbying service-structure upgrades, contact with education departments, and occasional representation in library-related committees. But it was said by too many that associations do not have long-term presence in policy formations; decisions regarding libraries are frequently made without organised professional input. Respondents invited associations to institutionalize advocacy units, write policy briefs (evidence-based), and establish contact with the Ministry of Education, HEC, and provincial departments to affect the staffing norms, funding, and digital policy. Successful policy involvement was found to be a path towards improved resources and also a channel to professional growth among librarians.

This policy advocacy and government collaboration analysis shows that lobbying the service structure (21 respondents) is the most tangible advocacy accomplishment of associations, as successful lobbying yields tangible results, including the upgrade of librarian cadres to the BPS-17 level, indicating the possible power of the systematic professional lobbying. Nonetheless, partnership with ministries (18 respondents) continues to be informal and intermittent with the kind of collaboration being infrequent engagements with education officials that are institutionalized in the sense of being unbelieved and informal, and restricting the viability and extensiveness of government relationships. Positively, there is enhanced policy visibility of associations (16 respondents), although there is increasing awareness among policymakers and more chances to input into the education policy debate, indicating a slow build-up of the library profession voice into the national debate. These results suggest that even though associations have been shown to be effective in realizing particular advocacy victories and are becoming more legitimate in the policy arena, institutionalizing ad-hoc partners by signing formal agreements and implementing formal consultation systems would make them much more capable to achieve systemic changes in library services, professional practices and resource distribution.

Table 5.13***Theme 8: Policy Advocacy and Government Collaboration***

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Lobbying for service structure	21	Associations have achieved limited cadre upgrades.	“After our lobbying, librarians got BPS-17 status.” , R3
2	Collaboration with ministries	18	Ad-hoc dialogues exist but lack permanence.	“We meet education officials, yet no formal MoU exists.” , R15
3	Policy visibility	16	Associations are slowly gaining recognition.	“Our voice is finally being heard in education policy.” , R1

5.2.9 Publications and research

Production of knowledge is infrequent. The LIS scholarship in Pakistan will be enhanced with institutionalized publishing platforms. The lack of regular and high-quality publications in the field of professionals was observed by respondents. Although there is the presence of Pakistan Library and information science journal and a few newsletters, the respondents proposed that more regular journals, internet repositories and research support are required to build a research culture. Some proposed that associations would be encouraged to have a research section, practitioner research with small grants, writing workshops, and a peer-reviewed forum to help increase the academic visibility of librarianship.

This literature review and research study demonstrates that inconsistent publications (10 respondents) is a core weakness of library and information science infrastructure in Pakistan since the research is largely invisible and there is a lack of the regular publication outlets that are recognized nationally to develop existing

research and scholarly research. This is further complicated by the poor practitioner-research culture (8 respondents), wherein associations have not taken a systematic approach to promote empirical research among working librarians, and respondents felt that small research grants and institutional support might help fill in the gap between professional practice and academic research. Also, due to poor knowledge dissemination procedures (7 respondents), most of the research published at conference frequently vanish without even decent archiving or further distribution, which is a lost knowledge sharing and professional learning opportunities. These results are an indication that to effectively strengthen the research ecosystem there must be multi-pronged intervention, including the creation of sustainable peer-reviewed journals with consistent publication schedules, incentive structures and capacity-building programs to motivate practitioner research, and digital repositories to preserve and disseminate conference proceedings and scholarly work, thus turning associations into knowledge production and dissemination centers which will promote the creation of intellectual background of the library profession.

Table 5.14***Theme 9: Publications and Research***

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Lack of consistent journals	10	Absence of national LIS outlets limits research visibility.	“We need regular journals and newsletters.”, R13
2	Practitioner-research culture	8	Associations should motivate empirical studies.	“Small research grants could encourage practitioner research.”, R16
3	Knowledge dissemination	7	Few mechanisms to share findings beyond events.	“Conference papers should be archived online.”, R10

5.2.10 Registration and legal status

You need to be formally registered to be accountable and to be eligible to receive funds; the constitutions need to be modernized. Other respondents identified the problem of a non-registered or an association that operated on obsolete constitutions. Registration issues do affect the opportunity to create bank accounts, receive grants, and sign MOUs. All the associations of the standard legal help (model constitutions, registration advice), were recommended by respondents, and it was even suggested that the grass roots groups needed to formalize themselves so that they were considered reputable to obtain funding.

The comparison of registration and legal status shows that unregistered associations (6 respondents) do not have any legal status and are subject to the risk of legitimacy issues and cannot establish institutional collaboration, funding, or official policy opportunities. The issue is also worsened by the presence of old constitutions (5 respondents), and some of the associations are still run under outdated by-laws that

were in use several decades ago and which do not reflect the modern demands of governance and the credibility of the organizations. There is strong demand among the respondents of legal advice and guidance (5 respondents) in the form of template constitutions and practical help on how to go about registration procedures which are prohibitively complicated or resource intensive to many volunteer-led associations.

The demographic situation reveals that it has impact on a small yet vital group of associations: 5 overall respondents (4 male, 1 female) that include 1 faculty member, 4 practitioner librarians who represent major organizations such as Punjab College Library Association, Pakistan Library Association Punjab Branch, PUCLA, and Peshawar University Librarians Welfare Association. It is observable that even amongst the established associations, there is a great inconsistency in registration status (2 registered, 2 unregistered, 1 uncertain), which points to inconsistency in the system. These results imply that supporting the availability of legal materials, standard formulations of constitutions, and procedural guidelines might empower informal associations to professionalize their operation and expand the general professional framework and allow fuller engagement in the policy advocacy process and the collaborative effort.

Table 5.15

Theme 10: Registration and Legal Status

Sr. No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Unregistered associations	6	Some operate informally without legal standing.	“Our association is not yet registered.” , R17
2	Outdated constitutions	5	Several use obsolete by-laws hindering legitimacy.	“We still follow a constitution from the 1990s.” , R14
3	Need for legal guidance	5	Respondents request templates and legal aid.	“We need model constitutions and registration help.” , R19
4	Registration Status	Registered: 2, Not Registered: 2, Not Sure: 1		

5.2.11 Mentorship and career development

Mentorship is a new expectation; the creation of guidance systems in the institution may help minimize attrition and increase the level of professionalism. Lastly, some of the new librarians mentioned mentorship, job search support, and support to unemployed librarians. The current networks of unemployed librarians received the praise, yet the respondents advised these mentorship programs to get institutionalized (mentorship pairings, internships, CV clinics) and included in the association portfolio. Mentorship is prescribed as a retention and capacity-development model.

This mentorship and career development analysis demonstrates that career progression and promotion (6 respondents) is the main issue, where librarians are frustrated about the inability to see the path to their advancement that undermines their professional drive and leaves them unsure of their future career trajectory in their occupation. There are no mentorship programs (5 respondents) which leaves librarians with less than five years of experience without any systematic guidance, they are calling on formal pairing programs which would help in knowledge transfer, professional socialization and support of new librarians to navigate their career path. Also, the respondents anticipate associations to be more proactive in job placement and welfare (4 respondents), which might involve job banks or placement services to assist the unemployed members and fresh graduates in an already competitive employment environment.

These results suggest that career development support is an uncharted aspect of association services, and the existing emphasis on training and conferences do not provide sufficient services to help librarians to overcome structural career issues

encountered during their professional paths. By instituting formalized mentorship schemes, drafting clear career laddering records, lobbying applicable authorities on the need to use standardized promotion guidelines and use of job placement agencies, association would be in a position to become an overall career support organizations rather than just event organizers, which would attract younger members and enhance retention of professionals as librarianship is a viable career in Pakistan.

Table 5.16

Theme 11: Mentorship and Career Development

Sr.No.	Subthemes	Frequency	Analytical Interpretation	Illustrative Quotations
1	Career progression & promotion	6	Lack of clear pathways demotivates librarians.	“There is no structured career path for librarians.” , R9
2	Mentorship initiatives	5	Need for pairing programs between seniors and juniors.	“Senior librarians should mentor newcomers formally.” , R11
3	Job placement & welfare	4	Associations expected to support job-seekers.	“Associations should maintain a job-bank for unemployed members.” , R15

5.2.12 Cross-theme patterns

Across themes, respondents depict library associations as the *engine* of Pakistan's librarianship, responsible for training, advocacy, digital evolution, and professional identity. Yet their performance is constrained by funding fragility, governance inconsistency, and regional inequities. Strengthening these pillars would elevate the entire field.

Two intersecting themes emerge. The first is capacity versus scale: many associations operate small, local activities that are high value but do not have the funds or governance structure to scale them nationally. The second theme is digital as both a democratizing opportunity and a dividing space: technology presents opportunities to overcome geographical barriers (online training, hybrid conferences) but also magnifies inequities in places where there is no infrastructure or experience. Lastly, there is an underlying tension between the volunteer nature of being an activist and the need for administratively structured professionals to sustain multi-year initiatives.

Table 5.17***Thematic Summary***

Sr.No.	Theme	Total Mentions (n = 29)	Overall Insight
1	Regional Outreach & Equity	28	Most critical issue; equitable inclusion of rural professionals required.
2	Digital Transformation & Technology	25	Digital modernization both a challenge and opportunity.
3	Training & CPD	23	Core function; demands continuity and accreditation.
4	Membership Engagement & Communication	23	Communication infrastructure weak but improvable via digital tools.
5	Policy Advocacy & Government Collaboration	22	Advocacy gaining traction; needs institutionalization.
6	Conferences & Networking	19	Valuable for unity; must be outcome-oriented.
7	Funding & Financial Constraints	19	Fundamental bottleneck; sustainable financing essential.
8	Leadership & Governance	18	Governance reform and transparency pivotal for credibility.
9	Publications & Research	10	Need revival of scholarly communication.
10	Registration & Legal Status	6	Formalization strengthens legitimacy.
11	Mentorship & Career Development	6	Emerging area with high potential impact.

5.2.13 Policy Advocacy as perceived to be carried out by Library Associations.

The findings revealed that the library associations in Pakistan are seen as being moderate in terms of activity but being weak in terms of policy advocacy on the library sector at the formal level. The participating associations, in all of the reviewed ones, report on professional activities through conferences, seminars, workshops, newsletters and training programmes. Nevertheless, the stakeholders to a large extent have regarded these activities as professional engagement mechanisms and not direct policy influence instruments. Although associations have been able to maintain the presence of professionals and discourse, the role they played in the development of the national or provincial library policies is considered minimal and uneven.

The respondents and reported professional opinion indicate that advocacy has been mostly issue-focused and event-driven that is not sustained with continuity and follow-up at the institution level. Because of this, associations are perceived as a forum to discuss and not as agents that can negotiate with the government, impact legislature or ensure libraries are given a long-term budget allocation.

5.4.14 Views on Advocacy as Symbolic, but not Strategic.

Another theme that is frequently repeated in the results is the feeling that policy advocacy by library associations is not so much real. Conferences and resolutions tend to be regarded as show-business results and minimal policy follow-up. There are doubts expressed by professionals of whether associations can translate discussions into enforceable reforms. This impression influences the involvement of members and lack of trust in associations as a means of systemic change. Consequently, advocacy tends to be considered as a dream or even an idealistic role of known associations.

5.4.15 Emergence of Digital and Grassroots Advocacy

The emergence of Digital and Grassroots Advocacy represents a form of advocacy that should be highlighted, as it seeks to preserve the principles of equality, empathy, and transparency. It is one of the types of advocacy that deserve to be mentioned because it aims at safeguarding the values of equality, empathy, and transparency.

The results also indicate an increased use of digital platforms and informal professional networks to advocate especially with the younger librarians and the unemployed professionals. The use of social media groups and online forums to create awareness on the issue of employment, structure of the service and professional recognition is on the rise. Although these platforms increase visibility and peer support, the respondents can admit that the platforms do not have institutional authority and cannot substitute formal interaction with policymakers. Their contribution is thus seen to be complementary and not transformative.

In general terms the findings indicate that the library associations in Pakistan have played a role in policy advocacy in piecemeal, skewed and situational manner. The accomplishments of advocacy are mostly restricted to provincial or institutional contexts, whereas the power at the national level is insignificant. The lack of structural constraints and fragmented professional representation coupled with the lack of a prioritised library sector all curtail advocacy outcomes. Meanwhile, these findings suggest an increased professional awareness of such deficiencies. It is becoming acknowledged that strong advocacy needs research-grounded policy action, institutional consistency and concerted efforts and not solitary professional interventions.

5.3 Summary

Analysis of secondary data reveals that library associations in Pakistan have evolved from foundational advocacy groups into complex, digitally active, and professionally significant institutions. They have made substantial contributions to:

- Professional training and capacity building,
- Technological modernization,
- Gender inclusion and networking, and
- Policy advocacy for librarianship recognition.

Despite notable achievements, the documentary record also exposes persistent weaknesses, chiefly financial instability, organizational fragmentation, and limited state collaboration.

The findings affirm that associations remain the cornerstone of librarianship development in Pakistan, but their future success will depend on structural modernization, strategic partnerships, and sustained digital engagement.

Table 5.18

Major Findings

Area	Positive Contributions	Limitations
Visibility & Professional Presence	Maintains profession's presence and connectivity through events and publications.	These engagements rarely translate into formal policy influence.
Skills & Capacity Building	Training and workshops enhance librarian competencies.	Lack of structured advocacy strategies limits alignment with national policy priorities.
Institutional Collaboration	Participation in international networks brings global frameworks into the discourse.	Weak domestic policy engagement and strategic liaison mechanisms.
Organizational Influence	Representation across provinces offers breadth.	Voluntary structures, finance, and membership engagement constrain depth of impact.

CHAPTER - 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The study analyzed qualitative data collected by researcher by analyzing secondary sources and through structured interviews of library professionals' who have been serving at various positions in the library associations. The thesis offers an informative record of the challenges facing Pakistani library associations based on documentary analysis and interviews (n=29) to effectively determine such crucial challenges as the urban-rural divide (28/29 respondents) and the requirements of digital transformation. Nevertheless, the study is rather a diagnostic survey than a critical analysis, which does a great job in describing problems but does not clarify why they remain the same despite decades of being acknowledged.

The biggest discovery, the advocacy is still symbolic and not strategic, shows connections, but only as networks of professionals and not as policy impact, but the study does not go very deep into inquiry about the structural reasons of this pattern and does not give comparative analysis with more or less similar developing country situations. The decree of self-selection of the sample group (mainly, association enthusiasts) and the absence of the political economy determinants study weaken the analysis.

Although the recommendations lie on an immediate to long-term implementation, they are too generic and do not focus on the underlying issues of chicken and egg: resources are required to professionalize, and again, professionalization is required to secure resources. The suggested remedies such as -

form regional equity mechanisms, develop sustainable funding models presuppose capacity which the findings imply that they do not have. The study has been effective in confirming that Pakistani librarianship is marginalized as part of the national policy, although it provides little insight into the possibility of voluntary associations having an effective institutional power without state assistance and alternative forms of governance. In the end, it is sufficient descriptive research that has valuable practitioner implications but lacks the theoretical breadth and is debatable in terms of its actions to create real structural change.

6.2 Findings of the current study

6.2.1 RQ.1: What is the status of library associations in Pakistan?

Pakistani library associations have historic roots and pockets of good practice, they face chronic constraints: funding, governance, and uneven reach. In general, the discussion indicates that the Pakistani libraries associations are on a transitional level, whereby they are no longer informal volunteer organizations but professional ones. These transitions can be facilitated through empowering governance systems, adopting digital-based interaction, and focusing on sustainable financing.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the situation with library associations in Pakistan is complicated yet promising. Throughout the respondents, the consensus is high that associations are very instrumental in professional development, advocacy, and capacity building in the library field in the country. Yet, the results also reveal that there are deep organizational problems, primarily, poor governance, poor registration, and poor financial sustainability, that limit their impact and growth over time.

6.2.2 RQ.2: What role library associations have played for the development of librarianship in Pakistan?

The core reactions describe library associations as critical though undervalued tools to professional development. The respondents found eleven areas of association functioning, which are (1) regional outreach and equity, (2) digital transformation and technology, (3) training and CPD, (4) conferences and networking, (5) membership engagement and communication, (6) leadership and governance, (7) funding and financial constraints, (8) policy advocacy and government collaboration, (9) publications and research, (10) registration and legal status, and (11) mentorship and career development. But these functions are performed in an unequal manner and are subject to funding fragility, governance inconsistency and deep-rooted regional inequities.

6.2.3 RQ.3: What challenges do library associations experience, and how do they suggest these challenges can be addressed to improve their effectiveness in the future?

Library associations in Pakistan exist but remain largely ineffective in practice. Organizational weaknesses, governance issues, and leadership monopolies limit progress. Professional development initiatives are irregular and urban-centered. Advocacy for librarians' rights and professional status is weak. Associations have minimal influence on national policy and educational reforms. Financial and resource limitations severely restrict activities. Poor communication reduces member participation and awareness. Research promotion and dissemination efforts remain insufficient. Regional inequality and lack of coordination hinder national development.

6.2.4 RQ.4: What measures can be taken to improve the effectiveness of library association in the future development of librarianship?

The most threatening discovery of the paper is that there is an urgent demand of equity in the region. The most talked about theme was regional outreach and equity which reveals the city-rural divide. Associations are concentrated in major cities such as Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and rural districts especially in Balochistan and remote Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are grossly under served. The adverse impact of this geographic inequity is observed in all other functions: there is a decrease in the number of CPD opportunities in rural librarians, access to networks is reduced, and their representation in policy debates is weak.

The thematic analysis suggests that the most critical factors affecting the performance of the associations are leadership commitment and engagement of the members. The key aspects that were many times cited by the respondents include the associations are effective when the leadership is participatory, open communication and regular elections. On the other hand, associations with non-transparent leadership frameworks are characterized by a lack of trust in the members and very little innovation.

The other theme that is reoccurring is the digital transformation gap. Though respondents recognized the importance of ICT-based platforms, including KOHA training, webinars, and online conferences, most associations continue to depend on face-to-face operations to a large extent. This restricts access especially to rural practitioners. Absence of an integrated digital communication network also compromises the cooperation between regional branches.

The problem of financial and structural constraints became constant. There are numerous associations which rely on voluntary donations, sporadic sponsorship or fund-raising. It is hard to institutionalize training programs or policy advocacy by the association because of the lack of formal registration and a stable revenue model. The most common answers among respondents were that these shortcomings could be solved through periodic audits, grant applications, and partnering-building with educational bodies.

Interestingly, respondents were willing to recognize a powerful sense of professional solidarity and were hopeful of reform. They suggested decentralization of operations, empowering of local branches and formalization of election cycles to increase accountability. Some of them pointed at the necessity of mentorship programs between older professionals and their mentee among emerging librarians, which might foster leadership continuity and transfer of knowledge.

The respondents' repeated emphasis on CPD and digital skills reinforces prior studies that identify continuous professional education as the profession's central gap. Associations such as PLA and PAKLAG are credited for foundational contributions, but respondents call for transformation: moving from sporadic, volunteer-driven activity to institutionally robust, resourced associations able to sustain multi-year initiatives and national advocacy. This finding echoes international literature where associations that combined stable funding, transparent governance, and digital strategies were more effective in shaping librarianship outcomes.

Immediate measure include: Equity First: Address the urban-rural divide (Theme 1, n=28) by implementing a 40% rural outreach mandate, mobile training units, and provincial equity coordinators. **Governance Reform:** Standardize

constitutions, ensure transparent elections, and establish quarterly accountability reporting (Theme 6, n=18). **Digital Infrastructure:** Launch a National Library Professionals Portal to replace fragmented WhatsApp/Facebook communication (Theme 5, n=23). **CPD Formalization:** Create annual training calendars with accredited certification programs accessible across all provinces (Theme 3, n=23).

Success Indicators can be evidenced by the effective transformation such as: **Geographic equity:** 50% of training participants from outside major urban centers. **Financial stability:** 60% of associations with sustainable funding independent of event revenues. **Policy impact:** Library professionals serving on at least 5 national education/digital policy committees. **Research output:** 100+ peer-reviewed articles annually from Pakistani librarians. **Membership growth:** 40% increase in active, dues-paying members across all associations. **Digital adoption:** 80% of libraries using standardized automation systems with shared infrastructure

6.3 Conclusion

The findings of this study conclude that library associations in Pakistan have not yet achieved their full potential as professional and developmental institutions. While their objectives are comprehensive and relevant, practical limitations such as weak governance, lack of advocacy strength, financial constraints, and poor member engagement prevent them from playing an effective role in strengthening library services and the librarianship profession in Pakistan. This study reveals library associations in Pakistan at a critical juncture. The analysis of 29 semi-structured responses, coded into eleven interconnected themes, demonstrates that associations serve essential functions—capacity building, networking, digital enablement, and advocacy—but execute them unevenly due to three fundamental constraints: chronic underfunding, governance fragility, and profound regional inequity. The most urgent

finding is the urban-rural divide (identified by 28 of 29 respondents), which affects every aspect of professional development. Associations concentrated in Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad cannot adequately serve rural librarians, creating a two-tier profession. Addressing this geographic inequity must be the foundation of all reform efforts.

Simultaneously, associations must professionalize their operations. The transition from volunteer-driven, episodic activity to institutionally supported, strategic action requires: (1) transparent governance frameworks that rebuild member trust, (2) sustainable funding models that enable multi-year planning, (3) digital infrastructure that provides equitable access regardless of location, and (4) formalized policy engagement that transforms associations from discussion forums into recognized stakeholders in national education and information policy.

The respondents' insights reveal not resignation but determination. They see associations as vital to librarianship's future and are willing to participate in reform. If associations successfully implement the prioritized recommendations—beginning with regional equity mechanisms, membership infrastructure, structured CPD, and governance reform—they can catalyze a transformation: professionalizing librarians across Pakistan's geographic expanse, shaping evidence-based policy, and ensuring that libraries serve as genuine engines of information access in the digital age.

The path forward demands immediate action on high-frequency, high-impact themes while building toward structural transformation. Pakistani librarianship's trajectory depends on whether associations can evolve from their current transitional state into resilient, inclusive, and strategically focused professional organizations.

6.4 Recommendations

The following are recommendations that can be acted upon, organized by urgency and mapped on themes.

Priority (0–12 months)

1. **Establish regional equity mechanisms** (Theme 1, n=28). Establish provincial outreach coordinators; require that 40 percent of training activities take place off the big cities; introduce mobile workshops; make all webinars recordable and available by the member with limited bandwidth in rural regions.
2. **Create an online membership hub & directory** (Theme 5, n=23). consolidate membership information, events schedules and resources, and stop communication that is disjointed on WhatsApp/Facebook by creating a centralized platform that ensures all people receive equitable access to information.
3. **Launch a structured annual CPD calendar** (Theme 3, n=23). Provincially coordinate workshops, deliver hybrids, capture all workshops so that they can be accessed asynchronously, collaborate with university LIS departments to ensure accreditation, and issue annual CPD certificates.
4. **Standardize governance templates** (Theme 6, n=18). Publicize model constitutions, open election rules, and accountability rules to professionalize leadership and restore the trust of members.
5. **Formalize association registration** (Theme 10, n=6). Give legal examples and assistance to unregistered associations; revise old constitutions to permit bank accounts, grant applications and MOUs..

Medium term (1–3 years)

6. **Establish sustainable funding models** (Theme 7, n=19). Offer graded institutional membership, professional service payment (certification programs), pursue recurring government grants and prepare transparent financial reporting to create donor trust.
7. **Create a Digital Transformation Taskforce** (Theme 2, n=25). Create communal OPAC infrastructure, offer communal Koha assistance, bargain on mass software licensing, establish digital literacy across curricula and offer special help to underserved areas such as low-bandwidth options.
8. **Form a dedicated Policy & Advocacy Unit** (Theme 8, n=22). Move toward ongoing lobbying as opposed to the occasional lobbying; release yearly evidence-based policy briefs; institutionalize liaison functions with provincial education departments and HEC; seek formal membership in library-related government committees.
9. **Revitalize Publications & Research** (Theme 9, n=10). Create an editorial board to revive the Pakistan Library and Information Science Journal with quarterly publication; provide an online base of conference proceedings; provide micro-grants to practitioner research; provide writing workshops once a year..

Structural (3+ years)

10. **Professionalize association management.** Transition from volunteer-only governance to hybrid models with paid core staff (administrative manager, programs officer, digital coordinator); establish permanent offices in each province; create endowment funds for long-term sustainability.
11. **Build comprehensive mentorship infrastructure** (Theme 11, n=6). Formalize senior-junior mentorship pairings; create internship programs; establish job-hunting clinics; maintain an employment database for unemployed librarians; partner with universities for early-career development.
12. **Achieve national policy integration.** Secure permanent representation on HEC library committees; develop MoUs with provincial education ministries; contribute to national digital library strategies; establish associations as statutory consultative bodies for library-related legislation.
13. **Create cross-provincial coordination mechanisms.** Establish a Pakistan Library Associations Forum to coordinate calendars, share resources, avoid duplication, and present unified policy positions; develop inter-provincial resource-sharing agreements.

6.5 Proposed model of an improved association (operational blueprint)

- **Core Secretariat (paid staff),** Administrative manager, programs officer (CPD & events), digital coordinator.
- **Standing Committees,** Training & CPD; Publications; Digital Services; Policy & Advocacy; Membership & Outreach.

- **Annual calendar**, CPD modules, a national conference with regional follow-ups, quarterly webinars.
- **Funding mix**, membership fees (tiered), paid services (training), institutional members, donor grants.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation**, simple metrics: CPD participants by region, membership growth, policy inputs produced, publications issued.

6.6 Limitations of the analysis

- **Sample size and representativeness:** Although the dataset contains 29 rich responses, it is not a fully representative sample of all Pakistani librarians; further quantitative surveys could complement these findings.
- **Self-report bias:** Respondents are often association members or enthusiasts; critiques from uninvolved stakeholders (e.g., government decision-makers) are absent.
- **Keyword-coded counts:** The theme counts were produced by keyword-based coding and then interpreted qualitatively; more in-depth manual open-coding by multiple coders would strengthen inter-coder reliability.

6.6 Implications for policy and practice

- **For associations:** The immediate policy implication is to professionalize governance and centralize membership communications (a low-hanging fruit with high returns). Associations that quickly implement member management systems and CPD calendars will build trust and deliver visible benefits to members.

- **For universities & LIS programs:** Partnership opportunities to co-design CPD modules, to host peer-reviewed practitioner journals, and to offer mentorship schemes.
- **For government:** Associations should be invited into consultation processes for staffing norms and to co-design library digitization plans; governments benefit when professional voices inform policy.

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Appendices

Cover Letter

Appendix A: Complete Interview Guide

1. Background & Involvement

- May I ask if this library association is a registered one? If not they why?
- Can you briefly introduce yourself and describe your role in the library profession?
- Which library association(s) have you been involved with, and for how long?

2. Role & Contributions

- What is the role of library associations in Pakistan?
- Probe: Can you share an example of a successful initiative, training, or project?

3. Challenges

- What major challenges do library associations face today?
- Probe: How do these challenges affect their ability to serve members?

4. Policy & Advocacy

- How effective have library associations been in influencing policies or advocating for the profession?
- Probe: Any example of policy change or government collaboration?

5. Regional & Member Engagement

- How well do associations cater to professionals in different regions (urban vs rural)?

6. Improvements

- If you could recommend 2–3 key improvements to make library associations more effective, what would they be?

7. Closing

- Is there anything else you'd like to share about the role or future of library associations in Pakistan?

Appendix B: Instrument Review Experts

Name	Designation	Institute
Dr. Ahsan Ullah	Associate Professor	Superior University Lahore
Dr. Memoona Iqbal	Lecturer	Government Graduate College Baghban Pura Lahore

Appendix C: List of Associations for data Collection

1. Punjab College Library Association
2. Pakistan Library Association Punjab Branch
3. Peshawar University Librarians Welfare Association
4. Punjab Medical Library Association
5. Karachi University Professional Librarians' Association
6. Pakistan Library Association (Headquarter)
7. Sindh Library Association
8. Punjab University Librarians' Association
9. Punjab University Alumni Association (PUAA)
10. Pakistan Library Association (Sindh Branch)
11. Punjab University Library Science Alumni Association (PULSAA)
12. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Library Association
13. Pakistan Medical Library Association
14. Karachi University Library Science Alumni Association (KULSAA)
15. Balochistan Library Association
16. Pakistan Library Association (Federal)
17. School Librarians Forum Pakistan
18. Punjab Library Foundation
19. Punjab Public Libraries Association
20. Pakistan Digital Library Network

Appendix E Plagiarism Report