

EMERGING TRENDS IN LIS EDUCATION ON DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

An attempt is made at this point to undertaking issues associated in the direction of the LIS education in India and specified some suggestions based on routine features and experiences. This paper presents a historical outlook of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India. This paper discusses the study also put forward the fundamentals of the LIS curriculum and the vision of LIS education in India for future decade and stresses the wants of revised course contents and allied challenges for readiness of Indian LIS education in digital environment. Finally, this paper highlights the recommendations of National Knowledge Commission offer an opportunity for restructuring and modifying the educational system of LIS that needs to be snatched.

Keywords: LIS education, ICT, LIS Education Systems, LIS profession, Digital Library, National Knowledge Commission

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Bank reports, today almost two third of the world's wealth comes from knowledge. Knowledge is now a key input for an organization's success and the currency of the new millennium and wherever greater intensity of knowledge activities exists, it has the potential to transform those societies into knowledge-based societies.¹

During the last few years, it seems in India a major changes as regards to LIS profession and professionals. India is a significant place in the world as regards to its history of vastly developed civilization and culture and way of life. But, in current years, India is having all types of libraries, which are located at the well-known places of learning. They include State Central libraries, Regional libraries, Oriental Manuscript libraries, and libraries attached to educational institutions, Research centers, Religious/Cultural organizations, Learned Societies and libraries managed by private organizations. At the advent of information and communication technology (ICT), besides the conventional documents, these libraries are in the process of acquiring digitized documents and resources. These libraries make use of all modern ICT facilities in organizing their resources and offering all types of services such as Internet Access, CD Rom Searching, Audio-Visual Service, Photocopying technology, News clipping service, Database Searching Service, On-line Networking, On-line Information Service On-line Reservation Service, E-Query Services using latest technology. In this group, the libraries attached to research institutes such as BARC library, TIFR library, and Information centers of ICAR, DSIR,

DESIDOC, IIT libraries, and BITS in biotechnology. Some of the universities and other educational institutes are also rendering automated library services from national centers to international through networks. The libraries of the metropolitan places like Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, Chennai, etc. are also interrelated by different networks like: DELNET, CALIBNET, BONET, PUNENET, MANET respectively. The scientific libraries, institutional libraries and information centers are also interconnected via computer and other network facilities named CSIRNET, INFLIBNET, NICNET, and ERNET etc.

LIS EDUCATION IN INDIA

In India, the Library and Information Science (LIS) education have taken place with the introduction of a training course in 1911, in the previous State of Baroda. The real beginning of systematic education in LIS is able to be traced to the initiatives 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, DRTC in Bangalore and NISCAIR in New Delhi started the library science education programmes. 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 B.L.Sc Course. The courses were offered at different levels such as Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's, P.G. Diploma, Master's and research degree programmes i.e. M Phil and Ph. D under different modes (on regular/on campus or distance/off campus or sometimes both) and schemes (annual or semester). The growth of universities during post-independent India ensured improvement in the quality of education. It is due to the importance of libraries in various institutions, research centres and government departments, the demand for librarians also increased. This actually gave boost to Library Science Education in India.²

PRESENT SCENARIO

The major aims of LIS courses to generate skilled LIS professionals to cope up with the new frontiers of librarianship like computer , information technology, information and communication technology, information management, knowledge management, information storage and retrieval. Currently, LIS courses are offered through the formal universities and deemed universities, open universities, degree colleges, associations, non university institutions such as DRTC, INSDOC, etc.

At present more than 118 universities and institutions are engaged in imparting LIS education in the country. Around 105 universities offer Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) course, 78 provide the Master of Library and Information (MLIS) courses while 21 schools/ departments offer two-year integrated courses. Nearly 16 universities offer Master of Philosophy

(M.Phil.) and 46 universities provide Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in LIS. Two universities also provide D.Litt Degrees. In addition, Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC), Bangalore, and the National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR), New Delhi, previously known as Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC) impart M. Sc. in Information Science and Associateship in LIS respectively. The University Grants Commission (UGC) Model Curriculum lists the six levels of LIS courses including Certificate in Library Science, Diploma in Library Science, Bachelor's Degree in Library and Information Science, Post-Graduate Diplomas in Information Technology, Archives and Documentation and Library Automation, Master of Library and Information Science (Both one year and integrated courses), Associateship in Information Science (Equivalent to MLISc) and Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy at Research level³.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

LIS Professionals have to face many challenges to meet the present and future generations and prospects of Library and Information Science to bring the quality education and practice. The ultimate aim and purpose of doing the professional courses is to obtain an excellent job. But nowadays most of the open universities have limitless intake of students; as a consequence, qualitative students are not coming out from these universities. In addition, notwithstanding having higher degrees with good percentage, they are ineffective and unproductive in the field of professional.

Following points are other biggest challenges and issues that the LIS education system is facing in this day and age:⁴

- Lack of Admission procedure
- Lack of finance policy
- Inadequate Infrastructures
- Inadequate of Knowledge and Training
- LIS course duration, curricula
- Insufficient Contact Classes
- Absence of Accreditation
- Lack of supporting policy
- Lack of a global Perspective
- Lack of Library Visit
- Lack of Permanent Faculty for Distance Program
- Lack of Evaluation & Medium of instruction

SUGGESTIONS

- Admissions should be done through conducting proper admission tests or based on excellent academic proof. Practical hours should be augmented and attendance should be made mandatory during contact classes.
- The syllabus of LIS courses should be updated at all levels. It is strongly considered that the course duration at Masters Level should be of four semesters. Dissertation/project work should be in the third semester and practical training/work experience should be given in the fourth semester.⁵
- Permanent faculty should be appointed in all schools who impart correspondence programs and the teaching style must be innovative to face the changing ICT environment.
- All LIS schools in India should have obtained the required infrastructure for imparting practical training e.g. well-equipped information and communication technology (ICT) laboratory with equipments such as telephony, cable, satellite, television and radio, computer mediated conferencing and video conferencing as well as digital technologies include computers, the Internet, www, intranet and software application and latest library management software i.e. LIBSYS, Alice For Windows, VTLS and SOUL etc.⁶
- Mobile technology learning should be encouraged using LAN or long –range ‘wireless’ network services. WAP (Wireless Access Protocol) enabled phones like Reliance Mobile.
- E-learning techniques to be introduced to get better the quality of the products with minimum qualified teachers
- Increasing and developing the competencies and self-assurance among the professionals by giving knowledge of latest technology.
- Study centers should take regular evening classes in selected major cities for the convenience of the working group of students instead of organizing contact classes.
- It is indispensable to set up a few professional bureaus at the national level to carry out the work of accreditation of the courses in LIS to maintain the standard in LIS curricula, nomenclature, course fee and duration.

NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMISSION (NKC)

National Knowledge Commission (NKC)⁷ set up by the Government of India, has recommended certain measures for the overall development of LIS education in the country. These are:

1. National Mission on Libraries should be set up immediately, for a period of three years. The Mission should subsequently be converted into a Permanent Commission.

2. Revamp LIS education, training and research facilities. The proposed: Mission/Commission on Libraries must assess as soon as possible the manpower requirements of the country in the area of LIS management, and take necessary steps to meet the country's requirement through LIS education and training.
3. To keep the LIS sector abreast of latest developments, necessary encouragement should be given to research after evaluating the research status in this field.
4. Establishing a well-equipped institute for advanced training and research in library and information science and services would provide the necessary impetus to this task.
5. A system should be set up to foster close cooperation between the teaching/research faculty and practicing librarians at all academic and research institutions.
6. The minimum staffing pattern for the BLIS course and the MLIS has been recommended and there should be a 1:10 teacher-student ratio.
8. It was felt that the Department should have not more than 50 students in one class for BLIS course, 20 students for MLIS course, and PhD students according to the University norms.
9. All departments of LIS should set up computer centres and well-equipped departmental libraries with appropriate teaching tools.
10. Appropriate physical facilities such as classrooms, must be made available to each LIS Department and E-learning materials for upgrading the skills of the existing staff should be provided.
11. Teachers who will teach in areas such as ICT applications in libraries and other modern methods should have a specialization in these areas. A system must be set up to allow stringent review of the performance of teachers. A suitable system of rewards, including promotions, should be instituted.

By these remedial measures taken by government of India for library and library professionals, is a golden opportunity for LIS education to improve. It has been realized at the highest level that libraries and library science education need revamping. Librarians should come together and act to take the profession on a high pedestal.

CONCLUSION

From the last few years the LIS area and department have radically full-fledged and developed new programs and courses, new teaching and learning approaches and used ICT to support teaching and learning. In India, e-learning is the future of education. At present it merely supplements traditional distance learning methods rather than replaces them. The probable causes for that are lack of finance, infrastructure as well as ICT technologies access, lack of technological skills, nature and level of courses to be considered and designed and offered,

instructional delivery modes, necessary faculty, accessibility and affordability of technology, evaluation process etc. But the web based online LIS education in India appears to be very encouraging and supporting. Incredible growth of personal computers, expenses of standard professional courses and increasing network from the residence, workplace and public places will make possible the development of web based learning as a cost effective and convenient educational method. Thus, the learning system of digital environment will obviously play a crucial role in delivering education in isolated parts of the country in the future.

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