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Saima Qutab
Islamia University, Bahawalpur, saimaqutab83@gmail.com

Farzana Shafique
Islamia University, Bahawalpur, alakhdarem2001@yahoo.com

Qutab, Saima and Shafique, Farzana, "Job Descriptions of Government Librarians in Pakistan" (2011).
Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). 621.
https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/621

Job Descriptions of Government Librarians in Pakistan

Saima Qutab
MPhil Student
DLIS
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
Librarian
Directorate General of Mines and Minerals
Govt. of Punjab
Lahore, Pakistan

Farzana Shafique
Lecturer
Department of Library and Information Science
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur

Introduction

Libraries all over the world are facing diversified service challenges posed by a mix of traditional information seekers and Google generation's call of technology features. These multi-facet demands and kinds of users' community have increased the list of responsibilities and skills required by the librarians. Selection of right person for the right job is the greatest challenge for library administration. This includes two main elements; nature of job descriptions defined or advertised by the administration and the availability of required human resources in the market. Only the right mix of these two essentials can ensure the selection of appropriate personnel for the delivery of high quality services to the diversified user community (Kennan, Willard and Wilson, 2006). Over years our profession is highly changed with invent of technologies and in result transforming life styles. Starr (2004) said that from the perspective of human history, a twenty-year period is a brief moment but in the context of our rapid electronic age, however, twenty years are enough for three or four technological lifetimes. Mathews and Pardue (2009) said that clearly the acquisition of the skills required to access, store, manage, and disseminate media in libraries is yet another example from the long history of librarians adapting to and adopting new technologies. The advancement of computer technology and the changing role of the libraries are clear to everyone (Farajpahlou and Danesh, 2009). Technology altered or replaced almost everything about libraries; manual catalogues with bibliographic databases; paper with digital; ready reference books with Google; library newsletters with social media and so on. On the other hand some things remain the same and required traditional skills of librarianship along with advance works. The library automation and IT have initiated three major changes in cataloguing i.e. MARC, microcomputers and CD-

ROM databases and emerging technologies of internet during last four decades and collectively all these changes effect the cataloguers' job requirements and roles of librarians as many primary responsibilities have been shifted to paraprofessional staff due to overall change in library operations (Heinrichs and Lim, 2009; Khurshid, 2003; Hosoi, 2000). Gerolimos and Konsta (2008) said that the appearance of the internet and the World Wide Web, as a final stage of an evolution has created a new information and social environment. This change has been both in the work undertaken and in the conditions under which people are employed (Kennan, Willard and Wilson, 2006). Librarians have adapted to fit new and expanded roles in this environment. This increasing speed and breadth of technological change sometimes require new responsibilities replacing old, but often additional tasks are added while traditional jobs remain the same (Meier, 2010; Kennan, Cole, and et al, 2006). This change issue has led to a considerable research and discussion concerning the form, the role, the position and the functions of the social institutions known as "libraries" within this new context (Gerolimos and Konsta, 2008).

Literature Review

Many information databases such as Elsevier, Science Direct, Emerald, Doaj, search engines such as Google and indexing service LISTA were searched for the literature review. Review of the literature shows that the library analysis of job advertisement and changing nature of work have been an area of interest for researchers, practitioners, educators and students. It is important to learn assimilation and influence of IT into all aspects of librarianship and how the new technologies may be influencing change and job market (Lynch and Smith, 2001).

Reeves and Hahn (2010) stated that job advertisement analyses have peppered the LIS research and professional literature since at least the 1980s. Alonso-Regalado & Ullen (2009) highlighted the importance of the job announcements analysis and considered it as essential information about the evolution of the positions over time, the nature of the job market, and predictions of employment trends. He also added that findings from such studies are also useful to library students' guidance for pursuing in specific careers within librarianship as well as for library school faculty for curriculum up gradation. Analysis of requirement in job advertisements has often been used to examine and predict the trends in market; demand for professionals; changes in a profession and employment conditions (Wu and Li, 2008; Lynch and Smith; 2001; Cullen, 2000). Kennan, Willard and Wilson (2006) witnessed changes in IT and information delivery substantial change in job markets and LIS education in response of these changes. Cullen (2004) beautifully stated that to find demands of changing information world, a good way is to start from the investigation of job advertisements because they "bluntly state necessary and desired employer requirements from candidates. Recruitment advertising is how the employment market communicates its needs to individuals seeking to engage with it". The job titles appearing in job ads varies over span of time from traditional to emerging titles also define the nature of the job responsibilities required against them and illustrates there complexity (Khurshid 2003; Croneis and Henderson, 2002). Ads provide a rich source of data about the profession and the knowledge, skills and competencies wanted by employers. The ads also indicate aspects of LIS as a profession, as it determines the jurisdiction of its expertise, and the nature of its relationships with certain outside bodies (Kennan, Willard and Wilson, 2006).

It is evident from different studies that the requirements by hiring authorities changes over time with changes in technology. The nature, magnitude, and swiftness of changes in the profession because of technology increases the demand of knowledge and skills related to electronic resource management (Park, Lu and Marion, 2009; Croneis and Henderson, 2002). Mathews and Pardue (2009) found subjective evidences of acquiring a wider range of IT skills by librarians as well as these IT skills are becoming driving force in library job market. According to

Wu and Li (2008), a well-studied factor was subject background or expertise. Technology-related characteristics i.e. library automation and computer-based services; training and experience in online bibliographical searching; internet-related skills and communication skills were most prominent appearing requirements for librarian jobs. The librarians have not only to manage media itself, but also to acquire, develop, deploy, use, and maintain the suite of information technologies and systems that support them. The development of a digital collection or an institutional repository requires the traditional skills of collection development as well as new skills of server setup and maintenance (Mathews and Pardue, 2009; Kousha and Abdoli, 2008). Reeves and Hahn (2010) explored that employers are seeking to hire individuals who not only have certain skills and experience, but also certain personal attributes such as excellent communication abilities, service orientation, a predilection for collaboration and cooperation, a penchant for participating in teams, and social and personal competence traits that reflect on an applicant's ability to adapt to change, meet deadlines, innovate, and take initiative. Alonso-Regalado & Ullen (2009) noted a trend of hiring individuals with highly specialized training and subject expertise to fill specialist positions. Kennan, Willard and Wilson (2006) stated that job ads are basically designed to attract the best possible staff member for the position, they also provide graduates, school leavers and the world at large with an opportunity to examine the working conditions, salaries, qualifications and career paths for a field or a profession and insight to the workplace.

In Pakistan, there are eight library schools offering MLIS degree. Collectively, about 500 to 550 students annually are being awarded MLIS degree from these schools. MLIS degree is a general degree in Pakistan without any major or specialization like in many other countries i.e. India, USA etc. All these schools teach almost same curriculum (according to HEC's revision in 2004). Although a verity of courses is being offered ranging from traditional to advance courses with technological influence, yet it is assumed that there is a wide gap in correspondence between the LIS school products and job market requirements. On the other hand, specific job description is not well practiced in Pakistan especially in the government sector, which mostly results in the hiring of inappropriate personnel in the government libraries. A review of the related literature indicates the importance of analyzing the job description for librarians, but no such study has been conducted to-the-date in Pakistan. Keeping this gap in view, this study aims at finding out the status of librarians' job descriptions advertised by the government hiring agencies.

Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are used to conduct this study. This study is descriptive in nature with main objective to analyze the library job advertisements in Govt. sector of Pakistan to understand the nature and contents of the job requirements set by hiring agencies and the market trends in the era of technological advancements. Following questions are set to achieve the objectives:

1. What type of qualification, experience, and skills are mentioned in job advertisements? Are these specifications made clear to identify nature of the job i.e. entry or expertise level?

2. Which knowledge (LIS and other), interpersonal, behavioral and other competencies/traits are listed in Govt. sector job advertisements?

3. Are institutional types shaping the nature of the library positions and statues?

Survey: The Job advertisements advertized within the period of three years (from 1st August 2007 to 31th August 2010) of all types of government libraries (academic, public & special) were selected for this study. The sources of these advertisements were four daily newspapers; The Dawn and The Nations (English); The Jang and the Nawa-i-waqat (Urdu); LIS list-serves such as paklag

(http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plagpk/), lisjobs
(http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lisjobs/); and two blogs: Jobs library and
information science (http://jobs4allprofessional.blogspot.com/), and LIS jobs blog
(http://plwo.blogspot.com/). Main source of data was list-serves emails and two
library job blogs. Most of ads were downloaded from these sources or their
reference were noted down and later searched from the newspapers. This
excluded a thorough newspapers search and so do complete geographical
coverage of the selected newspapers (only newspapers published from Lahore
were scanned). Duplication was discarded as usually list-serves and blogs report
the jobs appeared in the daily newspapers. Since it was first study of it nature so it
was decided to collect job ads with title of assistant librarian and above. Thus in
total 212 Job advertisements qualified on the criteria set for the study. Data were
collected in the first three weeks of September, 2010.

Interviews: For better understanding of the actual situation and reasons of current
pattern of govt. job advertisements, personal interviews were also conducted of
eight selected professionals i.e., chief librarians of university libraries (n=4), public
libraries (n=3) and Govt. hiring agency (n=1). Acquired responses were also
analyzed qualitatively.

Data Analysis of Survey and Related Discussion

Basic information: The results presented in Table 1 show that about 85 (40%) Job
ads were collected from list-serves and blogs, 100 (47%) from Urdu newspapers
and 27 (13%) from English newspapers. A frequency distribution of time span
covered shows that 51 (24%) ads appeared during 1st August-2007 to 31st July
2008, 64(30%) during 1st August-2008 to 31st July 2009 and 97 (46%) during 1st
August-2009 to 31st August 2010. Types of libraries covered were 138 (65%)
academic libraries, 72 (34%) special libraries and one (0.5%) public library.
Academic libraries included only university and college libraries while special
libraries included Govt. departmental libraries. Geographically these job positions
were advertized for the following cities: Islamabad (57); Lahore (45); Karachi (21);
Peshawar (9); Rawalpindi (7); Sargodha (7); Faisalabad (5); Gujrat (5); Khairpur
(4); Bahawalpur (4); Sahiwal, Mardan and Hyderabad (3 each); Sukkar,
Gujranawala, Taxila, DI Khan and AJK (2 each); and in Jhelum, Jamshoro,
Hafizabad, Gilgat, Dera Ghazi Khan, Darya Khan, Chichawatni, Chakwal, Bannu,
Bakhar, Bahawalnagar, Attock, Kamalia, Kohat, Kotali, Larkana, Malakand, Multan,
Nawabshah, Pano Aqil, Quetta, Rahim Yar Khan, Sheikhpura, Swabi ,Tando
Muhamma Khan and Tarbela (1 each).

Table:1 Frequency Distribution of Information of Sources

Table:1 Frequency Distribution of Information of Sources			
Variable		Frequency	Percentage
	Newspaper (Urdu)	100	47
Source information	Newspaper (English)	27	13
	Listserve/Blog	85	40
Year	1st August-2007 to 31st July 2008	51	24
(August 2007 – August 2010)			
	1st August-2008 to 31st July 2009	64	30
	1st August-2009 to 31st August 2010	97	46
	Academic	138	65

Library type	Special	72	34
	Public	1	0.5
	Permanent	16	8
Job duration information	Contractual	25	12
	Not mentioned	171	81
Package information	Mentioned	27	13
	Not mentioned	185	87
Age limits information	Mentioned	146	69
	Not mentioned	66	31

Job Duration and Age Limits: Of the 212 job advertisements analyzed for the study, it was found that only 16 (8%) ads mentioned the statues as permanent; 25(12%) as contract and remaining 171(81%) did not provide any indication regarding job duration. It is also an understanding that when the job ads do not provide any statues information about the duration, it is considered as permanent in Govt. sector. Information about pay package was provided by 27(13%) ads, while 185(87%) did not mention it. Due to change in Governmental policies many jobs are appearing as contractual jobs, so provide information about job duration and package. This trend is more evident among job ads of year 2009 and 2010. Age limit is another consideration in Govt. sector; only 146(69%) jobs provided reference of age limit conditions.

Job Titles and Scales: Job titles have significant role in reflecting the changes in responsibilities. This study observed a large variation in job titles and governmental scales against these titles. Most appearing titles were librarian (89, 42%) and assistant librarian (66, 31%) followed by cataloger (10, 5%); deputy librarian (8, 4%); senior librarian (8, 4%) and chief librarian (6, 3%). The title of "Librarian" is a general job title considered as entry level or above, sometimes with and/or without experience of two to five years but it does not indicate nature of job responsibilities i.e. acquisition, reference or digital services librarians etc. The titles of classifier and cataloger (10, 5%) reveal the type of job assignment.

Job scales or ranks are another important factor in Govt. sector jobs. Basic pay scale (BPS) is used in all provinces of Pakistan yet some different scales are used in federal area of Islamabad. An analysis of job scales shows that 48(23%) ads were advertised for BPS-17, 39(18%) for BPS-16, 14(7%) for BPS-18, 15(7%) for BPS-11, 13(6%) for BPS-19, and only 1(0.5%) ad for BPS-20. As general practice in Govt. sector special and college libraries, the librarian (scale BPS-17 or 18) is considered responsible for overall library management and technical operations. The job titles of librarian and assistant librarian were consistent in these libraries, but there was a variation in scales against these positions such as, for assistant librarian scales range from BPS-11 to BPS-16 and for librarian from BPS-16 to 18. The basic pay scales (BPS) of public sector university libraries range from BPS-16 to BPS-20. The data show a great deviation among job titles and scales against them. Few institutions offer BPS-16 for assistant librarian, while the others offer the same scale for librarian. Similarly, BPS-18 is mostly offered for senior librarian or deputy chief librarian or chief librarian, while in few institutions same job title comes up with BPS-19 or 20. Often the word director or the prefix of deputy, senior, or chief is used with the title of librarian (see annex A & B).

Other Job Requirements: For further analyzing the job advertisements in terms of qualifications and skill requirements, five variables were selected for data collection i.e. education, experience, skills, responsibility and personality traits. The results show that majority of job ads require MLIS degree (148, 70%) followed by simple graduation degree with diploma in library science (52, 25%). Few ads required higher degree such as M. Phil (3, 1%) and PhD (6, 3%). It was also observed that often senior positions also require MLIS degree with 10 or above years of experience and same positions reduced the experience requirements with

the possession of higher qualifications. Second variable was experience. It was noticed that a large number of job ads (85, 40%) required 1-3 years of job experience; 26(22%) ads required 4-6 years; 14 (7%) 7-9 years, while nine (4%) ads required the experience of 10 years or above. It was also witnessed that mostly reference of experience in years stated as "related experience" was without any further details of the nature of the experience required. Third variable of skills was further divided into two categories: computer skills and library related skills. It was found that only 67(32%) ads asked for any type of computer skills and 57(27%) for general library skills. The nature of computer skills was hardly stated clearly; if provided, the emphasis was on the use of Internet and/or MS Office, library automation or the requirement of some computer training certificate. See Table-2.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Different Job Requirements

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Variables		Frequency	Percent
	Diploma and B.A	52	25
	MLIS	148	70
Educational requirements	MPhil	3	1
	PhD	6	3
	Other degrees	1	0.5
	Not mentioned	2	1
	1-3 years	85	40
	4-6 years	46	22
	7-9 years	14	7
Experience	10 and above	9	4
	Not mentioned	58	27
Computer skills / certificates	Mentioned	67	32
	Not mentioned	145	68
	Mentioned	57	27
Library related skills	Not mentioned	155	73
	Mentioned	11	5
Job responsibilities	Not mentioned	201	95
	Mentioned	4	2
Behavioral traits	Not mentioned	208	98
	Mentioned	19	9
Communication skills	Not mentioned	193	91

Other type of skills included in the analysis were library related skills i.e. cataloguing, classification or "knowledge of library operations". Such skill

requirements were only mentioned in 57(27%) ads. A Job responsibility is important piece of information for applicants to assess their qualifications, skills and experience for some specific position. It also helps the employer to set expected criteria (minimum if not complete) for the selection of employees. Again this section is described by only 11(5%) job ads. Behavioral traits also reflect personal abilities i.e. trustworthiness, honesty, commitment, social interaction, ability to cope with pressures and team work. Although such traits are not directly related to the library work but play an important role in the successful accomplishment of daily job tasks. The results show that such trait requirements were mentioned in only four (2%) ads. Good communication skill (writing, speaking and presentation) is another important trait for survival in today's competitive world. Such skills were required in only 19 (9%) ads often with the statement, "must have good communication skills".

Qualitative Data Analysis

To understand the phenomena in-depth, personal interviews were also conducted. Following open ended questions were asked from the interviewees:

1. Do you find the contents of government sector jobs being advertised in the media well described in terms of duties to be performed, salary packages, duration, qualification, experience, skills, personality traits and other related skills, etc?

2. What is the value of well described job statements/ad in your point of view?

3. Please mention the authoritative agency/individual responsible for devising the job description contents at your department/institution. Are you satisfied with the contents of job descriptions of your institution?

4. In your opinion, what are the reasons of lack of uniformity in govt. job scales, packages etc. According to the changing trends, which contents/components should be included in the library job ads? Any other comments or suggestions in this regard.

Detailed responses are given in table 3.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Qualitative Data (Interviews)

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No	Statement	Frequency n=8
1	Are the contents of Govt. sector library job advertisement as well described in terms of duties to be performed, salary packages, duration, qualification, experience, skills, personality traits and other related skills, etc.	
	Not satisfied with the job ad contents	8
2	Well described job statement is valuable for:	
A.	Selection of most appropriate personnel for advertised job.	8
B.	Providing information of responsibilities.	4
C.	Establishing check and balance (setting basic	5

	evaluation criteria).	2
D.	Indicating needs of specific skill sets.	3
E.	Attracting future librarians.	4
F.	Only skillful personnel will be selected.	1
3	Please mention the authoritative agency/individual responsible for devising the job description contents at your department/institution. Are you satisfied with the contents of job descriptions of your institution?	
A.	I am not satisfied with the job ads descriptions by my department.	7
B.	I am somehow satisfied with the job ad descriptions.	1
C.	Registrar and human resource department for university libraries in light of established university calendars (University libraries, n=4).	4
D.	Board of governors or secretary of education (Public libraries, n=3).	3
E.	Head of department, usually a bureaucratic rather than a technical person (Govt. hiring agency, n=1).	1
F.	Librarians have no or very small role in devising the job description, sometimes their role is limited to identifying the need of new staff	8
G.	It is handled by authorities of parent organization	8
H.	Authorities of parent organization are usually not friends of libraries	1
I.	Detailed job ads are avoided to reduce the cast of publication	5
J.	Chief librarians did not take the pain of revising the existing job ads statements	4
K.	It is difficult to revise in Govt. sector when once approved	6
L.	Govt. sector job nature is more clerical rather than technical so latest trends are neither required nor reflected in job ads	3
M.	Communication is missing between the universities and market	1
N.	Many mega projects in Govt. sector are outsourced, causing no skills improvement demands from Govt. sector employees.	1
4	In your opinion, what are the reasons of lack of uniformity in govt. job scales, packages etc.	
A.	There is no parallel job structure among Govt. sector departments	8
B.	Every university have its own job nomenclature (n=4)	4
C.	Every institution's job structure is based on their internal job hierarchy that is set at the establishment of the said department. Priorities of the authorities and head of the department reflect the job hierarchy and it is very difficult to change it.	5
D.	Internal job structure are missing or very weak in many Govt. departments	2
E.	There is no job structure in Govt. sector of Pakistan	1

	in any field expect the bureaucratic group.	
F.	Librarian's job statue in organization is depended on the interest of the head of the department rather than the need of library.	3
G.	There is no trend of changing or updating the job hierarchy with changing technologies in Govt. Sector.	2
H.	Job statues upgrading is achieved with personal efforts in some institutions and marked as personal grades instead of basic pay scale. Moreover these upgrades resolve with the retirement of that person.	3
I.	Making the change in existing job structure is a dirty job, no one wants to get his hands in.	1
J.	Size of the library cause the nature of job ad either specific or general	3
K.	LIS profession is not recognized from authorize bodies	2
L.	LIS education is not accredited so the promotions are not subject to qualifications and skills	1
M.	Political pressure groups influence the job conditions and libraries are not priority	2
N.	Personal benefits of some seniors hindered the up gradation of professional scales in past and still faced by today's librarian generations.	1
O.	Diversity of functions of organizations as well as difference in pay scales	1
5	According to the changing trends, which contents/components should be included in the library job ads? Any other comments or suggestions in this regard.	
A.	Library schools should conduct research by using benchmarking tools to improve LIS job ad statements in Pakistan	1
B.	Computer literacy	5
C.	Interpersonal skills	2
D.	Specific qualifications	4
E.	Job responsibilities	3
6	Recommendations.	
A.	National Library of Pakistan should conduct survey regularly and define LIS job titles and minimum requirements against these titles	6
B.	Librarians need to improve their public relation skills to convince authorities for job statues improvements	2
C.	Pakistan Library Association should raise voice for the librarians in Govt. sector especially in college, public and special libraries.	6
D.	Specific LIS degrees are needed to be introduced	3
E.	University libraries should collaborate with each other for job statues uniformity	2
F.	There should be set rules for qualification VS job scale in Govt. Sector	2
G.	LIS education accreditation is needed by concerned	2

| | | agencies to stable the job requirements | | |

Findings and Conclusion

The study reveals that basic qualification requirement is MLIS with experience of two to three years or sometimes without experience. Qualification remains the same in most cases, while only experience requirement increases for top management jobs. Both job titles and scales are the only source to identify the statues and nature of job responsibilities as these are rarely mentioned in job ads. The results also show many weaknesses in govt. ads i.e. lack of uniformity in job titles, statues and requirements details; qualification regulation regarding the job title; skill requirements and nature of experience statements. The academic libraries (College and University libraries) offer better job scales and packages. It is also discovered that dissimilarities in position titles and statues are somehow subjective to institution type or size. On the other hand unavailability of job structure for librarians in Pakistan is causing this diversity. Kennan, Willard and Wilson (2006) believe that job advertisements are the most available and public expression of employee's requirements. On the other hand, Govt. sector job ads in Pakistan put more emphasis on the procedures of application than requirements. Collectively, these job ads are very weak in terms of their contents and fail to coop up with the changing trends. These job ads are also unable to illustrate the market trends or to appear as career guide for future librarians. Kennan, Willard and Wilson (2006) found similar results from their study and stated that a lack of uniformity in LIS qualifications required for those entering the LIS profession is resulting in lack of reference to specific qualifications. As a result, very general job requirements neither motivate existing librarians for skill enhancement through continuing professional education nor provide assistance to LIS schools for curriculum improvement. There is intensive need of revising the job ad descriptions to improve the quality of selection.

Recommendations

Following recommendations are made on the bases of conclusions of the study:

1. Government hiring agencies such as Public Service Commissions (PSC) and other related bodies (i.e. HEC etc) should play their active role in revising the job descriptions before advertising any job in LIS;

2. A uniform pattern in LIS should also be adopted in terms of needed competencies and scales or other benefits offered as it is the practice in advertising the higher education teaching jobs;

3. Standard descriptions for library job requirements should be developed with the help of national and international experts. These descriptions should also be made publicly available for the guidance of library schools and young professionals;

4. The standard job descriptions devised by the panel of experts should be strictly observed at the time of selection. This will not only standardize the govt. jobs in terms of scales and competencies required but will also improve the quality of library services in Government sector institutes.

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Annex A: *Job titles*

Annex A: Job titles					
Job titles	Fr.	%	Job titles	Fr.	%
Archivist	1	0.5	Deputy Assistant Librarian	1	0.5
Associate Librarian	1	0.5	Deputy Chief Librarian	1	0.5
Assistant Librarian	66	31	Deputy Librarian	8	4
Assistant Manager Librarian	1	0.5	Director IRC	1	0.5
Cataloguer	10	5	Director library	1	0.5
Chief Librarian	6	3	Director Publication	1	0.5
Classifier	3	1	Deputy Manager Archive	1	0.5
Documentation	4	2	Library officer	2	1
Information Executive	1	0.5	Library Specialist	2	1
Information Officer	1	0.5	Manager Digital	1	0.5
Information Archive officer	1	0.5	Manger Information resource center	1	0.5
Librarian	89	42	Senior Librarian	8	4

Annex B: Job scales		
Grade/ scale	Frequency	Percentage
Missing	66	31
BS-17	48	23

BS-16	39	18
BS-18	14	7
BS-11	15	7
BS-19	13	6
BS-14	10	4
BS-15	2	1
OG-2	1	0.5
PEC-17	1	0.5
BS-20	1	0.5