

Education in Library and Information Science in India: Current Trends

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Abstract. *The paper provides a brief description of library and information science (LIS) education in India. It deals briefly the issues, challenges, common problems, structure of LIS programme, and it explains the quality of LIS education. The topic has chosen with a view to discuss the current trends in LIS programme being offered by departments of Library and Information Science in Indian universities and colleges. It also emphasizes the re-designing of the curriculum based on the emerging needs to match the new technological age. In this article, a detail analysis has been made on recent progress in Library and Information Science. This includes processing of knowledge acquisition, knowledge of computer, internet, information literacy and change in management. This article is highly useful for teachers, students and research scholars in LIS education.*

Keywords: LIS education, India

1. Introduction

Now libraries and information centers are called also as knowledge resource centers. The new trends in the profession shifted towards the digital library and virtual services. Libraries are using blogs, twitters, chat and YouTube and other web 2.0 tools for being more user friendly, and facilitate virtual services. The resource sharing with the help of consortium of e-resources along with internet and intranet growth made revolutionary changes in the profession. The database creation, institutional repositories, open access initiatives is popular in libraries at present. There is a need for accommodating these important new issues in the syllabi of the LIS programme which comprises the three 'T's formula. i.e., Teaching, Technology and Team building. It is inevitable that the traditional profession in shifting towards the modern practices due to many reasons like application of ICT, communication technologies, development of databases, multimedia, web page design, web tools, internet resources, Meta data and digital content management.

2. Issues in LIS Education

In India the levels of courses range from certificate course, undergraduate diploma course, postgraduate Diploma course, Bachelor in Library and Information Science (BLIS), Master in Library Information Science (MLIS) advanced training course information system and management and technology, M. Phil, Ph.D and D.Litt programme in LIS. Library science courses are never being first option of the majority of students. Most of the students turn to Library Science after having failed to secure admission to other prestigious courses of study. Strength and reputation of LIS course depend on the teaching standards and adequate faculty strength with good academic record, up to date knowledge and development in the field of LIS and adequate teaching experience.

Analysis of course contents reveals that the LIS program in South Asia concentrates mainly on training students to manage a library by providing in depth knowledge of traditional library practices there is wide disparity in the course, duration, number and name of papers, contents, number of lecturers and practice, methods of teaching and

evaluation, and grading system. Therefore it is an urgent need that curricula be revised by reducing the traditional value of education and to introduce emerging areas such as information marketing, knowledge of management, online information system, information processing and retrieval system, information and communication technology. Revised curriculum must be capable of preparing the future professionals to meet the new challenges in the field of LIS.

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) in India has identified that libraries and information centers are important units to promote knowledge and so it has rightly take care of learning needs of LIS family. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) of India has identified that libraries and information centers are important units to promote knowledge. The working group on libraries (WGL) of the NKC has already made some recommendations on these lines.

- Identify, sponsor and conduct R&D programme in the LIS field
- Develop techniques for database creation and retrieval in Indian languages.
- Formulate lists of subject headings for Indian subjects.
- Study information needs of different cultural, academic and professional groups.

Librarians are not mere information retrievers and providers; they are guides and torch bearers of knowledge. The curriculum of LIS education in India needs to be based on the traditional library practices as well as modern trends for library functions and services by adapting the ICT application.

3. Recent Technology changes

During the last two decades the trends in the LIS profession are changing rapidly and there is also a need to revamp the educational programme to manage the new challenges in the profession with the help of an advanced level curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) has made a profound impact on the life and work of people. There is a shift from teaching to learning and from face to face learning to e-learning. Our curriculum has to be broadly interdisciplinary across knowledge management, information technology, information networks, open source software, web technology and e-information. There are many challenges before libraries and librarians i.e. the libraries must change from collection oriented institutions to service oriented organizations and librarians have to change from custodians of books and documents to information managers and disseminators.

LIS profession is treated as a noble profession as it serves the users in getting their information requirement. The LIS education is also developing fast and the growth of the learned organizations is also taking proper care of the change. Today the expectation of the LIS professionals is that they should be competent enough to manage, to provide access to organize, acquire and preserve materials in print and electronic form. For this they will keep pace with the technological changes, and changing times. The skills required for LIS professional systems and they also need to have knowledge of alternative publishing models. To face the challenges posed by the fast changing technology, information explosion, scattering of information, multidisciplinary nature, the flow of information and need for quick access to information, there is a processing need that LIS professionals should be trained accordingly. Since the trends and challenges are the same throughout the country, the education imparted to the professionals should have uniformity and it should be in conformity to the standards established in the field of Library and Information Science the world over.

4. LIS Programs in South Asia

South, Asia consists of seven countries; out of these seven India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have provision for LIS education. Another three countries, Nepal, Butan and Maldives depend on outside support for education and training. There are a lot of variations between and within countries and institutions in South Asia. There are no uniform models. There are one year BLIS and MLIS courses and there are two years integrated course also. And some universities and colleges are experimenting with the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). The revolution in information and communication technology has considerably changed both the education of information

professionals and information science as well. Several curricula in South Asian Universities particularly in India added many courses on the use of ICT and are gradually moving from 'pure' library science to the hybrid field of information management, which draws its philosophy from both Library Science and Information Systems.

5. LIS Education In India

The Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India may be said to have taken place with the introduction of a training course in 1911, in the erstwhile state of Baroda. The real beginning of systematic education in LIS can be traced to the initiative of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan during the period 1926-1931 at the Madras University Library in association with Madras Library Association. The summer school leading to certificate in Library Science, which Madras University continued under the stewardship of Dr.S.R. Ranganathan till 1937?

Later, Andhra University, Banaras Hindu University, Bombay University, Calcutta University and Delhi University introduced Post-Graduate Diploma courses in Library Science in the year 1935, 1941, 1944, 1946 and 1948 respectively. Apart from these Universities, Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC) in Bangalore and National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) in New Delhi started the Library Science Education Programme. During 1947, altogether 27 Universities were offering Diploma courses in library science. In 1957, for the first time in the country, Aligarh Muslim University started BLIS course. The course was offered at different levels such as certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's PG Diploma, Master's and Research Degree Programme (i.e.) M.Phil and Ph.D under different modes and schemes. The growth of Universities during post independent ensured improvement in the quality of education. It is due to the importance of libraries in various institutions, research centers and government departments, the demand for librarians also increased. This actually gave a boost to library education in many parts of India.

Besides, there are several other Open Universities imparting Library Education as Distance Education. The professional association such as Delhi Library Association (DLA) and the Polytechnic institutions throughout the country are also imparting LIS education as lower level such as certificate, diploma in library and information science.

6. Objectives of Library and Information Science Education

The goal of Library and Information Science Education is the preparation of personnel for the task of successful performance of different types of libraries with an insight into the role of these libraries in a fast changing society. There will always be changes in the environment, and these changes will affect librarians and information professionals, their role, job opportunities, self-image, motivation and even survival. Librarians therefore need to find a solution or a quick recline and this will certainly not be a short-term. We live in an information society where the development of information technology and telecommunication networks is accompanied by a corresponding increase in knowledge with a rapidly growing flow of information. The new information environment requires new skills in seeking, processing and using information. The base for individual ability to understand and use information is a qualitative, ongoing learning process. Learning and education are important topics in the information society and the educational situation is changing for several reasons, which develop from the social, cultural, political and economic changes in the society. The role of librarians and information professionals in this new environment has been strongly influenced by these changes.

The main objectives of LIS profession are to provide training for building up leadership qualities among the LIS profession, develop knowledge of the latest techniques of information storage, transfer and retrieval help to acquire necessary skills in handling, accessing and application of electronic resources, tools and media and help to know the latest developments in the information technology (IT). To sum up, the basic aims of Library and Information Science Education may be as follows:

- To develop necessary technical skills

- To develop administrative skills
- To develop service orientation
- To develop through knowledge by various sources of information necessary to give the traditional and modern library services.
- To develop the professional awareness.

7. New Development in LIS Field

The curriculum of LIS must be reviewed continuously; the trends in the profession are also reflected in it. The trends in the LIS from traditional practices in the profession shifted towards the digital library, including digitization, change in the practices due to application of information technology and knowledge management techniques etc. The impact of e-resources on libraries with the help of the consortium, e-publications, web 2.0 tools, libraries 2.0, and internet and intranet growth made the revolutionary changes in the profession. E-resources have become the order of the day. It has several features-such as subject gateways which provide online resources on a particular theme or discipline. There has been a paradigm shift in the methodology of reading with the advent of e-resources. Users of higher educational institutions are increasingly looking for electronic information. For that there is a need to accommodate all these new issues in the syllabi of the LIS programmes.

The information needs and pattern of information use by users are changing as part of cultural change in society. *“Do the job you love and love the job you do”* Should be one of the strategies of the LIS profession. According to the new trends in LIS profession, there are three categories of competencies. They are;

- Professional competencies
- Personnel competencies and
- Core competencies

8. Curriculum Development

In the 1980's a marked change in LIS education was required due to the introduction of IT to the library field. As a result, the revision was initiated by the UGC in the early 1990's. The University Grants Commission (UGC) constituted the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) on Library and Information Science under the chairmanship of Prof.D.N. Koula (1993). Soon after this, many changes accord in the ICT sector which had a direct impact on the libraries. As a result the revised curriculum was published in 2001 by Prof.C. R. Karisiddappa (2001), the chairman. However it is felt that lacunae persist so that LIC professional in India are still unable to get full satisfaction out of the present curriculum and teaching.

LIS courses offered by Indian library schools in different universities have become partially irrelevant since long. The debate on changing the LIS curricula has been going on for the last few years, but nothing concrete has yet been done at the national level, except for some cosmetic changes. The syllabus have more ICT courses like digital libraries, digital multimedia, web technology, web management, database technology, web page design, e-publishing, expert systems, knowledge management, networking and consortium, telecommunication and data transmitting, content management systems, network technologies and semantic web. The courses include both theory and practical sessions. Besides, there is a need for interpersonal communication skills among the LIS professionals, it helps interact more with the users and provide good service to them. In this context, personality development and communicative skills may be included in the LIS curriculum.

Library and Information Science has become multidisciplinary subject as it deals with information, which is applicable to all the subjects. More particularly, management and technology has been an integral part of the library profession and the current demand for library professionals to have managerial and technological skills in addition to sound librarianship.

9. New Challenges

Curricula remodeling is a process whereby the choices of designing a learning experience for students are made and then activated through a set of coordinated activities. Curriculum development for the professionals is a logical as well as practical process to reach the problem solving stages ultimately. Today, information professional is required to be informed evaluator, instructor, service marketer, innovator, data miner, information aggregators, information consultant, effective communicator and knowledge manager. He is supposed to have workable knowledge of handling ICTs, web based library and information services, digitization of document and IPR issues. He is also supposed to train users in making effective use of networked electronic information services, organize library outreach services etc. With such countless responsibilities, only multi-skilled information professionals can survive and thrive in the emerging information era.

There is need to change the LIS education system in order to face the new developments in the profession, the following important points may be useful;

- Practical orientation is an essential concept to be incorporated
- The concept of creating, managing and maintaining databases is helpful in LIS student's current job.
- Model curriculum based on the cutting edge course contents and ICTs.
- Teaching and evaluation methods must internalize the spirit of the emerging mechanism.
- Information literacy and knowledge management must be integrated into the LIS course and reflected in the nomenclature.
- Collaboration with the information and data providers to provide trail run for digital resources and training to the students to develop the skills.

10. Change Management

Change is permanent and rapid change is important to the survival and success of any library. Lucy Jeynes has presented the key steps in change management as follows:

- Building the vision (*'be bold', 'be audacious'*)
- Mobilizing commitment (change is about people)
- Diagnosing reality (the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threats analysis)
- Knowing the change cycle.

Libraries and Information Centers are intermediaries between information providers and consumers. Library and Information Professionals are basically facilitators of the professional and social goals by providing instant access to valuable knowledge and information in a cost effective manner. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan's laws are valid and useful for all time; the only change needed is to replace the word '*books*' in his laws with 'knowledge and information.

Technology will continue to change and libraries and librarians have to use the changing technology to provide the best access and service to the patrons. The library is no longer defined simply as a building or a physical repository that houses information. So the librarians must change the library environment as pathways to high quality information in a variety of electronic media and information resources.

It is inevitable that the traditional profession is a shift towards the modern practices due to many reasons like application of ICT, communication techniques, development of databases, multimedia, web page design, web tools, internet resources, metadata and digital content management etc. Therefore it is high time to make analysis of the changing context and to fine-tune the LIS courses accordingly. We have no choice but to make the LIS course consistent with the job market.

11. Shortcomings

A country like India has multilingual and multicultural agglomeration of population, complexities of the situation and diversity of information needs, setting up of stereotyped library and appointing stereotyped library professionals at all places may not work very well. We need to set up Learning Resources Centers and Knowledge Centers that may really conform to meet the information needs of various segments of society including the literates. For that there is an urgent need to redesign the LIS programmes.

Only 50% of the LIS schools have changed their curriculum according to the new trends and development in the field of LIS. We have to examine carefully the courses being offered by us in our institutions in order to ensure that 50% credit be given to the traditional school of idea. At present only 40 percent of the area is related to IT components. Faculty, curriculum, student's intake, learning support, teaching methods are critical components for the success of any LIS programme. But LIS programme in majority of the developing countries like India are suffering from acute shortage of faculty, competent students and hence the internet connectivity is still a luxury for many of the departments. There was not enough hardware and software on the one hand and web based resources and services on the other. For that, would be librarians future is in bleak. In many universities either in regular stream or distance mode, the students have obtained degrees with limited theoretical knowledge.

12. Student's Intake and Infrastructure in LIS

Library science courses are never the first option of the majority of students. Most of the students turn to Library Science after having failed to secure admission to other prestigious courses of study. During the last two decades there has been a mushrooming of LIS courses available through correspondence course or by the more respectable nomenclature '*distance education*'. Most of such schools are ill-equipped for LIS education that they have proved to be money minting machines for the parent Universities due to higher enrollments. At present about 125 institutions offer LIS programme in India. Of these, the MLIS course is being offered by 102 Universities, 85 Universities have Ph.D Research facilities and D.Lit at two places (BHU and Utkal) only. It has been observed that more and more institutions and libraries are open library science courses, without having even the minimum facilities for teaching, with poor libraries and funds, they have started MLIS programme.

The LIS department, need to impart the student with subject content-both traditional and emerging trends; computer skills with adequate hands on practice to meet the demands of the real work situation and communication skills for personality as well as professional development. Such curriculum really imparts required employability skills.

The LIS students will have to compete with other professionals to survive in the ever changing information handling management. Based on sources available, the present LIS education system in India indicates that an immediate revision of curricula is essential and unavoidable not only for its survival but also for facing the major challenges brought out by the changing information society.

Therefore it is high time for LIS faculty to give close and thoughtful attention with regard to the curriculum design to make it relevant to the demands of knowledge society and develop products capable of getting respectable professional positions and work with self esteem.

13. Recent Trends of Research in LIS in India

Research in Library and Information Science briefly means the collection and analysis of original data on a problem of librarianship done within the library schools according to scientific and scholarly standards (Kumar, P.S.G. 1999).

During the reason past, a quite number of research activities have been carried out in the universities and research institutions in various parts of the world. LIS education in India has now become ten decades old and is centered in the universities. This is a professional education and of late doing quite well in the job market. For the past three

decades quite a number of research activities have been carried out in the different universities in India and this has improve the status of the field even more. After independence it has been noticed that the amount of research activities has drastically increased. In India about 130 Universities and Research Institution are offering Ph.D programmes in LIS.

Dr. S. R. Renganathan introduced Library Science Education at the University of the Delhi in 1951 and it becomes the first University in India to award Ph.D Degree in Library Science in the year 1957 to D. B. Krishna Rao. Who worked on “*faceted classification for agriculture*” Library and Information Science is an emerging discipline and now LIS education has become a global phenomenon. In India near about 130 Universities which offer Ph.D in LIS do not have any particular and single data base or any documentary source which holds a list of the doctoral theses completed throughout these years. Any one who wishes to know about the research activities that have been carried out in the past or the research projects being under taken in the present days need to consult several sources to get the accurate information. In spite of their efforts they are often misguided and reach to false inferences. This all happens due to lack of a proper research agenda prepared by experts in the field who have immense research experience and a single source containing records of the research activities being carried out all over the country not only in the field of Library Science but also in almost every discipline.

Though India has contributed a lot to the field of Library and Information Science it lacks in the research in LIS, if there is any, it is not up to the mark. This is mainly due to;

1. Traditional method of teaching and lack of research orientation in most of the Indian Universities
2. Lack of research experience of the faculty members and the librarians.
3. Inadequate strength of the teaching faculty in may Universities and thereby overburdening them with Classroom teaching.
4. Inadequate financial support
5. Lack of good library facilities and services.
6. Absence of identification of the research area (Kumar, P.S.G., 1987) till the year 2008 there are 802 Doctoral degrees awarded by the different Universities in India (Chandrasekara and Ramesh, 2009). For this there is an urgent need to deal with the problem areas to contemplate on wholesome changes for Success of LIS research and to re-establish the importance of LIS research for professional practice.

14. Suggestions

- An accreditation agency for LIS courses in our country at the National level is urgently required in the pattern of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for Technical Education and Medical Council of India (MCI) for Medical Education. The absence of such a national body has been the main cause of inadequacy of quality education in LIS in India.
- For effective teaching and learning we will have to follow the technology based learning and teaching (TLT) and Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) is the need of the hour.
- There is also a need to formulate a standard syllabus for all the Universities to follow the concept of standardization, which may be helpful for the migration of students and professionals anywhere for seeking the employment. The suggested standard syllabus may be similar to that of the UGC.
- To establish a computer laboratory in the department and train the students for a competitive world.
- Start Data Bank, information analysis centers and transition centers etc.
- Refresher courses in LIS are to be conducted often by Academic Staff Colleges in Universities for Librarians and Teachers in Library Science in order to update their professional skill in specialized areas like digitization, automation, web based information searching, web page development and application of web 2.0 in the library etc.
- Student evaluation of faculty must be encouraged to keep the faculty agile.

- LIS courses must be based upon the leading edge, feedback from the Alumni, and needs of the existing and emerging job markets.
- Students must be trained in online searching information literacy, interpersonal skills, research skills, and leadership competencies.
- For quality assurance, mechanisms for professional accreditation must be evolved,
- Commercialization and privatizations of education must be regulated,
- Open and distance education courses should be allowed only if the adequate faculty, infrastructure and transparency are in place.
- Funding bodies like UGC in India and Library Association like Indian Library Association (ILA) and Indian Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science (IATLIS) in India should play a leading role in promoting excellence and collaboration.

15. Conclusion

In a networked society, based on the information economy, the LIS profession has to change its outlook and methods to learn new tools and retain the dwindling clientele encroached upon by the IT people and allied professions. Librarians are not mere information retriever and providers; they are guides and torch bearers of knowledge. There is a need for the qualified professional as many changes in the profession during the past few years have taken place for future challenges. The curriculum of LIS education in India definitely needs to be based on the traditional library practices as well as modern trends for library functions and services by adapting the ICT application. Thus the LIS curriculum development today is a very difficult task in order to keep in mind the changing paradigms of library and information resource centers. Changing of the conservative thoughts and to get in its place the mind, tools, methods and mechanisms is an imperative need of the hour and that alone will fulfill the future dreams of a knowledge thirsty class of LIS professionals in the country.

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