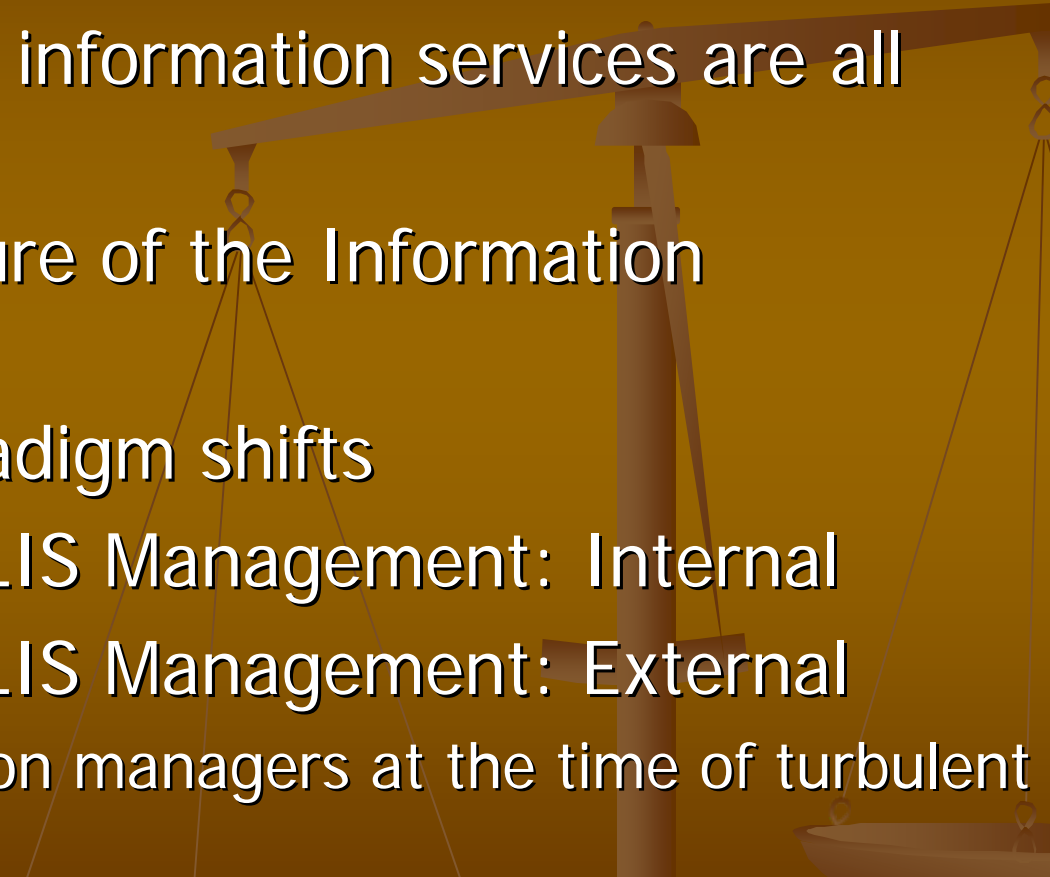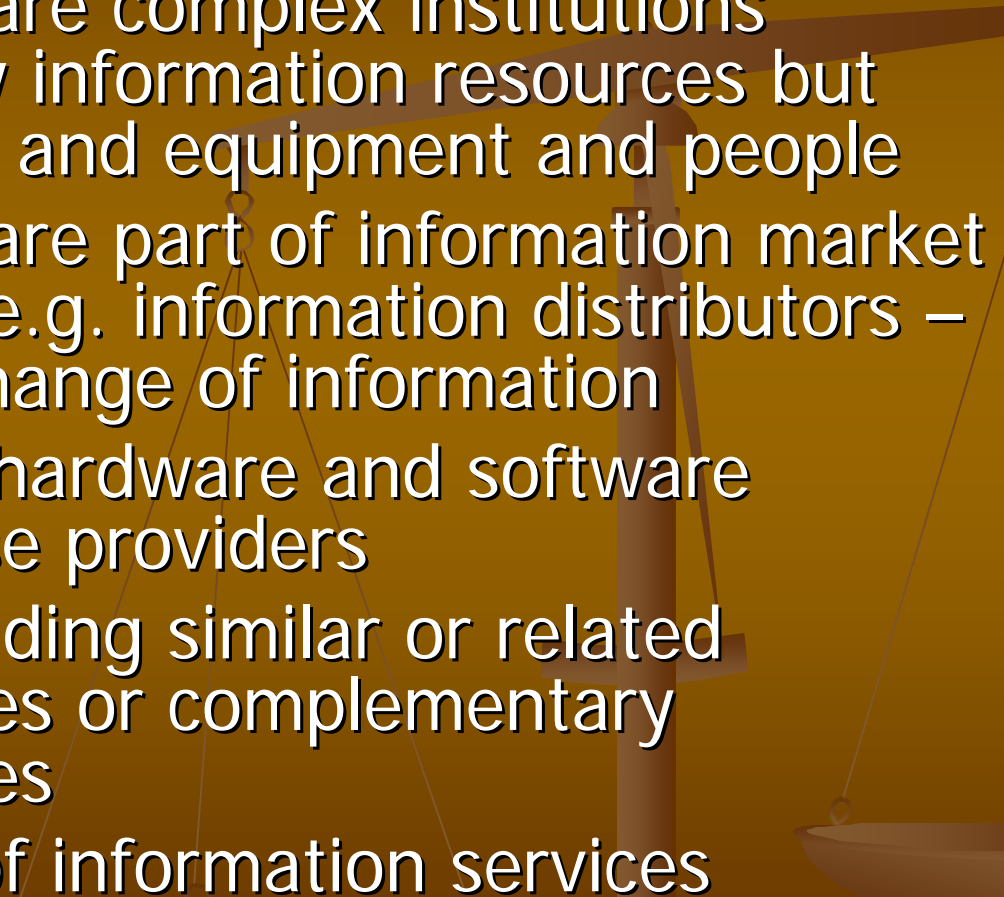# Managing Library and Information Services at the times of Change

Prof Joseph Ojiambo

Dean – School of Information Sciences
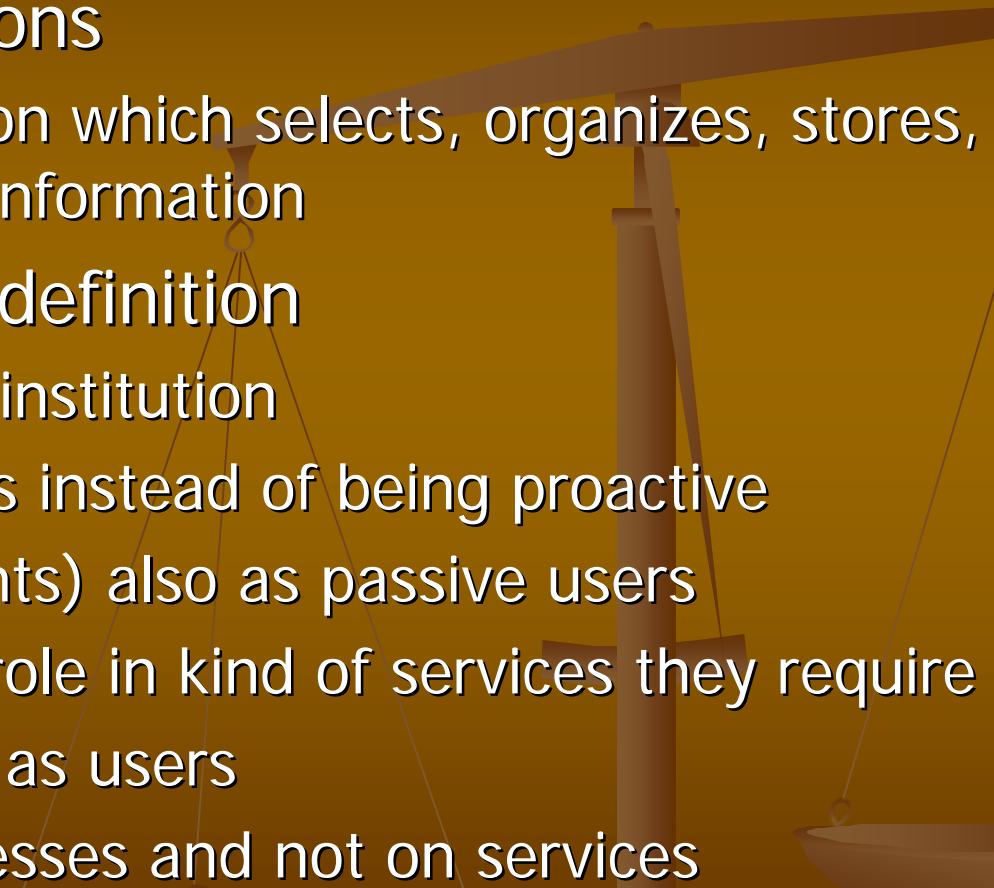
Moi University - Kenya

Outline

- Introduction
- What libraries and information services are all about
- The changing nature of the Information profession
- Implication of Paradigm shifts
- Critical issues for LIS Management: Internal
- Critical issues for LIS Management: External
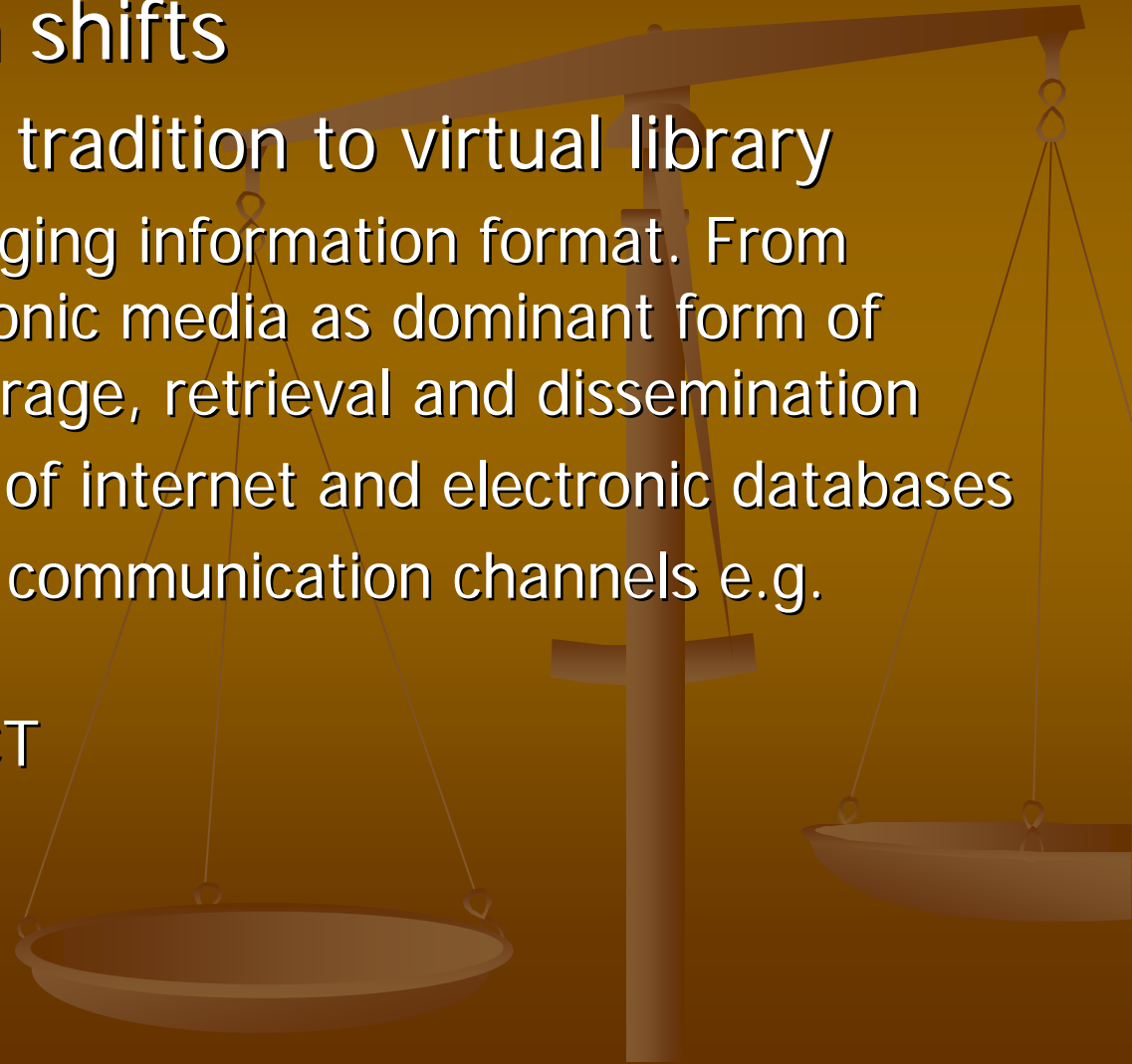- Library and information managers at the time of turbulent change

Introduction

- LIS organizations are complex institutions managing not only information resources but also finance, plant and equipment and people

- LIS organizations are part of information market with many actors e.g. information distributors – they facilitate exchange of information

- Support services (hardware and software providers, database providers

- Competitors: providing similar or related information services or complementary information services

- The client: users of information services

What are libraries and information services about?

- Traditional definitions
  - Library as institution which selects, organizes, stores, and disseminates information
- Implication of the definition
  - Library as passive institution
  - Reacts to problems instead of being proactive
  - Stakeholders (clients) also as passive users
  - Clients having no role in kind of services they require
  - Clients referred to as users
  - Emphasis on processes and not on services

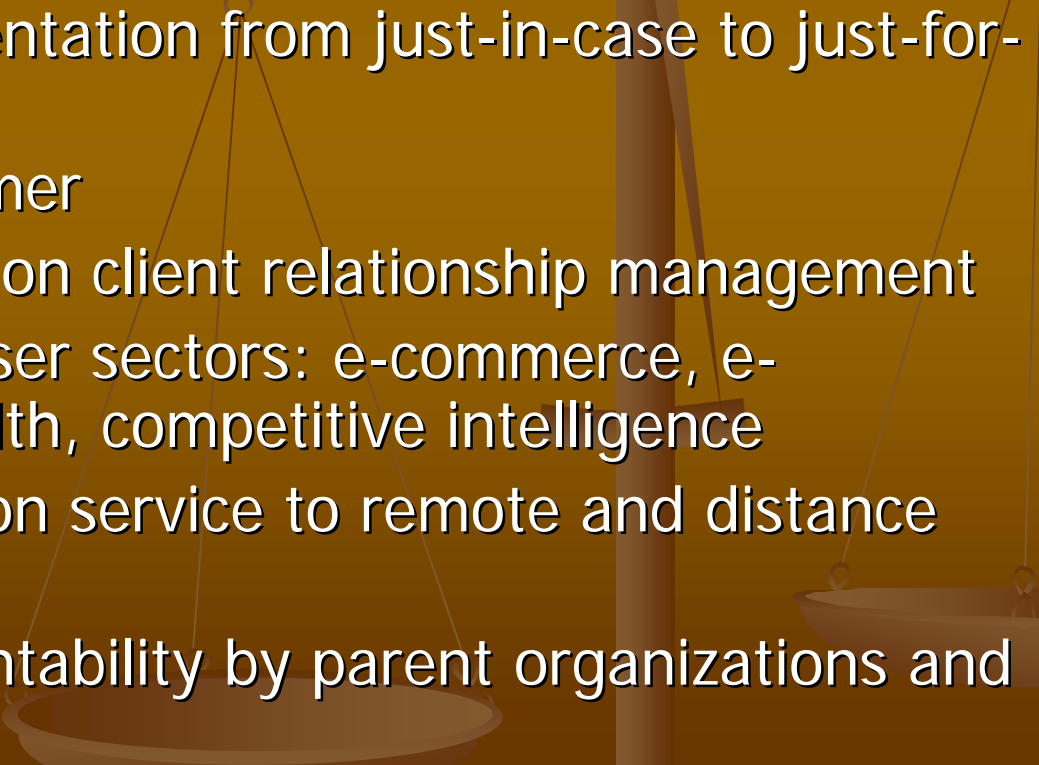# The changing nature of the Information profession

- **Three paradigm shifts**
  - **Transition from tradition to virtual library**
    - Increases changing information format. From paper to electronic media as dominant form of information storage, retrieval and dissemination
    - Increasing use of internet and electronic databases
    - Proliferation of communication channels e.g. mobile phones
    - Dominant of ICT

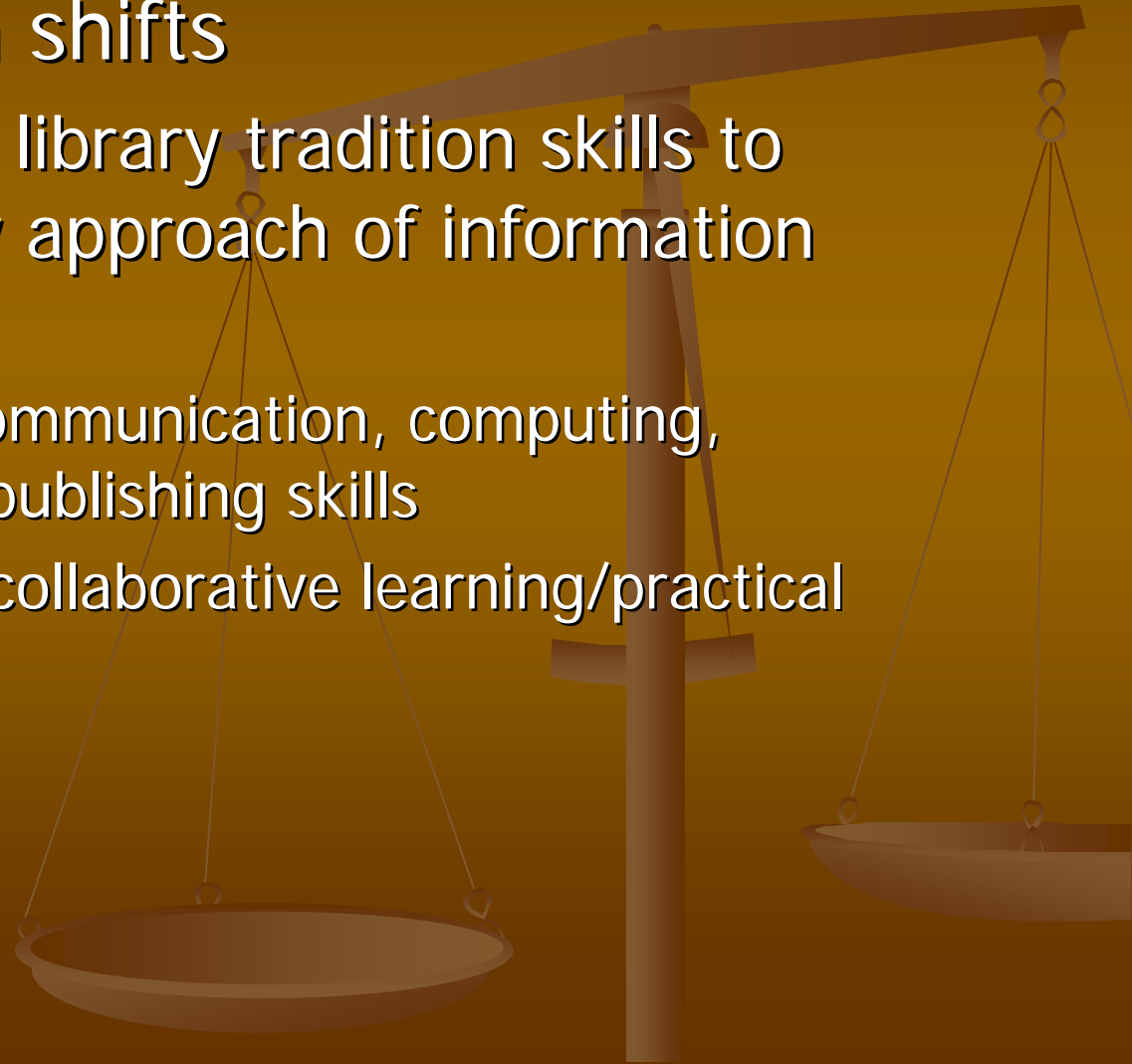# The changing nature of the Information profession

- Three Paradigm shifts
  - Transition from technical to client centered approach
    - Shift in service orientation from just-in-case to just-for-you
    - Focusing on customer
    - Growing emphasis on client relationship management
    - New information user sectors: e-commerce, e-governance, e-health, competitive intelligence
    - Need for information service to remote and distance users
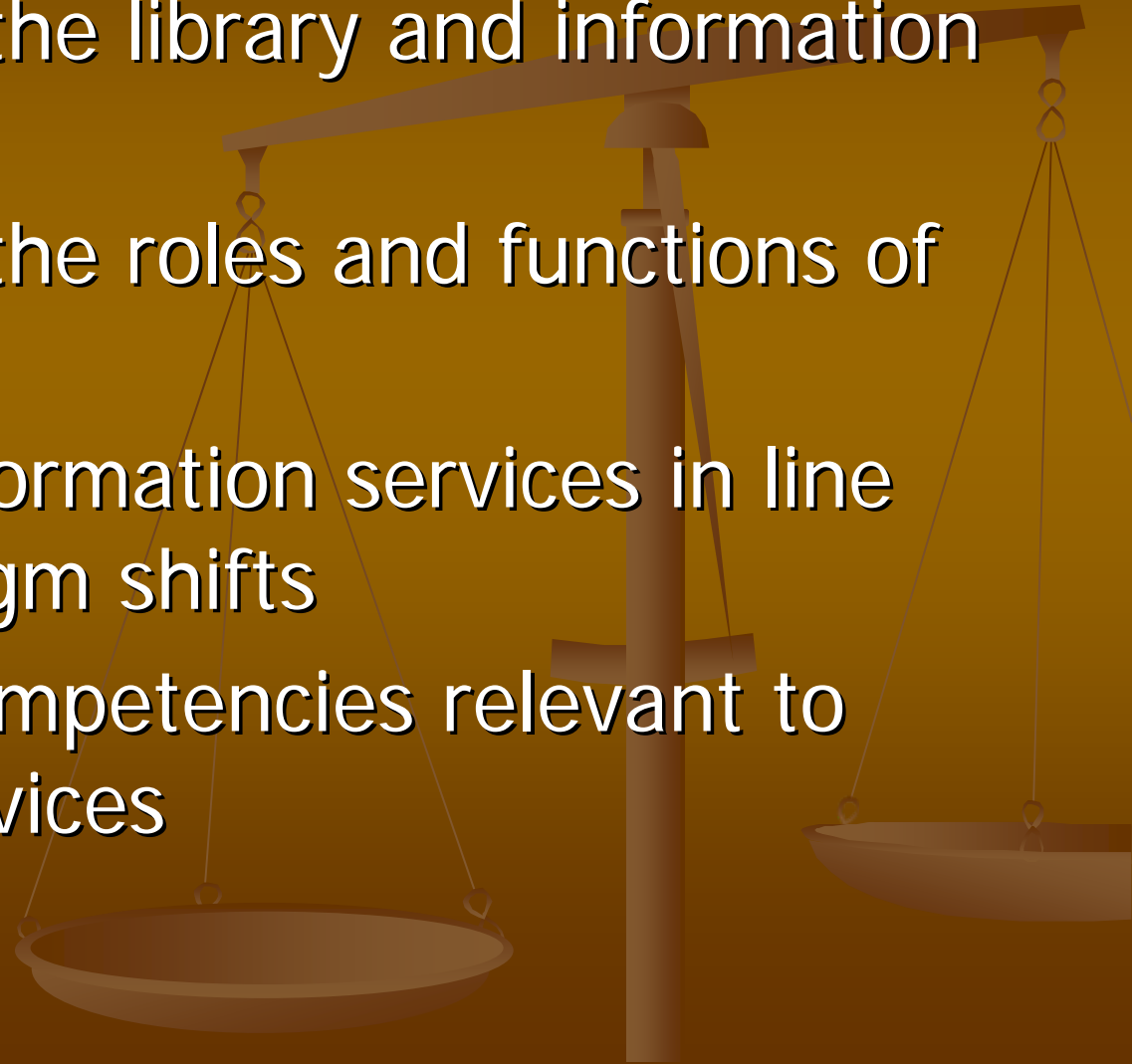   - Demand for accountability by parent organizations and society

The changing nature of the Information profession

- Three Paradigm shifts
  - Transition from library tradition skills to interdisciplinary approach of information communication
    - Information, communication, computing, management, publishing skills
    - Move towards collaborative learning/practical approach
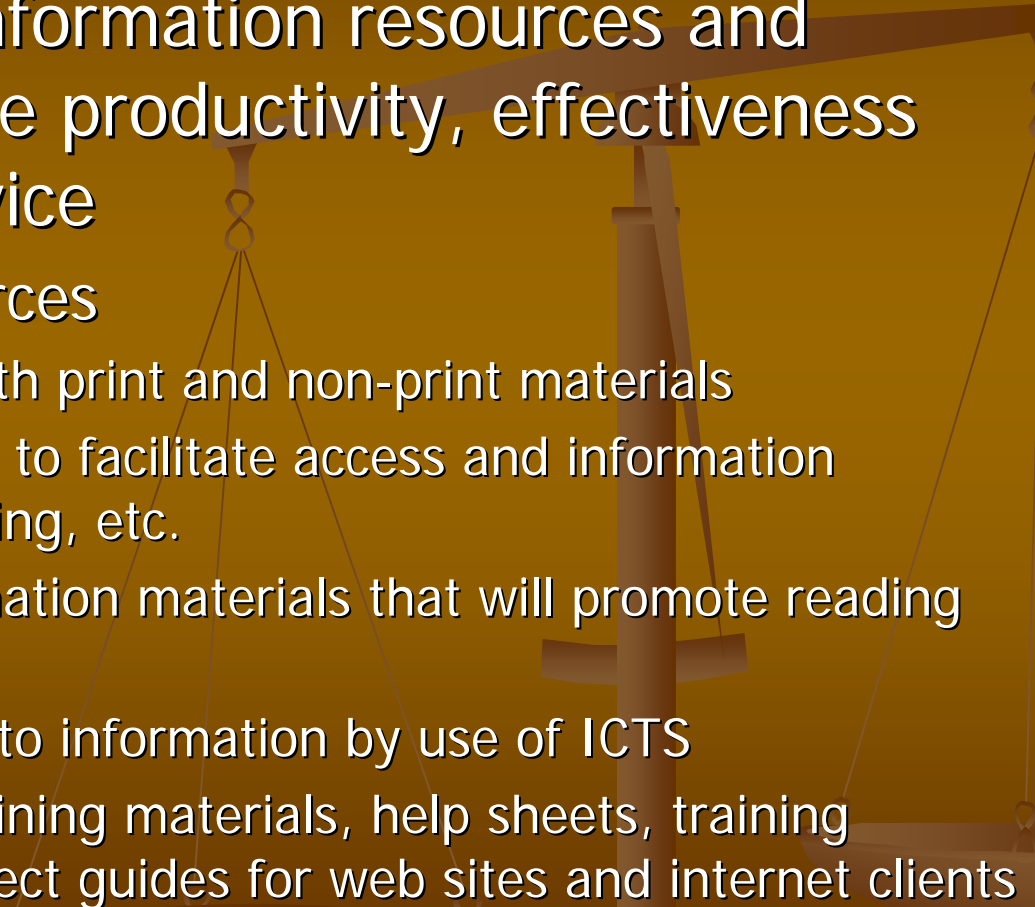   - Team work

Implication of Paradigm shifts

- Redefinition of the library and information services
- Redefinition of the roles and functions of LIS
- Redesigning information services in line with the paradigm shifts
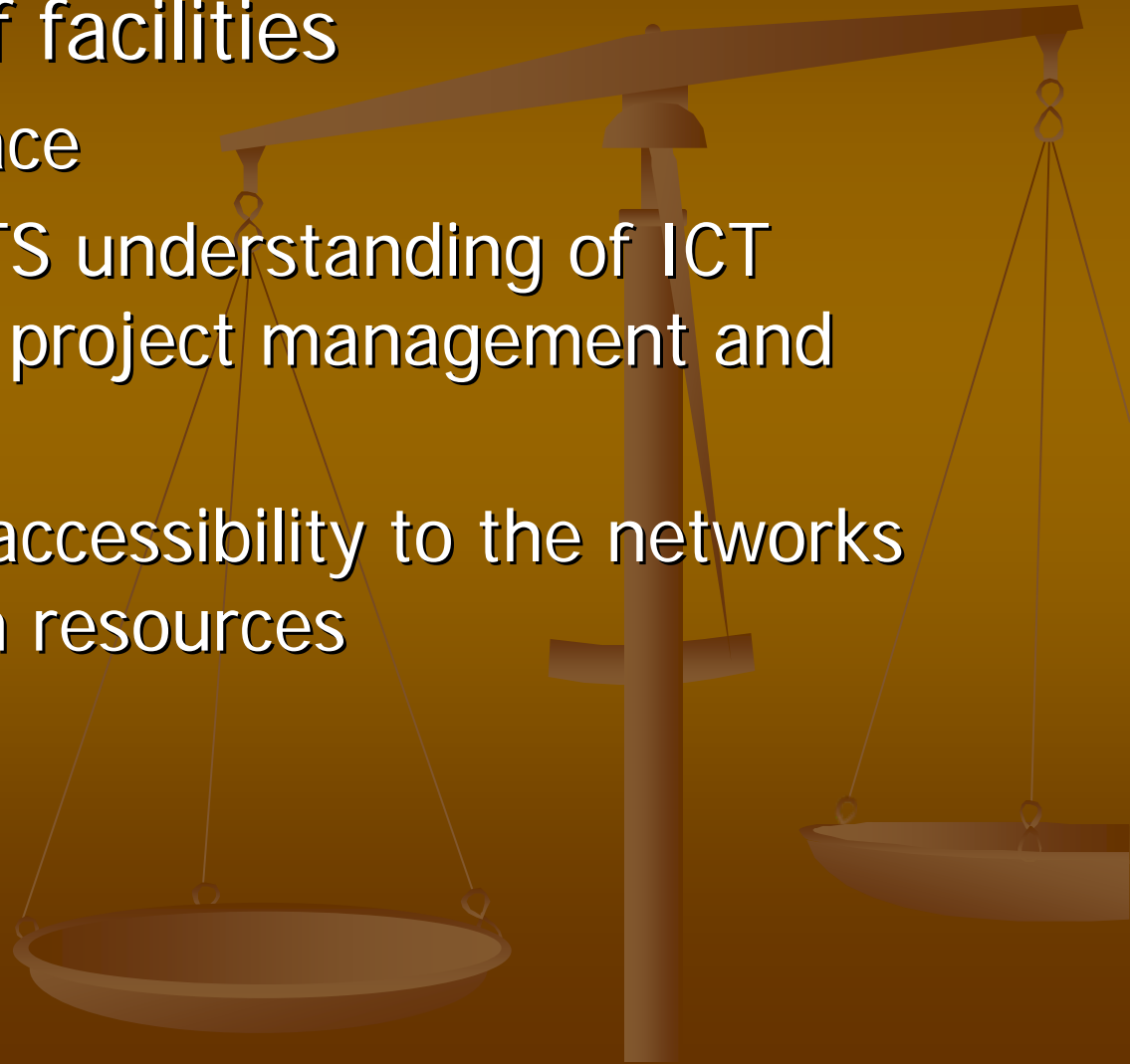- Identify new competencies relevant to modern LIS services

Critical issues for LIS Management: Internal

- Improvement of information resources and services to increase productivity, effectiveness and quality of service
  - Information resources
    - Combination of both print and non-print materials
    - Establish consortia to facilitate access and information sharing, inter-lending, etc.
    - Provision of information materials that will promote reading culture
    - Emphasize access to information by use of ICTS
    - Publishing web training materials, help sheets, training manuals, and subject guides for web sites and internet clients

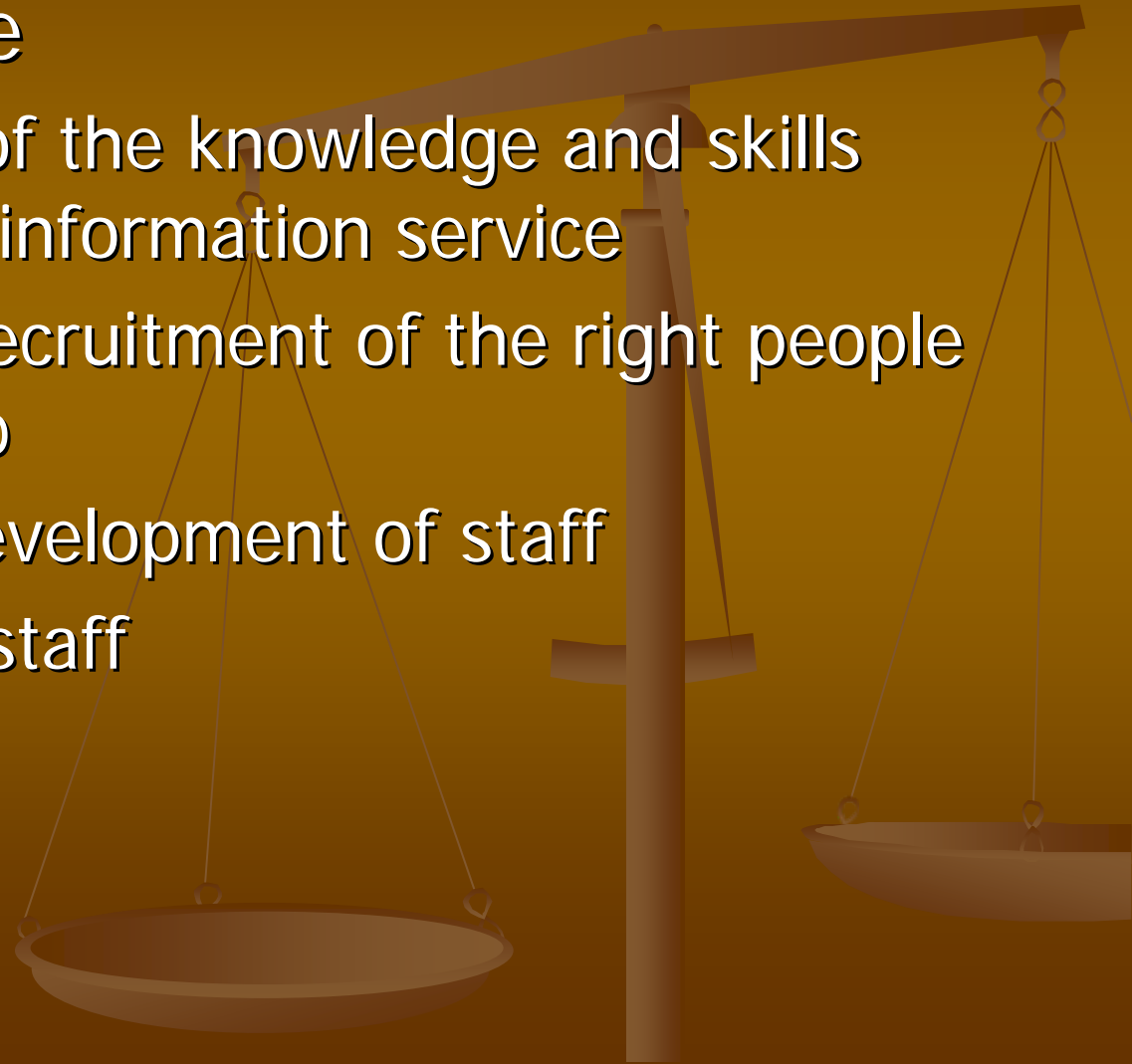# Critical issues for LIS Management: Internal … cont'd

- **Improvement of facilities**
    - Provision of space
    - Provision of ICTS understanding of ICT requirements – project management and team work
    - Ensure instant accessibility to the networks and information resources
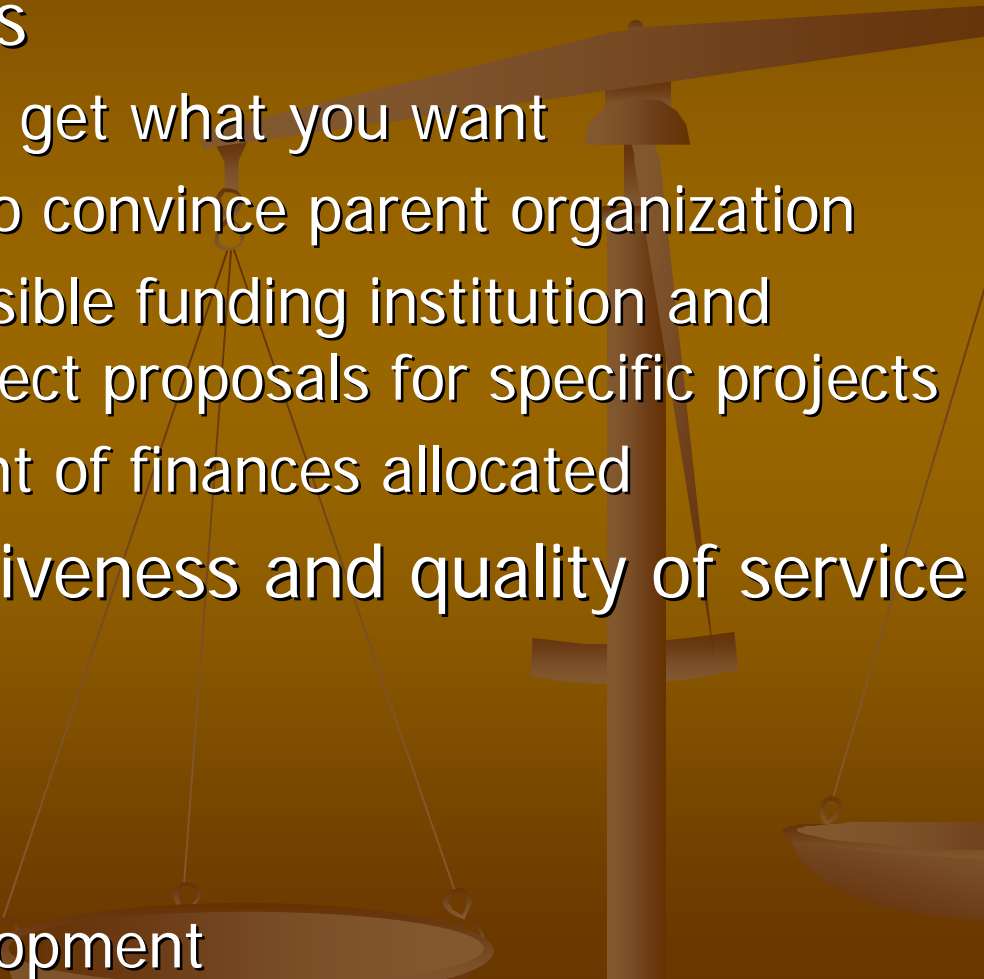
Critical issues for LIS Management: Internal … cont'd
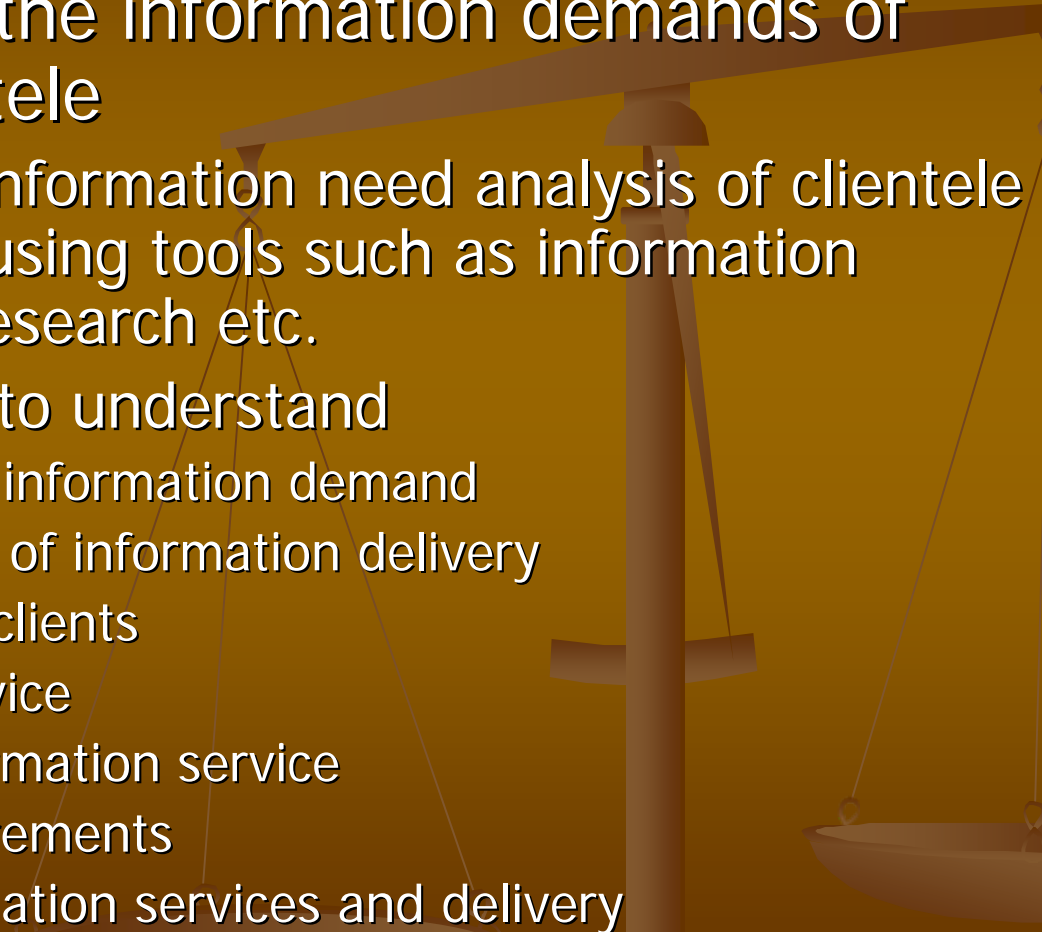
- Human resource
  - Establishment of the knowledge and skills required in the information service
  - Selection and recruitment of the right people for the right job
  - Training and development of staff
  - Motivating the staff

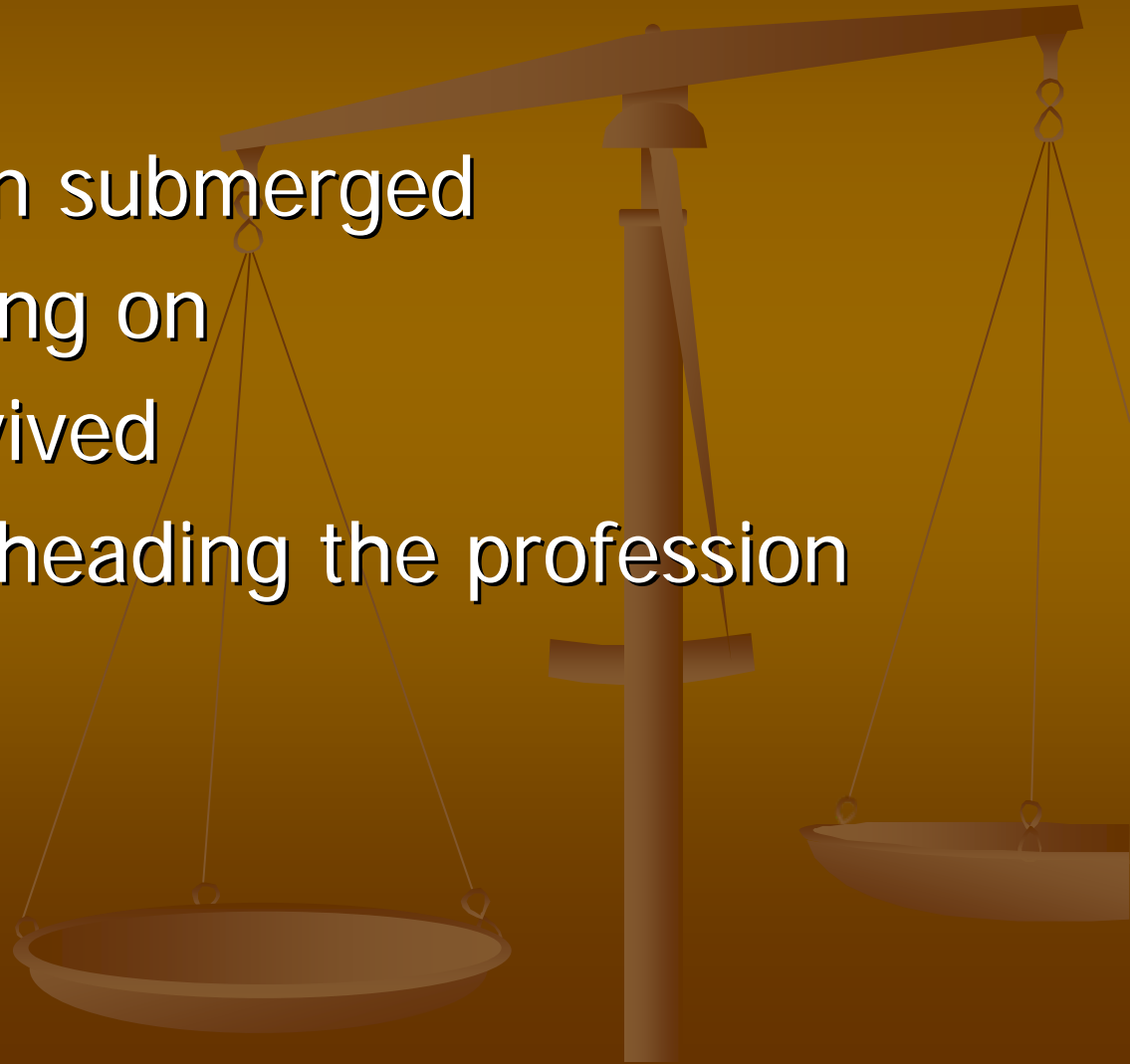# Critical issues for LIS Management: Internal … Cont'd

- Financial Resources
  - Not always easy to get what you want
  - Sound budgeting to convince parent organization
  - Networks with possible funding institution and preparation of project proposals for specific projects
  - Sound management of finances allocated
- Productivity, effectiveness and quality of service
  - Accountability
  - Integrity
  - Staff motivation
  - Training and development
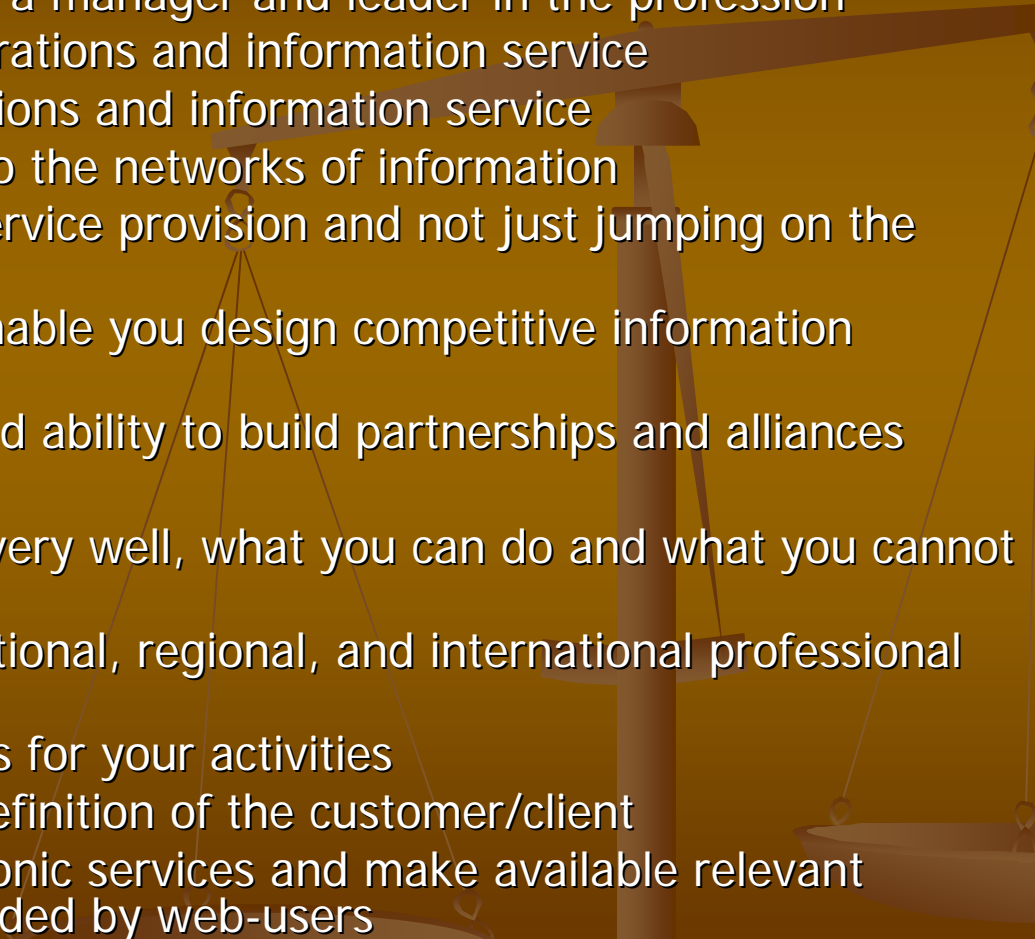
Critical issues for LIS Management: External

- Understanding of the information demands of your various clientele
  - Establishment of information need analysis of clientele with a purpose – using tools such as information seeking, market research etc.
  - This will help you to understand
    - The level of client information demand
    - Preferred medium of information delivery
    - Characteristics of clients
    - Peak hours of service
    - Some cost of information service
    - Information requirements
    - Planning of information services and delivery

Can library and information managers withstand the turbulence of change?

- Some have been submerged
- Some are hanging on
- Some have survived
- Some are spearheading the profession

How to survive and become productive LIS manager

- Stop being a technician – be a manager and leader in the profession
- Balance between library operations and information service
- Use of ICTS in library operations and information service
- Ensure instant accessibility to the networks of information
- Be a leader in information service provision and not just jumping on the bandwagon
- Know your competitors to enable you design competitive information services
- Possess business acumen and ability to build partnerships and alliances
- Be a leader and not Ruler
- Understand your institution very well, what you can do and what you cannot do
- Participate actively in the national, regional, and international professional conferences
- Know where to tap resources for your activities
- Operate with an extended definition of the customer/client
- Develop and maintain electronic services and make available relevant services and facilities demanded by web-users

END